

Finding Our Way

SPIRITUAL | AND | MORAL
DIRECTION | THE | LIFE

to God

Massive Open Online Course

Open but Unmonitored

Instructor

Fr. Dennis Billy, C.Ss.R., dbilly@spiritualdirectors.world

How to Participate in this Course:

Complete the requirements in the syllabus below using the website at <http://www.spiritualdirectors.world> and the book by Fr. Dennis Billy, C.Ss.R., entitled *Finding Our Way to God: Spiritual Direction and the Moral Life*

1. Course Description

This course engages with the relationship between spiritual direction and the moral life. It comes out of the Catholic tradition, more specifically, from the moral and spiritual mindset of St. Alphonsus de Liguori, doctor of the Church, patron saint of confessors and moral theologians, and the founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. While not an exhaustive treatment of either spiritual direction or the moral life, the course examines the relationship between the two and, in the spirit of Alphonsus, does so in a way that is simple, practical, pastoral, focused on the poor and marginalized, engaging of other faith traditions, and easy to implement. It wishes to make sound spiritual direction accessible to as many people as possible and to offer it across boundaries that have often kept people divided, rather than united. As such, this course is intended as a practical primer for an approach to spiritual direction that looks to the future by reflecting on the past and learning how both impinge upon the decisions of the present.

2. Envisioned Learning Outcomes

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the nature of spiritual direction and the connection to the moral life.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the moral and spiritual mindset of St. Alphonsus de Liguori.
- Students will demonstrate a capacity to engage in the work of spiritual direction according the model presented, engaging those within the Christian faith tradition and dialoguing with those within other faith traditions.

3. Course Schedule

Week 1: The Moorings of Spiritual Direction

Activities

Introduction

- Watch Module 1 – What is Spiritual Direction? (15:48); Read Chapter One: Spiritual Direction
- Watch Module 2 – The Relationships of Spiritual Direction (16:16); Read Chapter Two: Relationships
- Watch Module 3 – Integrating Spirituality and Morality (15:57); Read Integration ([available here as a PDF](#))
- Watch Module 4 – Listening (15:25); Read Chapter Three: Listening
- Watch Module 5 – Prayer (15:49); Read Chapter Four: Prayer

Assignment

Discussion Prompt: Describe your understanding of spiritual direction now that you have completed this module and the impact you feel it would have/has had on your life. (75-100 words)

Week 2: An Alphonsian Approach to Spiritual Direction

Activities

- Module 6 – Watch The Spiritual Legacy of St. Alphonsus de Liguori (17:15); Read Chapter Five: The Spiritual Legacy of St. Alphonsus de Liguori
- Module 7 – Watch Interpreting St. Alphonsus Today (15:59); Read Chapter Six: Interpreting St. Alphonsus Today
- Module 8 – Watch An Alphonsian Model of Spiritual Direction (15:18); Read Chapter Seven: An Alphonsian Model of Spiritual Direction
- Module 9 – Watch The Qualities of an Alphonsian Director (16:41); Read Chapter Nine: The Qualities of an Alphonsian Director
- Module 10 – Watch A Session of Alphonsian Direction (15:40); Read A Session of Alphonsian Spiritual Direction ([available here as a PDF](#))

Assignment

Discussion Prompt: How might the dynamics of Alphonsian mental prayer/meditation affect your approach to spiritual direction? (75-100 words)

Week 3: Spiritual Direction and the Moral Life

Activities

- Module 11 – Watch The Moral Dimensions of Prayer (16:05); Read Chapter Nine: The Moral Dimensions of Prayer
- Module 12 – Watch The Spiritual Journey (14:32); Read Chapter Ten: The Spiritual Journey

- Module 13 – Watch The Way of Virtue (15:58); Read Chapter Eleven: The Way of Virtue
- Module 14 – Watch The Gifts of the Spirit (16:22); Read Chapter Twelve: The Gifts of the Spirit
- Module 15 – Watch Attending to the Virtues and Gifts in Spiritual Direction (15:50); Read Chapter Thirteen: Attending to the Virtues and Gifts in Spiritual Direction

