

ĐỒNG HÀNH THIÊN LIÊNG

**Ngày 13-14 Tháng 6
2008**

Vietnam



VÀI LỜI NHẬP MÔN

- Chúng ta chỉ có hai ngày...
- Thế là rất ngắn cho đề tài quan trọng này
- Câu hỏi của chúng ta là:

LINH HƯỚNG LÀ GÌ?

- Có quan trọng trong đời sống tu hành không?
- trong việc đào tạo tu sĩ không?
- Ai có thể là người linh-hướng?

LINH HƯỚNG LÀ GÌ?

- Linh hướng cũng gọi được là
 - **ĐỒNG HÀNH THIÊN LIÊNG**
 - hoặc *Spiritual Guidance*
- Tại sao dùng **LINH HƯỚNG**
 - **= SPIRITUAL DIRECTION?**
 - 1. Vì là danh từ dùng nhiều hơn...
 - 2. Vì truyền thống lâu dài của Giáo Hội...

Nhưng hãy ý tứ!

- Chữ **LINH HƯỚNG** dễ hiểu lắm:
 - ***SPIRITUAL***: nghe "cao" lắm, quá xa với đời sống thực tế của chúng ta, với hiện tại và bây giờ của chúng ta
 - ***DIRECTION***: chỉ có một vị hướng dẫn—
 - là **Thánh Thần của Chúa**.
 - Việc gọi một con người "DIRECTOR" là điều nguy hiểm vì giống như người đó có quyền "to direct"--bắt buộc phải theo... như mình là Chúa vậy.

Nếu chúng ta dùng chữ **LINH HƯỚNG**

- thì chúng ta nên hiểu cho đúng:
- “**SPIRITUAL**” không phải chỉ là "thiên liêng"
 - nhưng liên hệ đến toàn thể đời sống chúng ta dưới sự hướng dẫn của Thánh Thần
- “**DIRECTION**” không có nghĩa "hướng dẫn... và bắt buộc phải theo"
 - nhưng có nghĩa nhiều hơn là "chỉ đường cho" (“pointing the way...”)

Sách về LINH HƯỚNG

- Ngày hôm nay, có người viết về linh hướng không?
- Go to **BARNES & NOBLE** website and look for books on “spiritual direction” (in English)
 - You will find 656 titles of books...
- Go to **AMAZON** and you will find ... đoán thử bao nhiêu?
 - 9,680 titles!!!

Có lẽ Quý Vị sẽ hỏi:

- Why are there so many Jesuit authors on Spiritual Direction?
- Simple (and important) reason:
- ***LINH THAO!!!***

Ignatius' "discovery"

- He discovered a truth that had always been present (but often forgotten) in the Church:
- *God communicates with every Christian, and it is possible to "discern" His will,*
 - preferably with the help of a *spiritual guide.*
- This is why the Inquisition ran after him and put him in jail three times!

Vài câu định nghĩa LINH HƯỚNG

- How would you define Spiritual Direction?
- Let us look at **some definitions** of Spiritual Direction given by some contemporary authors
 - and pick up the main ideas that recur in those definitions

A first definition, given by Fr. Barry:

“Help given by one Christian to another to enable 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.”*

Sr. Sandra Schneiders' definition:

“Process carried out in the context of a one-to-one relationship

- in which a competent guide helps a fellow Christian to grow in the spiritual life***
- by means of personal encounters***
- that have the directee's spiritual growth as their explicit object.”***

Sr. Janet Malone's definition:

- ***“Occasion to meet with another person in order to look at one's prayer life***
 - ***and how it interfaces with how one is living one's life.***
- ***Opportunity to ask oneself a twofold question:***
 - ***how is God speaking to me in these people, circumstances and events,***
 - ***and how do I want to speak to God about these?”***

Sr. Dykman & Fr. Carroll's definition:

“An interpersonal relationship in which one person assists others

- to reflect on their own experience***
- in the light of who they are called to become in fidelity to the Gospel.”***

Rev. Jeffrey Gaines' definition:

- ***“Art of Christian listening carried out in the context of a one-to-one trusting relationship.***
- ***It is when one Christian is trained to be a competent guide***
 - ***who then ‘companions’ another person,***
 - ***listening to that person’s life story***
 - ***with an ear for the movement of the Holy, of the Divine.”***

Fr. James Keegan's definition 1:

“To help people

- to perceive the religious dimension of their experience more and more accurately,*
- to react more authentically,*
- and to move with the action of God to make a difference in the world.”*

Definition 2:

- ***“Contemplative practice of helping another person or group***
 - ***to awaken to the mystery called God in all of life,***
 - ***and to respond to that discovery in a growing relationship of freedom and commitment.”***

Những yếu tố chính

- Encounter, **relationship**
- Presence of a (competent) **guide** who **listens**
- Focus on **prayer**, on one's relationship with God
- In view of **discerning** the movement of grace within the person
- and finding an appropriate **response**.

