

## Spirituality

... spirituality for Jews is an enacted relationship to God; it is a transformation of the self for the sake of reality.<sup>1</sup>

... spirituality is understood as the unique and personal response of individuals to all that calls them to integrity and transcendence.... [it] has something to do with the integration of all aspects of human life and experience.<sup>2</sup>

...fundamentally spirituality has to do with becoming a person in the fullest sense.<sup>3</sup>

spirituality is that attitude, that frame of mind which breaks the human person out of the isolating self. As it does that, it directs him or her to another relationship in whom one's growth takes root and sustenance.<sup>4</sup>

...the spiritual concept of grace goes beyond "information" and "events" into a realm of relational mystery that is at the heart of the way of knowing and teaching... In receiving spiritual grace we understand that we not only seek but are sought, that we not only know but are known, that we not only love but are loved. Indeed, it is *because* we are sought and known and loved by grace that we are capable of seeking and knowing and loving. The disciplines of spiritual formation aim finally at enlarging our capacity to receive this larger grace, a grace that is always reaching for us from the heart of love. It is a gift we cannot manipulate and command but for which we can only pray.<sup>5</sup>

Spirituality may be described but is not readily defined, for the boundaries are broad. It is a sense of relatedness to that which is beyond the self yet approachable.<sup>6</sup>

In its broadest sense, spirituality centers on our awareness and experience of relationality. It *is* the relational component of lived experience. This component includes four distinct though interconnected dimensions: relations with self, others, God, and the natural world.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Carol Ochs, "What Jews Can Learn From Christian Spirituality," *Proceedings of the Center for Jewish-Christian Learning* 6 (1991) 25.

<sup>2</sup>Sandra Schneiders, "Theology and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals or Partners?" *Horizons* 13/2 (1986) 264.

<sup>3</sup>Schneiders, 264.

<sup>4</sup>Schneiders, 265.

<sup>5</sup>Parker Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known* (San Francisco:HarperSanFrancisco, 1993) 113.

<sup>6</sup>"Spirituality," in *Encyclopedia of Religious Education*(San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1990) 607.

## Religious education:

Religious education is the making accessible of the traditions of the religious community and the making manifest of the intrinsic connection between traditions and transformation.<sup>8</sup>

Christian religious education is a political activity with pilgrims in time that deliberately and intentionally attends with them to the activity of God in our present, to the Story of the Christian faith community, and to the Vision of God's Kingdom, the seeds of which are already among us.<sup>9</sup>

Catechesis supplies a religious dimension to moral development and decision-making. It is concerned about behavior, individual and communal, and even more about commitment, values, and attitudes. The mature Christian, by definition, is inner-directed — one who takes responsibility for his or her action and inaction. Catechesis affirms the need for Christians to be inner-directed, but it also reminds them that they are not a law unto themselves. The Christian community emphasizes a certain out-directedness based on responsibility to God the creator.<sup>10</sup>

Religious education must effect the socialization of the child into a religious community that is explicitly "there," visible; it must foster the child's individuation as an implicitly religious person; and it must negotiate the tension between religious belonging and reliability on the one hand, and religious "becoming" and spiritual autonomy, on the other.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Katherine Zappone, *The Hope for Wholeness* (Mystic, CT: Twentieth-third Publications, 1991) 12.

<sup>8</sup>Mary Boys, *Educating in Faith* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1989) 193.

<sup>9</sup>Tom Groome, *Christian Religious Education* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1980) 25.

<sup>10</sup>Berard Marthaler, "Introduction," in *Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics* (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 1983) 16.

<sup>11</sup>Michael Rosenak, *Commandments and Concerns* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1987) 261.