

## **Zoom and Spiritual Direction:**

Notes of the insights coming from conversations in the Zoom session on 14 July.

Over 40 people participated in the two hour session. Most of the conversation happened in small groups. The key points emerging from these conversations were reported in the final half hour plenary session.

Participants were invited to think about their experience of zoom in relation to:

- The beginnings, middles and ends of sessions

From the experiences of Zoom Spiritual Direction,

- what is being learnt (for better or worse)
- what strengths and weaknesses are emerging
- what discoveries, insights, wisdom can be shared

## **Reflection on Experience of doing SD on Zoom**

Some had leapt in, others more gradually engaged

### **Change of Mode**

- Facing the change reveals the SD's disposition in face of change, uncertainty etc. How open, risk averse?
- Doing different can be challenging, but good
- The SD's reduced control of the environment may be good – enabling a greater trust in God in the process

### **Video SD vs Normal SD**

- Video makes SD more accessible for the less mobile
- Whole body presence vs head and shoulders
- Needs more preparation
- Challenge to keep sacred sense when face to face – less sense of 'triangulation' than when sitting at angle to each other
- Does screen have different impact on Introverts and Extroverts?
- Conversation can be more focussed on Video
- Some can go deeper faster
- Some suggest its easier to stay focussed on Video
- Some suggest silences are harder on Video
- Video enables directee to share more creatively – eg pictures, video films recorded, collection of items brought to table

### **Telephone vs Video**

- Some reports that telephone conversations (no video) actually go deeper. Easier for SD to be more challenging?

- Visual clues on video (clothes, facial expression); Telephone – words and tone communicated – yet are we listening to more?

## **Beginnings:**

### **Preliminaries**

- Benefit of a preliminary conversation about boundaries and practicalities: interruptions, phones, door bells, other household members..., using zoom well
- What to do if tech fails? Reversion to telephone? Very important if directee in an emotional or vulnerable place when this happens.
- Suggesting Reflection questions to help prepare for the session in lieu of travel time
- One person mentioned sending sheets for reflection on spiritual and personality preferences to new directees as part of preparation for the relationship.

### **Establishing Boundaries**

- SD is not in control of interruptions at Directee's end – need for them to establish their boundaries.

### **Preparing your space:**

- background (keep simple, not displaying anything you don't want to be seen, not distracting)
- candle, flowers...
- is having a drink a distraction?
- Preparation and follow up time more important

### **Creating Sacred Space**

- New ways to be found to establish this sacred space
- Use ways of creating sacred space – establish a formality and reverence: eg candles
- Presence is not dependant on physical, but can need culturing in video space

### **Starting Sessions**

- Need for thinking about how to start session – creating rituals
- How to break ice / begin engagement: Time of quiet, prayer...?
- 'Jet lag' – it may have only taken a click to get together, but the transition from what has gone before may take much longer (no journey to get there)

### **Using Zoom (or alternatives)**

- Risks of breaking up of audio and visual – particularly challenging when directee in difficult place
- Making it normal – one did knitting
- Ensure light on your face
- Seeing yourself on screen can be distracting – use of 'hide self-view' (for both parties) can be liberating
- Many report Video is more draining, (listening differently) needing more preparation and more follow up time

## **Middles**

### **Nature of the Interaction**

- Meeting is as real as meeting in home – but it is different
- Can be a real spiritual encounter
- Handling distress when not in same room may need to be different.
- ‘Energy’ between SD and Directee can seem different

## **Endings**

- Can be more abrupt, awkward – as you both find the ‘leave’ button
- Need for managing closing process / ritual
- Value of discussing what might be helpful. eg Use of prayer or silence to bring to a close

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