1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course equips the participants with the technical skills for spiritual direction, skills which enable the participants go through personal discernment and help others in both personal and communitarian discernment for discovery of personal vocation and decision making.

2. LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students at the completion of this course will be able to:

- Demonstrate a knowledge of Christian Spiritual Direction
- Show a basic difference between Spiritual Direction/pastoral counseling and Confession
- Show empathy in direction through attentive listening
- Demonstrate the knowledge of the relationship between the Spiritual director, the directee and the Holy Spirit
- Master the technical and moral qualities expected of a Spiritual director
- Acquire necessary qualities expected of a directee.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the stages of an authentic spiritual direction
- Understand the role of psychology in Spiritual direction
- Show a basic understanding of Spiritual Discernment
- Understand the grace and challenges in Spiritual direction
- Demonstrate that Spiritual Direction is a ministry of faith seeking understanding.

3. COURSE SCHEDULE

There is always a profound uneasiness currently felt with respect to direction and the ministry of direction among the best and most Apostolic of priests, religious and lay apostles. But at the same time, there is a secret longing, a deep yearning for direction. It is always clear that those that are as it were dissatisfied with it often are dissatisfied with it because of the kind of frustration they experienced with it. In this course, we shall be exploring the skill and practice of spiritual direction.
This will enable the intending directors to be more equipped in the ministry and the directees to be adequately prepared to embrace and get the best out of the ministry. When Pope Benedict XVI called for the year of faith (October 11, 2012, till November 24, 2013) he invited the people of God to seek spiritual direction for even the most devout Catholics have questions or struggle with elements of the faith or desire more focus. Hence, the purpose of this course is to adequately prepare those engaging in the ministry of spiritual direction. The ultimate aim and objective of this ministry is with the aid of the Holy Spirit they can discern how to be more fully themselves in Christ.

You will need to read the lecture summary for each week and the corresponding assigned texts and listen to the internet links when preparing for your discussion board posts and writing your papers. From week 6 through week 15 you will be expected to perform role plays based on the scenarios presented. You will be told in advance by the instructor if you will be playing the role of a director or directee. The role play will be on Sunday of that week by 9.00 pm Eastern. This means that you will submit a skype request to the facilitator at Ugodom or Ugoogod at the end of week 5 for this interaction.

Week 1- Lesson 1: General Definition of Christian Spiritual Direction

Readings: The priest, minister of divine mercy: An aid for confessors and spiritual directors: Nos: 64-77

Spiritual Direction and the Encounter with God: A Theological inquiry: Introductory pages
Seeking Spiritual Direction: How to grow the divine life within: Pages 31-48
The practice of Spiritual direction: Pages 3-12
Navigating the Interior life: spiritual direction and the journey to God: Pages 3-10

Assignments: Barry and Connolly defined Christian spiritual direction as help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God’s personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God and to live out the consequences of the relationship. With this definition in mind, discuss all other related definitions of Christian Spiritual direction.

Week 2- Difference between Spiritual direction/pastoral counseling and Sacrament of confession

Readings: The priest, minister of divine mercy: An aid for confessors and spiritual directors: Nos: 1-76

Seeking Spiritual Direction: How to grow the divine life within: Pages 41-47
Navigating the Interior life: spiritual direction and the journey to God: Pages 3-10

Assignments: To say that Christian spiritual direction is not a number of other enterprises often confused with it is not automatically to downgrade these other efforts to improve the human situation and to solve problems. Describe the differences between Christian spiritual direction and these other disciplines often identified with it.

Week 3- Spiritual direction and the art of active listening

Readings: Seminary Journal: Pages 22-26

Assignments: Discuss the various elements involved in active listening for an authentic spiritual direction.
Week 4- Objective of Spiritual Direction

Readings: The priest, minister of divine mercy: An aid for confessors and spiritual directors: Nos 78-80

Assignment: The principal objective of spiritual direction is to discern the signs of God’s will for our journey of vocation, prayer, perfection, for our daily life and for our fraternal mission. Discuss.