Various “models”

- These definitions show substantial agreement on main points.
- But you may also find many disagreements about what spiritual direction is and/or should be.
- This is because we can look at spiritual direction from several angles.
- Fr. Fleming proposes to see spiritual direction under the light of *models*.

What is a *MODEL* in theology?

- A model is a way to look at a reality (like the Church or Religious Life) under different lights, from a different angle.
- Thí dụ ĐỜI SỐNG TU HÀNH có 3 *mẫu* chính:
 - MONASTICISM: Benedict
 - CONVENTUAL LIFE: Francis and Dominic
 - APOSTOLIC LIFE: Ignatius
- One religious life, three ways of living it...

1st model:

“INSTITUTIONALIZED”

- Part of a **FORMATION PROCESS** in a novitiate or seminary.
- It has a molding role: it gives space to instruction in the spiritual and religious life
- **Ưu điểm**: clarity of formation because of the instruction given.
- **Khuyết điểm**: more *directive*, it may seem to impose spiritual practices, without much attention to each one's pace of growth.

2nd model:

“**INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP**”

- Focus on **relationship**: spiritual direction is like a friendly sharing and loving support.
- **Ưu điểm**: love, care, concern permeate the relationship, and the gift of self is assured.
 - Historically, examples can be found in the lives of saints.
- **Khuyết điểm**:
 - Lack of distance may bring about blindness
 - May give more importance to the relationship with the friend than with God.

3rd model: “**CHARISMATIC**”

- Special gift of the Spirit given to a person, allowing him (or her) “to read a soul”
 - Hiếm lắm! "Một trong 1,000" theo Thánh Theresa, hoặc "một trong 10,000" theo Thánh Phanxicô de Sales!
- *Ưu điểm*: atmosphere of the divine
- *Khuyết điểm*: looking for something marvelous, spectacular, with risk of manipulation or illusion, blind following (tiên tri giả nguy hiểm lắm!)

4th model:

SACRAMENTAL

- Within the context of *confession*, often in the forms of words of advice.
 - The priest-confessor has been very often seen seen in such a role
- *Ưu điểm*: it makes confession a means for spiritual growth and not only a cleansing ritual.
- *Khuyết điểm*: the director has to be a priest, and his advice may be more moralizing than spiritual.

5th model:

INCARNATIONAL

- Model emerging today and given most attention: ordinary encounters where one person helps another in search for God's will
- All the definitions given earlier follow this model principally
- It seeks to touch all aspects of a person's life
- ***“Ordinary means of spiritual growth in the embodied spirituality which is Christianity.”***

INCARNATIONAL MODEL

- ***Ưu điểm:***
 - ***empowerment*** of all baptized: it is not limited to priests or to religious
 - deepens the awareness of every Christian that God is active in one's life
- ***Khuyết điểm và câu hỏi:***
 - Who can be a true (*competent*) spiritual director? Adequate preparation needed...
 - What is the nature of this relationship—friendship or professional?

CÂU HỎI QUAN TRỌNG NHẤT:

- Ở ĐÂU
- và THẾ NÀO
 - là THIÊN CHÚA NÓI VỚI CHÚNG TA?
- What is a ***SPIRITUAL or RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE?***

What is an *EXPERIENCE*?

- From Latin *ex-per-ire*:
 - = *to go all over and through*
- A definition given by Fr. Keegan:
 - *“An experience is an encounter, rooted in the senses, that raises reactions in me that are not only in the senses but enfold the whole of me too—my mind, memory, imagination and emotions.”*

But this is very human!

- **True: this definition is very human**
- **It explains what an experience is for us as human beings**

***Where is God
in our human experience?***

THIÊN CHÚA Ở ĐÂU?

- Trong KINH THÁNH
 - hay trong bộ sách TAM QUỐC CHÍ?
- Trong NHÀ THỜ LỚN
 - hay ở CHỢ BẾN THÀNH?
- Trong VỊ LINH MỤC
 - hay trong DÂN TỘC THIỂU SỐ?
- Trong ĐỜI SỐNG TU HÀNH
 - hay trong ĐỜI SỐNG VỢ CHỒNG và GIA ĐÌNH?

God in human experience...