Assignment

Discussion Prompt: What connections do you see between spiritual direction and the moral life that may be helpful to you in your work? (75-100 words)

Week 4: Dialoguing with Other Traditions

Activities

- Module 16 – Watch An Open View of Spirituality (14:41); Read Chapter Fourteen: An Open View of Spirituality
- Module 17 – Watch Natural Law and Interspirituality (16:50); Read Chapter Fifteen: Natural Law and Interspirituality
- Module 18 – Watch Embracing One's Tradition (16:43); Read Chapter Sixteen: Embracing One's Tradition
- Module 19 – Watch A Suggested Template (15:58); Read Chapter Seventeen: A Suggested Template
- Module 20 – Watch Living in the Gap (16:43); Read Chapter Eighteen: Living in the Gap

Watch and Read the Conclusion

Assignments

Discussion Prompt: What role does spiritual direction play within your religious, philosophical, or ethical tradition? (75-100 words)

COMPLETING THE COURSE

Quiz: The end of course quiz will include 20 questions, five drawn from each of the four weeks of the course. Students must receive at least a 70% on the quiz in order to receive the certificate of completion.

4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Students must provide on the Course Blog, Facebook or LinkedIn page a 75-100 word response to each of the four prompts above. Students are encouraged to comment on one another's posts.
- A short quiz will be available at the end of the course. Completion of the quiz will trigger a certificate review. If when your final quiz is submitted with a grade higher than 70%, and you've made the four substantive posts, then you'll receive via email a certificate of completion. To receive the certificate, please prompt Sebastian Mahfood as to your completion by emailing mahfood@wcatradio.com.

5. REQUIRED READINGS and RESOURCES:

- Billy, Dennis J., *Finding Our Way to God: Spiritual Direction and the Moral Life*, \$27.99, ISBN #978-0764828034. or \$14.99 eBook. Get it today at Liguori Publications (<http://www.liguori.org/finding-our-way-to-god.html>) or Amazon (<https://www.amazon.com/Finding-Our-Way-God-Spiritual/dp/0764828037>).
- Course website: <http://www.spiritualdirectors.world> with free access until March 5 of all course videos.

6. SUGGESTED READINGS and RESOURCES:

- Billy, Dennis J., *What Is Spiritual Direction?* Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 2009.
- Ashley, Benedict M. *Living the Truth in Love: A Biblical Introduction to Moral Theology*. New York: Alba House, 1996.

7. ABOUT YOUR PROFESSOR



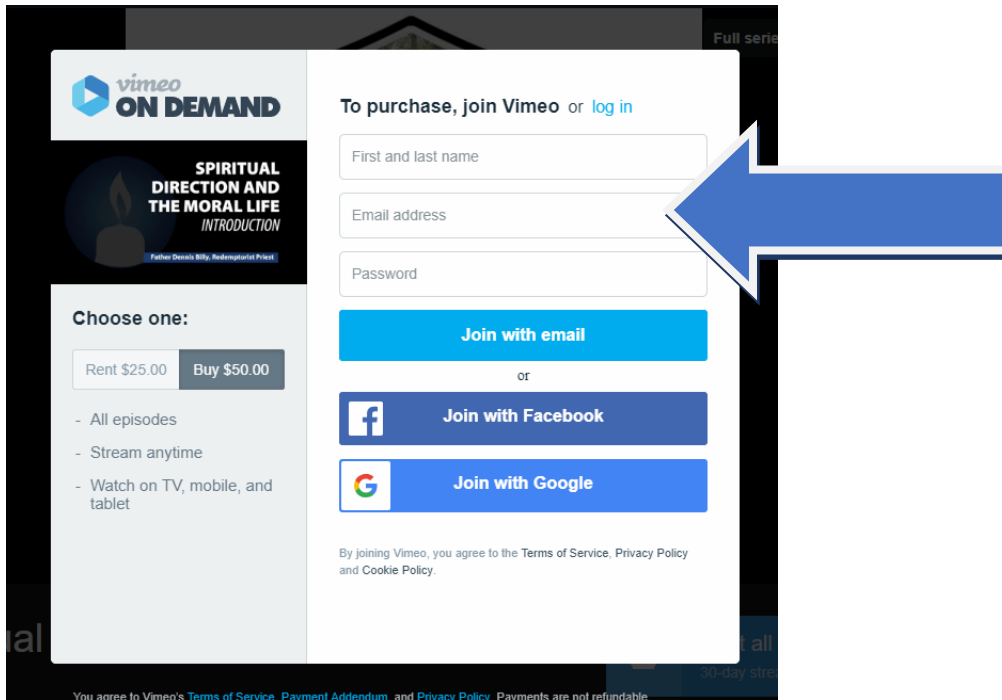
Dennis J. Billy, CSsR, is professor emeritus of the history of moral theology and Christian spirituality at the Alphonsian Academy of Rome's Pontifical Lateran University, and currently serves as the Karl Rahner Professor of Catholic Theology at the Graduate Theological Foundation in Mishawaka, Indiana. An American Redemptorist of the Baltimore Province, Fr. Billy has advanced degrees from Harvard University, the Pontifical University of St. Thomas (Angelicum), and the Graduate Theological Foundation. The author of numerous books and articles on a variety of religious topics, he is also very active in his order's retreat apostolate and in the ministry of spiritual direction.