Week 5- The technical qualities of a Spiritual director

Readings: The practice of Spiritual direction: Pages 127-141
Seeking Spiritual Direction: How to grow the divine life within: Pages 63-86
Navigating the Interior life: spiritual direction and the journey to God: Pages 41-52
The practice of Spiritual direction: Pages 127-141

The priest, minister of divine mercy: An aid for confessors and spiritual directors: Nos 101-105

Assignment: Briefly describe the technical qualities expected of a good spiritual director

From week 6 we start our role plays for Spiritual direction. This is a sample of Role play and an appropriate response

A 17 year old boy is having problems with his parents at home. He comes to your office and is extremely distressed. After about five minutes he states: “for goodness sake they treat me like a child. They lay down the law: Be in by 10.30pm, no later”. Yes I have problems but I do attempt to be responsive. It is as if they do not really trust me. They always seem to know best; at least that is what they say. I can’t wait until I am 18 to leave school. After one hour the boy leaves the office to resume his school duties.

Write down on separate sheet of paper what you would say to your school boy directee. Try to communicate both understanding and direction. Write down the exact words you would use in your response to your directee.

Note: In your response be as specific and concrete as possible.

Response: “You seem to feel discouraged and angry because you cannot demonstrate that you are old enough to take responsibility for yourself. It also seems that you want to prove yourself responsible enough to make your own decisions. Does this seem correct? You may consider listing all the things you could do to prove responsibility, and then choose one to start with that your parents could accept. (This response communicates an accurate understanding of where the directee is, where he wants to be and gives tentative direction as to how he can get there. It also provides both understanding and direction)

Week 6- The Moral qualities of a Spiritual director

Readings: The practice of Spiritual direction: Pages 127-141
Seeking Spiritual Direction: How to grow the divine life within: Pages 63-86
Navigating the Interior life: spiritual direction and the journey to God: Pages 41-52
The practice of Spiritual direction: Pages 127-141

The priest, minister of divine mercy: An aid for confessors and spiritual directors: Nos 101-105
**Assignment**: St Teresa and St John of the Cross stressed some moral qualities expected of a good spiritual director. Enumerate and briefly discuss these moral qualities.

**Role play**: A twenty one year male rapped his female counselor under gunpoint while engaging in her ministry of counseling. She is well known in the city and the church for her competence and has always carried herself so well. She was scared of discussing this incident with any person but as days rolled on, she started experiencing some strange bodily reactions which sent some signals that she may have been pregnant from that brute. She quickly went to a good friend of hers who is a doctor who confirmed what she thought. Upon the confirmation, suggested abortion as the safe route. Considering all the implications of abortion and the shame of carrying a baby out of wedlock she reluctantly agreed to the suggestion of her doctor friend. From that moment on, everything changed: she pokes herself, hears the cries of babies all night long, and is afraid of any human contact. In fact she is almost running out of her mind. As the male rapist could no longer stand seeing his therapist in that messy condition and could no longer bear the trauma of his action, he decided to come to you for direction and way forward.

**Week 7 - Relationship between the Spiritual director, directee and the Holy Spirit**

Readings: Spiritual Direction and the Encounter with God: A Theological inquiry: Pages 59-72, 90-105

The practice of Spiritual direction: Pages 31-107, 144-184

Seeking Spiritual Direction: How to grow the divine life within: Pages 19-29, 33-40

**Assignments**: The relationship of spiritual direction is fully immersed in the incarnational nature of the divine plan. The governing principle of the director and the directee is that they together say this mutual yes both in thought and in deed to the principal agent of spiritual direction who is the Holy Spirit. Discuss

**Role play**: A divorced man is estranged from his adult children and is stuck at home when a bad car accident leaves him unable to walk. The insurance and disability payments cover his financial needs but he is so terribly lonely. He did sign up for meals-on-wheels but the person delivering gets impatient because the man takes so long to get to the door. He won’t stay to visit for even five minutes, just drops off the food and leaves. After a few weeks he has convinced himself that no one cares about him and it would be better for everyone if he committed suicide. Still thinking about all these, he comes to you for direction.

**Week 8 - Spiritual direction to priests, consecrated religious and laity**

Readings: *The priest, minister of divine mercy: An aid for confessors and spiritual directors*: Nos 70-76, 84-86, 110-140

**Assignment**: Discuss the distinctive aspects in the spiritual direction of priests, consecrated religious and the laity.

**Role play**: A woman in her early forties is experiencing a break up in her marriage. She has searched different parishes for the right priest to hear her story. She is not looking for direction or even ways of repairing the marriage but instead has it in her mind that good men can only be found in the priesthood. The woman, seeking comfort from a gentle male figure wants to be accepted by a certain priest and is eager to please him by bringing baked goods with personal notes of support for his work in priestly ministry to the rectory after normal working hours. The priest is becoming concerned about these gifts and comes to you as a good friend and mentor for direction.
**Week 9- Stages in any authentic spiritual direction (first session)**

*Readings:* The practice of Spiritual direction: Pages 128-202
Navigating the Interior life: spiritual direction and the journey to God: Pages 35-52

*Assignments:* In your own words, discuss how to get your first meeting set up and ensuring that it goes well.

