

# **Spiritual Direction Program**

*“A spiritual director who intimately knows and loves Christ can help the directee to achieve that same love and intimacy”*

***Pope Benedict XVI***

## **Introduction**

The Spiritual Direction Training Programme (Carmelite Tradition) – which has been running since September 2019 – builds on an interpretation of the experience of journeying towards intimacy with God as expressed in the life of the Carmelite saints and deriving principles from this for the growth and flourishing of the spiritual life. The programme, therefore, has its foundation in the spirituality of the Carmelite tradition. At the heart of this spirituality is a prayerful listening and response to the God who befriends us and an expression of this experience through a life of contemplative awareness and friendship with one another.

The Programme is centred on journeying with others who seek to deepen and grow in their personal relationship with God. There are no set rules for this, and no single pathway, but a willingness to deepen one’s contemplative awareness and to respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit who is ever calling us and working towards the greater fulfilment and wholeness of each person.

One does not need to be a Carmelite or even know much of Carmelite spirituality to be part of the Programme. All that is necessary is to have a heartfelt desire to draw from the rich tradition of Carmelite spirituality in deepening one’s own bond with God and to walk with others as they journey through life.

## **Our Team**



**Alexander Ezechukwu, OCD**

Fr. Alex is a Carmelite priest and serves as the prior of the Carmelite community at Boars Hill, Oxford. Fr Alex is a trained spiritual director with many years of pastoral experience in guidance in the spiritual life. He holds a Licence in Sacred Scripture from the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome. Fr Alex also serves as the co-director of CACS.



**Candida Kirkpatrick, OCDS**

Candida is the North American Coordinator for CACS.  
Candida is blessed to be a wife and a mother of two wonderful adult children living in

Phoenix, Arizona. She has been a vowed member of the OCDS Community of St. Joseph in Phoenix for almost 20 years, and works as a spiritual director, retreat master, speaker and blogger of Carmel in the Desert for those seeking closer union with Christ in the Carmelite spiritual tradition.



### **Liam Finnerty, OCD**

Fr. Liam is a Carmelite priest and serves as the prior of the Carmelite community in Avila, Dublin. Fr Liam has been involved in the retreat ministry and spiritual direction for many years. He holds degrees in social work and theology. Fr. Liam is the co-director of the spiritual direction training programme for CACS.

#### **Aims of the Course**

Learning Outcomes

Key Features

Course Content

Term Dates

## **Vision**

To form spiritual directors within the Carmelite lived tradition. The model is distinctive as its emphasis is not only on having Carmelite spirituality as its foundation but in its aim to prepare candidates to undertake spiritual direction both on a one-to-one or group basis but as importantly, to be a guiding and prayerful presence in the world. They achieve this through being witnesses of the spirit of Carmel as a presence in the world in their everyday lived experience. The course may also enhance the ability in spiritual Direction of those candidates that apply who currently hold accredited qualifications or experience in other traditions of Spiritual direction or formation.

## Aims of the Course

- To form Carmelite spiritual directors in a two-year course
- To use diverse learning methods including distance learning and internet technology for the delivery of the course
- To encourage an experience of living and praying in a Carmelite community
- To encourage self-awareness and the flourishing of the spiritual life through deepening one's intimacy with God
- To empower candidates in developing the skills needed in spiritual direction and the ability to walk with others as they journey through life
- To broaden an understanding of the wider context of biblical spirituality and theology, the history and practice of Christian spiritual direction
- To encourage best practice and self-care in spiritual direction through an understanding of proper ethical guidelines, the importance of reflective practice and supervision.

## Cost

For the cost, we are offering a tiered pricing structure (Sustainable Price and Supported Price) and people are to select the price that feels appropriate for them. We're doing this because we recognise that what is affordable for some can be a financial stretch for others.

**Our Sustainable Price (£1,700 / \$2,400 per year)** – This can be paid in instalments by arrangement and covers the cost of the course and helps us to sustain our learning facilities.

**Our Supported Price (£1,500 / \$2,100 per year)** – This can also be paid in instalments by arrangement and reflects a partial bursary toward the cost of the course and is intended for those with minor financial need.

Our quoted prices are for tuition and refreshments during course days.

## Accommodation

For those who wish to stay at the Carmelite Priory during the Intensives, email for updated information to [ruth.preston@carmelite.org.uk](mailto:ruth.preston@carmelite.org.uk). (when accommodation is fully open – contact details – **(+44) 7849596572** to find out about availability and rates and to book your accommodation).

Those wishing to stay at the El Carmelo, Redlands, California, for the intensives, please email the event coordinator, Nellie Lara at [elcarmeloh@gmail.com](mailto:elcarmeloh@gmail.com) or call **(+1) 909-792-1047**.