

SPIRITUAL ACCOMPANIMENT

In Movements & New Communities

Aiding Human and Supernatural Growth

.....

Proceedings of the First Study Week on Movements
and New Communities hosted by Santa Croce

Prologue by His Eminence Kevin Cardinal Farrell

.....

Edited by

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Abbreviations

AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i> ("Acts of the Apostolic See")
Can./Cans.	canon(s)
CEI	Italian Episcopal Conference
cf.	<i>confer</i> ("see")
CIC	Code of Canon Law (1983)
Const. Ap.	Apostolic Constitution
ex.	example
Ap. Exhort.	apostolic exhortation
Enc. letter	encyclical letter
PL	<i>Patrologiae Latina</i>
q.v.	<i>Quod vide</i> (For more on this topic, see in this book)

Introduction

Movements and new communities utilize forms of spiritual accompaniment on various levels. This mode of sanctification, a long-time tradition in the Church and rooted in Sacred Scripture, can be found both internally, among their members, and externally, among those they evangelize.

The Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (Rome) held a Study Week on Spiritual Accompaniment in Movements and New Communities to explore this topic both generally and specifically relating to new church groups. The "study week," which had more than 300 people from over 40 different ecclesial bodies in attendance, took place from January 30 to February 3, 2023. It was a week of intense work and profound sharing through attendees' participation during the afternoon workshops.

The participants were able to reflect on the special relationship that takes place in the context of spiritual accompaniment, where one person assumes the role of spiritual father/mother—or older brother/sister—to help the other grow in his/her faith and identification with Christ. It is a practice that has had various names and forms throughout history and has faced numerous challenges. In fact, the cultural changes of our times, theological research, and recent events in the life of the Church have emphasized both the need for good accompaniment to grow in one's following of Christ and the need for adequate training of the people who provide this service.

This volume, which is a collection of the study week's proceedings, begins, as a prologue, with His Eminence Kevin Cardinal Farrell's paper presented at the start of the week. In his report, he summarized Pope Francis' Magisterium on the topic of spiritual accompaniment and then gives a few guidelines for this practice within the context of movements and new communities.

This is followed by four comprehensive papers that help appropriately frame the topic of spiritual accompaniment. Most Rev. Bishop Massimo Camisasca's paper explores this practice that boasts a long tradition in the Church on a historical and theological level, providing a glimpse of all its richness and spiritual value. Dr. Amedeo Cencini, on the other hand, paints a picture, in his paper, of the spiritual director, the importance of his mission, and the risks to which he is exposed. Next, Most Rev. Bishop Carlo Bresciani, combining his experience as a pastor, psychologist, and professor, outlines the necessary distinctions and inescapable connections between spiritual accompaniment and psychology. Finally, Dr. Philip Milligan presents an interesting overview of the role of the spiritual director and the practice of spiritual accompaniment in the various movements and communities, based on his years of experience serving the Pontifical Council for the Laity and his current role in the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life.

The following four papers address some of the most deeply felt, current challenges of spiritual accompaniment, from different perspectives. Dr. Eduardo Baura's paper helps draw the auspicious dividing line between spiritual accompaniment and government action. Dr. Davide Cito's and Sr. Anna Deodato's papers address the delicate topic of abuse, both to help identify and prevent this harmful behavior and to aid spiritual directors in the difficult accompaniment of victims/survivors of abuse. Finally, Most Rev. Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella, exploring the challenges posed by contemporary culture, pushes for a spiritual accompaniment that is able to ignite—or reignite—a passion for evangelization.

Dr. Luis Navarro's paper, which brought the study week to an end and concludes this volume, recalls the centrality of the individual and his dignity, which both spiritual accompaniment and government action are called to serve, synergistically.

In these pages, the reader will find much material for reflection and formation in these topics which are equally delicate and essential to the life of the Church. Well-aware of this, the study week's participants insisted that this material be made available as soon as possible to ecclesial bodies and the academic community.

We could not, however, collect all the week's contents in this volume, which had to be limited to the final versions of the speakers' presentations. The most valuable aspect of the entire week for the participants is, in any case, the frequency of sharing through various workshops, testimonies, presentations from the audience, and rich exchanges during breaks, as well as, above all, the acquaintances and friendships made between so many people from such varied ecclesial entities. We thank the week's participants, again, for all their valuable contributions, and we hope to be able to find an opportunity to meet again soon and continue this fruitful sharing, at the service of both the entities they belong to and the whole Church.

Elisa Lisiero
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Rome, May 15, 2023