*Role play:* Sr. Mary Dolores has been transferred to a new mission after working for twenty years in a mission she loved so much. She is terribly sad to leave because she loved her students and coworkers very much. She so immersed herself in her sadness that she stops eating and begins to constantly malign the superior for making her leave. Sr. Dolores has been known for her calmness in the community but she radically changed becoming cranky and getting in trouble with everyone in the community. She is beginning to hate herself and so came to you her spiritual director for help.

**Week 10- Stages in any authentic spiritual direction(Subsequent sessions)**

*Readings:* The practice of Spiritual direction: Pages 128-202
Navigating the Interior life: spiritual direction and the journey to God: Pages 35-52

*Assignment:* Discuss the necessity of warmth in your subsequent meetings to ensure you retain the directee in the ministry of spiritual direction.

*Role play:* A middle age lady came to you with a heavy heart of guilt because of her past life of moral laxity. She is particularly depressed because she is physically no longer a virgin but she promised God in her younger age to give herself whole and entire to Him as a loving sacrifice. She is now a good and committed catholic doing everything to appease the good Lord and making up for loosing her virginity. How will you direct her conscious of the right notion of virginity from the bible and the tradition of the church?

**Week 11- The role of Psychology in Spiritual direction**

*Readings:* Care of mind, care of spirit: A psychiatrist explores spiritual direction, Pages 51-148

*Assignments:* Spiritual directors need to be aware of the very real dangers posed by the indiscriminate application of psychology to spiritual direction. Could you discuss the dangers of indiscriminate application of psychology to spiritual direction and the necessary role psychology plays in spiritual direction.

*Role play:* A very pious teenage boy considering the vocation to the priesthood came to you absolutely convinced that giving his life entirely to God is much better than getting married and raising a family. He sees marriage as an obstacle to holiness because of the “filthy” sexual relationship between the opposite sex which is involved in marriage. Not wanting to be part of that filth, he felt that priesthood is the only way to achieve his pure and genuine desire. He came to you for direction on how to realize his dream.

**Week 12- Qualities expected from a directee**

*Readings:* Seeking Spiritual Direction: How to grow the divine life within: Pages 89-95
The priest, minister of divine mercy: An aid for confessors and spiritual directors: No. 106
Navigating the Interior life: spiritual direction and the journey to God: Pages 41-52 (interesting to note that most of the qualities expected from the director are same with the directee but operate from different dimensions)
Assignment: Discuss the necessary qualities that a directee should have for an effective spiritual direction.

Role play: Mathew has been married for five years to Ruth. The two of them have had four children over the years. Both are very good practicing Catholic, frequenting the sacraments. Just as with every family, they had minor family problem and invited Father Pat for family pastoral counseling. Fr Pat did a fabulous job by putting them back in shape. Just to follow up with the direction, Fr Pat kept visiting and calling the family. But Mathew could not understand the reason for this continual visit from Fr Pat as they are done with their family problem. He kept showing this in so many ways. For instance, he stopped coming up to communion and also started to avoid Fr Pat at Church. He also stopped answering his phone calls. A year later, Ruth fell sick with Cancer and was hospitalized for few days. Fr Pat visited almost every day. Matthew often sits quietly in the room when Fr Pat is speaking to his wife. Fr Pat could not understand this unusual behavior of Matthew and came to you for direction.

Week 13- Growth in Spiritual discernment in Spiritual direction

Readings: *The priest, minister of divine mercy: An aid for confessors and spiritual directors: Nos 98-100*

Spiritual Direction and the Encounter with God: A Theological inquiry: Pages 73-89

Seeking Spiritual Direction: How to grow the divine life within: Pages 46-47, 267-278

Assignments: Discuss the signs of growth in discernment in the ministry of spiritual direction.

Role play: You are in charge of formation at a house of formation run by your international order. One of the seminarians comes to talk with you about a classmate of his named George. He says he is worried about the fact that the young man stays up late at night and often watches pornographic films. He also purchases pornographic pictures and magazines from the nearby store. He is in a questionable relationship with his fellow seminarian who comes to his room late in the night. His academic work is slipping, as is apparent from the way he seems unprepared for class discussions of assigned topics.

