

No Time Like the Present

- Enabling the
encounter with God**

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Session 1:

Enabling Encounter: On the Threshold

threshold

dive in

step back

‘If spiritual directors do not focus on the religious experience of their directees, then this most intimate and challenging area of experience will ordinarily be skirted in their conversations. Other areas of life experience, and especially problem areas, will take up the time. Directees may get help with these areas, but they may not develop a deeper personal relationship with the Lord.’

Barry & Connolly: The Practice of Spiritual Direction
(Revised edition) page 187.



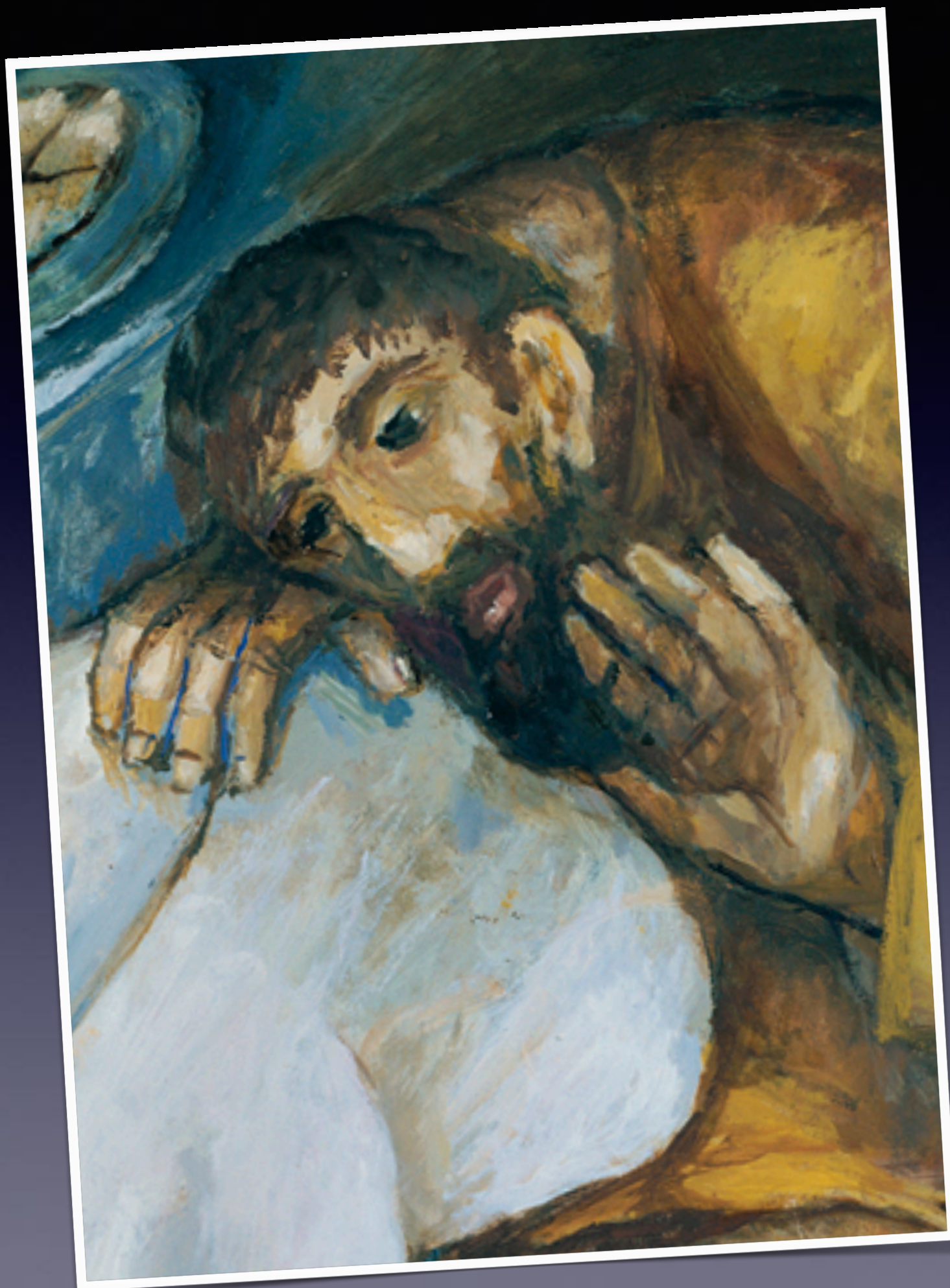
I found though that my directees often initially baulked, as I had, at believing God might be real and really available in their own experience and prayer.

