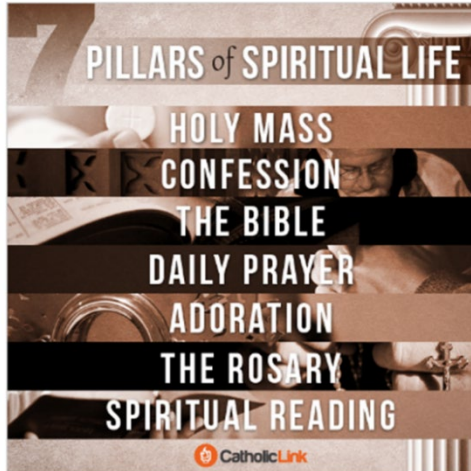


## Faith in 5 – Adults Spiritual Life & Direction



1. Spiritual practices help us grow in holiness. **Basic elements of a Catholic spiritual life** include: Holy Mass, confession, the Bible, daily prayer, adoration, the rosary and spiritual



reading ([Image source](#)). Other practices include the Sacraments, works of charity ([Source](#)), fasting and silence. These spiritual practices help maintain the health and vigor of the Holy Spirit's life within us. All of these require dedication, discipline and the development of habit. The Catholic spiritual life will always include commitment to these practices, with one or more followed uniquely and devotedly according to personal preference. As we grow in the knowledge and love of God, we become more aware of ourselves and our need to stay close to Him.

2. Moral life is part of the spiritual life. The degree of our spiritual faculties, will and intelligence make us moral beings ([Source](#)). The teachings of the Church provide the boundaries, within is all freedom but without is danger. Spirituality goes beyond natural life, seeking forward progression toward God Himself, pursuing holiness and the imitation of Christ. To say a Catholic can be spiritual without religion is doubtful. We receive the grace of the Holy Spirit through the sacraments, and God reveals Himself to us through the Scriptures. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith. It is Jesus - God's best gift given directly to us in the Mass. Our faith needs these spiritual practices to nourish our spiritual life, to lead us towards a greater affection for intimacy with Christ. Spirituality for Catholics disconnected from religion can only be meaningless and lost.

3. **The importance of silence.** St. Faustina says, "In order to hear the voice of God, one has to have silence in one's soul and to keep silence; not a gloomy silence but an interior silence; that is to say, recollection in God". Staying quiet allows us to hear God's voice; when we can make still our mind and heart, we can be open to what God says to us through the Holy Spirit. St. John of the Cross further suggests, "What we need most in order to make progress is to be silent before this great God with our appetite and with our tongue, for the language He best hears is silent love" ([Source](#)).

4. On the journey to sanctity, **spiritual direction** can be a good way to sustain one's development in holiness. The purpose of spiritual direction is to help a person form and cultivate a relationship with God and to better discern how the Holy Spirit is leading in their life. It is not psychological intervention, crisis counseling or life coaching. It does not involve a problem to be solved but is a development of a relationship to be discovered and deepened through prayer and discernment. It does not tell someone "what to do" but leads one to a directed focus and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.

5. Spiritual direction originated from desert hermit monks who sought spiritual instruction from elder, trained monastics. The wisdom from this instruction was known as sayings from “the Desert Fathers”. In the fourth century St. John Cassian, a monk and theologian, developed guidelines for spiritual direction from these monastic dialogues. His work shaped the practice of monasticism in the West through the Middle Ages. According to The Catechism of the Catholic Church 2690, spiritual direction is a prayerful presence offered to others by “certain of the faithful” who have been gifted by the Holy Spirit with “wisdom, faith, and discernment for the sake of this common good which is prayer.”

6. We are called to spiritual direction in some way, shape, or form to become who God made us to be. [Pope Benedict XVI reiterates this point](#), “Today the Church continues to recommend the practice of spiritual direction not only to those who desire to follow the Lord closely but to every Christian who wishes to live responsibly his or her Baptism, that is, new life in Christ.”

7. Spiritual direction can be given by a priest, a member of a religious community, or a lay person. It can be used to help a person discern a vocation to religious life, but it can also be used by those who want to grow in their faith and make good decisions in their personal and professional lives. A spiritual director can be a friend, though the focus should be on the relationship between God and the one seeking direction.

8. A spiritual director encourages, role models and prayerfully supports one during the various stages of spiritual life:

- a. Purgative Stage – The director can be a source of motivation to help one move from sin and towards a life of virtue.
- b. Illuminative Stage – the director can be an observant participant, watching how God is intervening in the person’s life.
- c. Unitive Stage – the director can point out subtleties in growth and help sustain the growth.

9. Qualities of a good spiritual director should include someone who has a strong spiritual and prayer life; one who has been through many experiences and is familiar with how to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit. It is through their experiences and knowledge of God’s Word that they can guide a person to make good decisions. A spiritual director should have an open, compassionate heart, attentive and sensitive to the needs of the one seeking God’s wisdom ([Source](#)). Ultimately, it is God in charge of our spiritual life, through the working of the Holy Spirit.

**“...don’t be afraid to try to deepen that relationship with God, to seek the Lord through prayer and through living the spiritual life vibrantly. It’s a commitment, but the rewards are tremendous—to have that relationship with God, to know God’s presence not only in prayer but in the midst of my daily life, and to be able to seek and find God in all things.”**

Pope St. John Paul II

**This is a free resource! For more information, visit [www.acatholicmomslife.com](http://www.acatholicmomslife.com)**