You call George in to talk with him. You tell him about the concern his classmate has expressed. George is quick to reassure you that his current interest in pornography is connected with his preparation of an article he is writing for the local diocesan newspaper. He says he has never tried to conceal his use of pornography for literary purposes and complains that other students ought to be mature enough to understand and accept his unobjectionable involvement into it and defensively attacks whoever that must have reported him about his clean relationship with Patrick.

You explore with George what his interest in pornography means. Help him to open up to the Holy Spirit for discernment of his vocation to the Catholic Priesthood.

Week 14- The genuine notion of freedom in Spiritual direction

Readings: *The priest, minister of divine mercy: An aid for confessors and spiritual directors: Nos 107-109*

The practice of Spiritual direction: Pages 86-106

Assignment: Spiritual direction is all about being free from resistances in order to be free for God and neighbor. Discuss those resistances or signs of those resistances.

Role play: Monica is married to Frank for five years now, each year as the Holy season of lent approaches, they will always have serious family problem. The hub of the matter is always around the form their Lenten abstinence will take. Monica will always insist that Lent is a time
to be pure before the Lord and not a time of love making but Frank maintains the stand that love making is part and parcel of their spousal relationship and should not be limited to any season. As the Lenten season is drawing near, Monica came to you presenting the difficulty she is having in her marriage for you to help her talk to the husband to educate his sexual emotions only during that Holy Season of fasting and abstinence.

Week 15- Spiritual direction as faith seeking understanding

Readings: Seminary Journal: Pages 27-32

Assignment: The ministry of spiritual direction is an important arena where the acquisition of spiritual wisdom occurs. With the goal of helping us become ourselves in our faith, it helps us to talk to God, to listen to him and to engage in an ongoing process of discernment that ultimately leads to deeper intimacy with Him. In the light of this profound theological statement, demonstrate that spiritual direction is a ministry of faith seeking understanding.

Role play: A long time practicing Catholic woman is now questioning her faith. She has been defending the church in the sexual abuse scandals until her nephew was devastated by her pastor. Now, she feels that she cannot trust any member of the clergy and can no longer pray. But something within her kept telling her to hold on to her faith and know that God exists that dark side of the church notwithstanding. She still feels wounded and abandoned by God and the Church. She came to you as a director for a way ahead.

4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course both theoretical and practical in nature. The first five weeks will be essentially dedicated to learning the theoretical dimension. From week 6 through week 15, the course will introduce and additional value of practice not excluding though still the theory. In the first 5 weeks you will be expected to post a one-page paper based on the assignment and response to your peers postings. From week 6 through 15, you will be expected to perform role play either as a directee or director based on the scenario presented by the facilitator. This is in addition to a one page posting and response to your peers. The postings should be double spaced, 12-point font of New Times Romans. Proper academic format should be used cognizant of footnotes and title page at the beginning. Please consult the HACS style sheet located in the shared folder of the files tab in Populi for proper citation. The Discussion Board topics are listed under the Discussion tab, by week.

Discussion Forums:

We have two discussion forums; General and Required forums.

General Discussion forum:

This is for course-related discussion. You may post questions about the materials and topics, thoughts and comments about the course concepts. Be sure to respond to the postings of your colleague the same as you would do in a traditional classroom. I will monitor this forum, but please do not expect me to comment on all postings. Do please use the General Discussion forum for all course-related questions that you would like to ask of me, for if you have a question, chances are some of your colleagues have the same question and will be able to join in the response. You may also contact me directly as I do not check the General Discussion every day. Specific personal questions regarding your grades, extensions for due dates and private matter should be sent to me in an email: ugodom2000@yahoo.com. I will do my best to respond to you within 48hours. If I will be out-of-range of Internet access for several days, I will communicate that prior to the time.
Required Discussion Forum:

This forum is for weekly assignment submissions. You are expected to write one page every week following the week’s lesson and write a short response (not more than half a page) to your colleague’s submission. This is for the purpose of fostering a community of learners. I will monitor and comment once on all the submissions and responses, and this should help you to orient your mind to the materials as you begin the process of role plays.