Rob Marsh SJ: Teaching Spiritual Direction as if God were real' (The Way, October 2014)

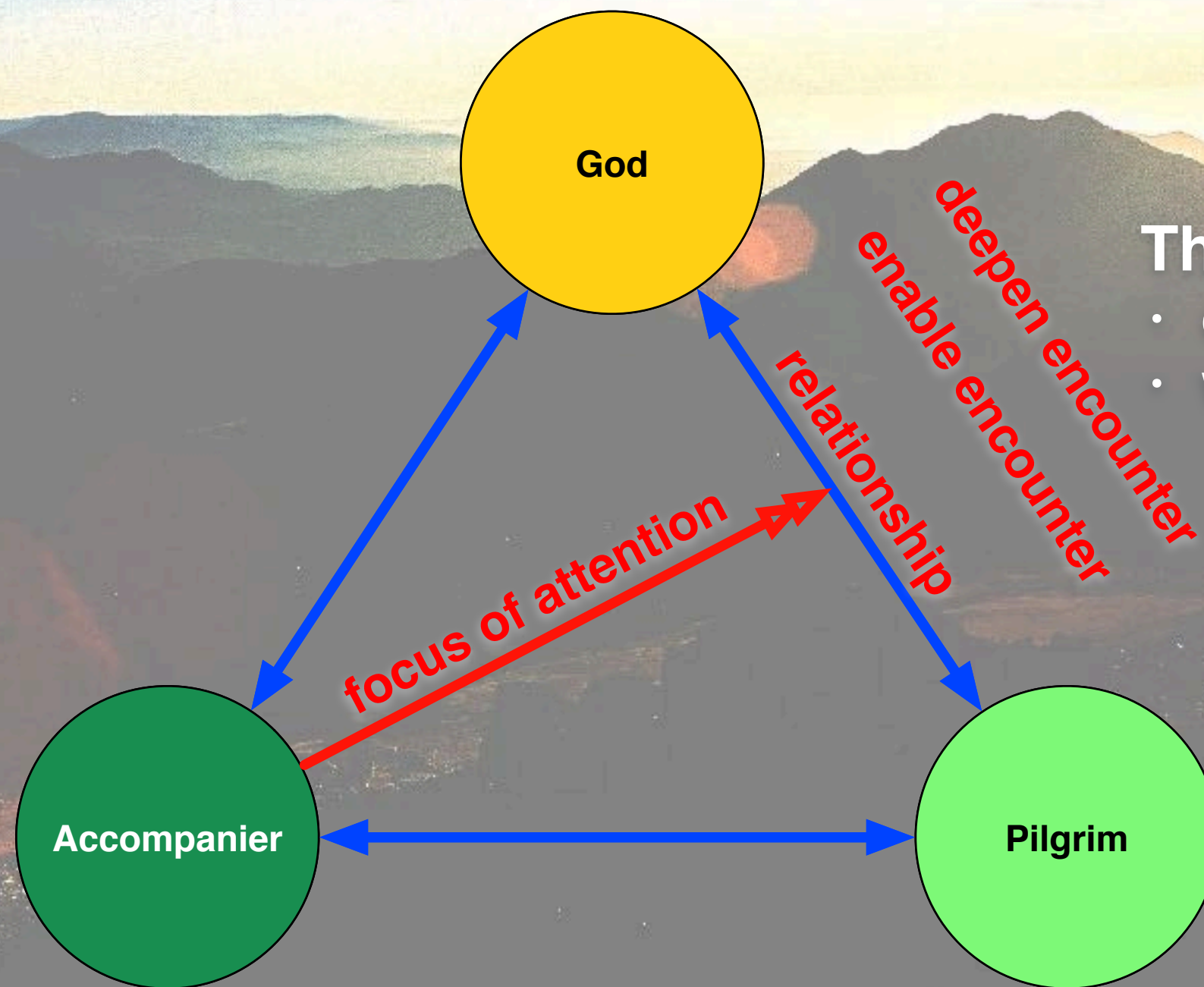


Sieger Koder
Washing of Feet





A Model of Spiritual Direction



Threshold

- draw closer
- withdraw

**In your personal journey
- your encounters with God...**

what happened?

the threshold: notice...

the draws to encounter ...

impulses to withdraw from ...

the fruit ...

**In your spiritual directing - witnessing /
enabling encounters with God...**



Session 2:

The Spiritual Director On the Threshold



between...

- enabling attentiveness to God
- attentiveness to self as Spiritual Director

The opportunity: 'A director promotes the encounter with God by helping directees notice more and more about the experience in question, by exploring what God is like there, how God looks at them, what they are desiring and how they are drawn to respond.'



A simple model for spiritual direction:

1. Listen to what a person is saying.
2. Notice (and help the person notice) his or her implicit experience of God.
3. Help it become explicit experience of God.
4. Stay with it and deepen it, let it come into the present, let it develop.
5. Encourage it to become 'conversational'.

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The challenge:



‘there are often lots of other things a spiritual director might be drawn into doing in a session rather than paying attention to the traces of God—for example,

- just listening,
- helping someone pray in helpful ways,
- helping someone cope with a major loss or transition,
- teaching about decision-making,
- teaching about discernment,
- engaging in a little theological reflection,
- dealing with special circumstances,
- listening to dreams, appreciating art, and so on.’

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For personal reflection:

What opportunities in enabling encounter are you finding yourself drawn to? Where do you see them applying to your own practice?

What challenges do you recognise for yourself?

How is God gazing at you in this?



In Groups:

Share and listen:

- where this is landing for you:
- what is coming to life
- what is disturbing you
- your sense of God's gaze and your response

Any insights / questions / comments to bring back -
(place on the chat)

Remember your conversation with God at the beginning of the day - about your hopes, needs and desires, and God's desires for you.

notice where these desires have met

Gaze at God with this awareness

receive God's gaze

move into conversation...