How to Register for the Course in Four Easy Steps

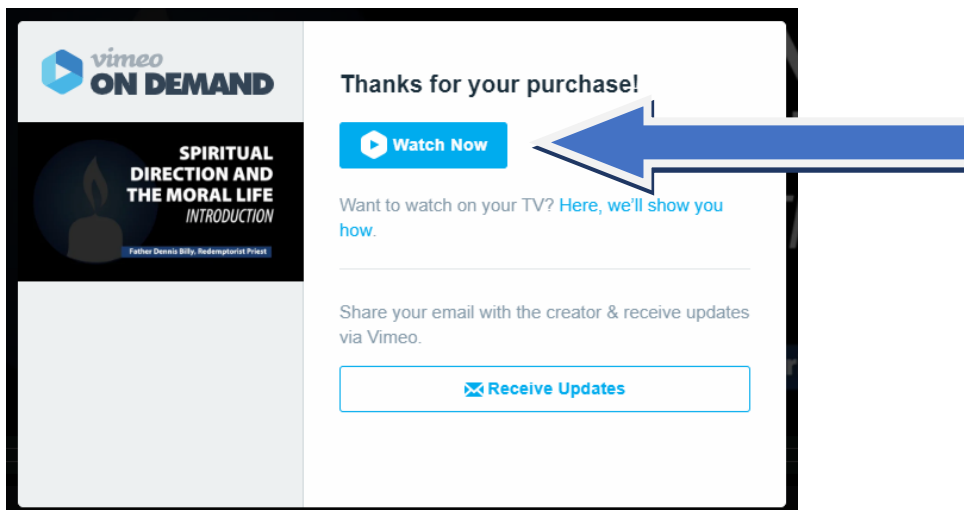
1. Go to <http://www.spiritualdirectors.world> and click on "Get this course for \$50" – that'll take you to the Vimeo page.



2. Once on the Vimeo page, enter your first and last name, your email address, and any 8-character password of your choosing and click “join with email” when done. You may also, if you prefer, join with Facebook or Google.



3. You'll then be logged in after you make your \$50 payment (you may also pay \$25 to rent the videos for 30 days). You may click “Watch Now” and go straight to the videos. Or you may return to the course site (preferred) and follow the path on the menu bar using the social media links to participate in various course activities. The spiritualdirectors.world website will remember that you're logged into Vimeo, and the videos will display.



You may also purchase these videos in the form of a DVD set, an audio CD set or as MP3 downloads at Now You Know Media, online at <https://www.nowyouknowmedia.com/seeking-wisdom-spiritual-direction-and-the-moral-life.html>. If you have any difficulty accessing the course using the directions above, please contact Dr. Sebastian Mahfood, OP, at mahfood@wcatradio.com for assistance. Have a great time learning about Spiritual Direction!