5. REQUIRED READINGS and RESOURCES:
All the books should be available for purchase on the Internet using Amazon.com.

- Seminary Journal, Vol 19, No 1, spring 2013, Theme: Spiritual Direction (available in course)
- Seeking Spiritual Direction: How to grow the divine life within, Thomas Dubay, St Anthony's Messengers press, 1994, $10.15, ISBN-10:0892838108
- Seminary Journal

6. SUGGESTED READINGS and RESOURCES:

- Individual Spiritual Direction
- The difference between confession and spiritual direction
- What about spiritual direction

7. EVALUATION:

Grading
- Postings: 40%,
- Discussions: 30%,
- Role Play Acting: 30%,
8. DISABILITIES ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY
Holy Apostles College & Seminary is committed to the goal of achieving equal educational opportunities and full participation in higher education for persons with disabilities who qualify for admission to the College. Students enrolled in online courses who have documented disabilities requiring special accommodations should contact Bob Mish, the Director of Online Student Affairs, at rmish@holyapostles.edu or 860-632-3015. In all cases, reasonable accommodations will be made to ensure that all students with disabilities have access to course materials in a mode in which they can receive them. Students who have technological limitations (e.g., slow Internet connection speeds in convents) are asked to notify their instructors the first week of class for alternative means of delivery.

9. ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY
Students at Holy Apostles College & Seminary are expected to practice academic honesty.

Avoiding Plagiarism
In its broadest sense, plagiarism is using someone else’s work or ideas, presented or claimed as your own. At this stage in your academic career, you should be fully conscious of what it means to plagiarize. This is an inherently unethical activity because it entails the uncredited use of someone else’s expression of ideas for another’s personal advancement; that is, it entails the use of a person merely as a means to another person’s ends.

Students, where applicable:
- Should identify the title, author, page number/webpage address, and publication date of works when directly quoting small portions of texts, articles, interviews, or websites.
- Students should not copy more than two paragraphs from any source as a major component of papers or projects.
- Should appropriately identify the source of information when paraphrasing (restating) ideas from texts, interviews, articles, or websites.
- Should follow the Holy Apostles College & Seminary Stylesheet (available on the Online Writing Lab’s website at http://www.holyapostles.edu/owl/resources).

Consequences of Academic Dishonesty:
Because of the nature of this class, academic dishonesty is taken very seriously. Students participating in academic dishonesty may be removed from the course and from the program.

10. ATTENDANCE POLICY
Even though you are not required to be logged in at any precise time or day, you are expected to login several times during each week. Because this class is being taught entirely in a technology-mediated forum, it is important to actively participate each week in the course. In a traditional classroom setting for a 3-credit course, students would be required, per the federal standards, to be in class three 50-minute sessions (or 2.5 hours a week) and prepare for class discussions six 50-minute sessions (or 5 hours) a week. Expect to devote at least nine 50-minute sessions (or 7.5 quality hours) a week to this course. A failure on the student’s part to actively participate in the life of the course may result in a reduction of the final grade.
11. INCOMPLETE POLICY

An Incomplete is a temporary grade assigned at the discretion of the faculty member. It is typically allowed in situations in which the student has satisfactorily completed major components of the course and has the ability to finish the remaining work without re-enrolling, but has encountered extenuating circumstances, such as illness, that prevent his or her doing so prior to the last day of class.

To request an incomplete, distance-learning students must first download a copy of the Incomplete Request Form. This document is located within the Shared folder of the Files tab in Populi. Secondly, students must fill in any necessary information directly within the PDF document. Lastly, students must send their form to their professor via email for approval. “Approval” should be understood as the professor responding to the student’s email in favor of granting the “Incomplete” status of the student.

Students receiving an Incomplete must submit the missing course work by the end of the sixth week following the semester in which they were enrolled. An incomplete grade (I) automatically turns into the grade of “F” if the course work is not completed.

Students who have completed little or no work are ineligible for an incomplete. Students who feel they are in danger of failing the course due to an inability to complete course assignments should withdraw from the course.

A “W” (Withdrawal) will appear on the student’s permanent record for any course dropped after the end of the first week of a semester to the end of the third week. A “WF” (Withdrawal/Fail) will appear on the student’s permanent record for any course dropped after the end of the third week of a semester and on or before the Friday before the last week of the semester.

12. ABOUT YOUR PROFESSOR

Fr. Dominic Anaeto is a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Nnewi in Nigeria. He holds a License in Spirituality from Gregorian University in Rome, a Doctorate in Pastoral Theology from the Lateran University also in Rome, and a diploma from the Christian Institute for the Study of Human Sexuality at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Illinois. He is a certified counselor on topics related to Human Development and Human Sexuality. He functions as a director of spiritual life which involves giving spiritual conferences, moderating retreats, seminars and recollections. He offers pastoral counseling and spiritual direction to individuals and groups. Presently, he is a professor at Holy Apostles College & Seminary in Cromwell, Connecticut.