- **We cannot experience God immediately and directly**
- **but everything can reveal, manifest God to us.**
- **St. Ignatius said that**
we can “see God in all things”

Human experience is always

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL

- Every reality or experience can be looked at from different angles,
- including the angle of God's presence in it.
- **LINH HƯỚNG GIÚP CHÚNG TA TÌM SỰ HIỆN DIỆN CỦA CHÚA TRONG MỌI SỰ**

Our problem is always:

- **We can see God in a church, in a sacrament, in a blessing, in the Holy Book, even in religious people,**
- **but we may not see God in all created reality...**

Mục đích của LINH HƯỚNG là:

- *“... to help people to perceive the religious dimension of their experience more and more accurately,*
- *to react more authentically*
- *and to move with the action of God to make a difference in the world.”*

What about “*THIN PLACES*”?

- It is true, however, that there are, for each one of us, special **PLACES** or **EVENTS** where **HEAVEN AND EARTH MEET**
- Fr. Barry calls them *THIN PLACES*
- *Places (or moments) where GOD SHINES THROUGH, GOD APPEARS, GOD SURPRISES US...*

Kinh Th

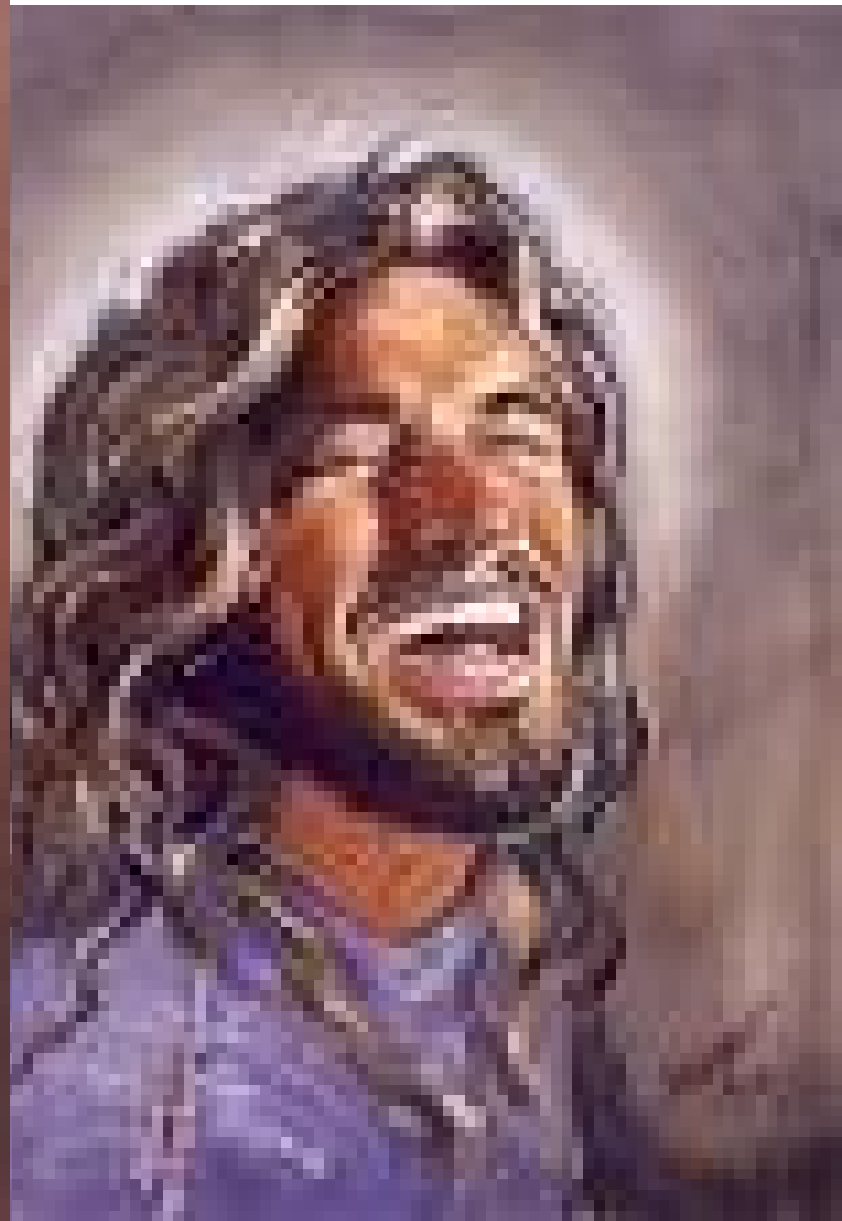
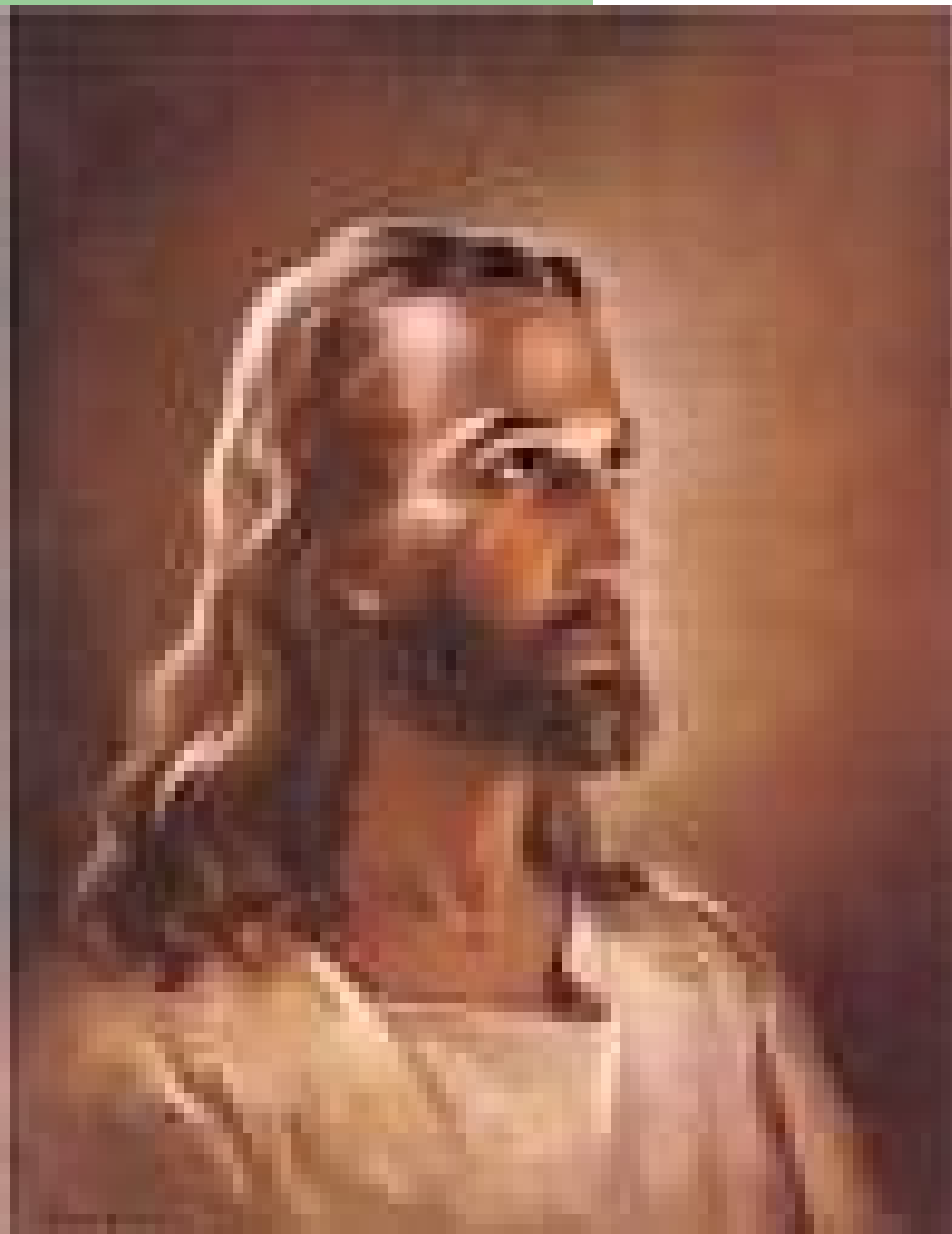
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Trong đời sống của tôi, chắc đã có

- những biến cố mỏng, những chỗ mỏng, những người mỏng... đã biểu lộ Thiên Chúa cho tôi?
- Mà đồng thời, tôi có thấy sự hiện diện của Chúa trong cuộc sống hằng ngày của tôi không?
- hay có lẽ tôi chỉ gặp Chúa trong nhà nguyện hoặc trong giờ cầu nguyện mà thôi?

KHỞI ĐIỂM CỦA LINH HƯỚNG LÀ...

OUR BELIEF THAT:

- it is possible to encounter God in human experience
- and to *engage* God directly
- despite the necessary human mediation of any such encounter
- simply because God is a *personal God* who wishes to communicate with us.