Reflection on My Spiritual Direction Experience

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I have no idea why I agreed to become part of the Wisdom Circle. I respect Tony Sabatino so much and when he asked me, I immediately agreed. I spent most of the few weeks before our first meeting deeply regretting that decision. I was nervous. What would I say? I was such a novice at praying. I had only started about a year ago having a morning prayer time that I intentionally set aside each day with a routine and a prayer list. I loved that time each day but I realize now that those were such baby steps.

In any case, I went to the first gathering of the Wisdom Circle group and something happened. I was inspired by the introduction, the video, the talk. Then we were given the opportunity to read Chapter 7 in *What is Ignatian Spirituality*, “God Calls, We Respond.” The words of that chapter resonated within me. I read and re-read them in the time we had. I underlined and noted sentences in the book. I read “God is an active God. He is ever at work in people’s lives, inviting, directing, guiding, proposing, suggesting.” I wrote in my journal - “I think I have responded to God’s call without even realizing it….in the way I meet others’ needs…. But have I been responsive to God?” I had an epiphany right out there on the lawn. Back with the group, i shared some thoughts that I never would have shared openly - so vulnerable. I felt opened, challenged, excited, on-the-verge. I likened it to falling in love….the early days when lovers are so alert to each other, always watching. I realized God has been watching me that way….. and though I ministered on behalf of Him, I missed watching him…being attentive to His call to me, His signs…. This is my magis, the “more” i longed for without even realizing it. I went off feeling kind of “lit up.” I was anxious to continue, a little afraid….grateful to Sister Maria and Tony for bringing me into this group.

At the very beginning, we all had technical difficulties with the website, but my experience was not dimmed too much by that. I have read my Week One Reflection and I remember how I felt as I wrote. I was moved to tears, having read and re-read the assigned chapter, underlining, and taking notes. I think the biggest revelation was that I began to realize that Jesus works **with** me. My life and my ministry is not to work **for** Jesus but with him. That little change in wording is so huge. I had no difficulty - again in tears I could not fully explain - writing my reflection. I loved getting Sister Maria’s notes and comments. But the blogging was difficult. There were just the four of us in our Wisdom Circle and we all know each other well. I just somehow couldn’t express it all in the blog. The others, two of whom are my colleagues at the Department of Catholic Schools, felt the same. We gathered in person to share our thoughts. That was a little easier. Then, with Tony, we devised a plan to cut and paste part of our reflection in the blog space and to Face Time with each other and talk. We didn’t get too far with that. I am wondering if the blog is truly necessary.

But for me, truly I think I have been on my way to this experience all my life. I am overwhelmed with emotion at it all. I like the discipline of the Examen. I love the times when I read and reflect, read again, and feel such depth of comfort and at-home-ness, and excitement. My method was this: each week I would one day first read the chapter cold; the next day I would read it again and underline and make notes and sit with it all; the third day—-the only way I can explain it is that “something happened” again. I would read the chapter again and write notes in my journal and the Spirit came to me. My words would just pour out. Usually again I’d be in tears. I would marvel at what I wrote….and give gratitude to God for being with me. Further, my daily experiences in my work and with my family and friends have taken on a new dimension, especially since I am reflecting on them in a new light. I am still “lit up.”

I have a long way to go but I am on my faith journey, thanks to this introduction to Ignatian Spirituality which continues to resonate with me to my very core. I am looking forward to Sister Maria’s direction in this second semester. I am grateful for her and for everything.