

## SPIRITUAL DIRECTION CHECK-UP: AUTUMN 2014

I am drawn these days to a phrase of that fiery sixteenth-century Spanish Carmelite mystic Teresa of Avila, who writes: **“The world is on fire, and this is no time to be concerned with unimportant things.”**

She could have written this phrase this morning, and it would sound equally urgent.

As a person of Christian faith I am impelled to read the signs of the times through the lens of the Gospel. It’s not a matter of asking: “What would Jesus do?” Far more is at stake. I feel an urgency to stand in the place of the risen Christ himself, carrying, as I do, the breath of the Holy Spirit within me.

“I am impelled,” I say, because my only real freedom is to live the life that has *my* name on it, my authentic life in the risen Christ.

Spiritual direction explores the vast territory of our lives. And at some point that unique and often painful conversation of self with the larger world must come into

focus. We are far more accountable for the causes and responsible for the remedies of the world’s anguish than we realize.

Who will inspire others with the fragrance of the Gospel, if not us? Who will be the living expression of compassion, mercy, healing, and genuine hope, if not us? As Peter Maurin of the Catholic Worker movement would say, “How shall we create a society in which it is easier for people to be good?”

In our “holy conversations” I listen for evidence of the inbreaking of the reign of God. I want to hear what breaks your heart *because* it breaks the heart of God. What moves you to action in the cause of life, justice, mercy, and peace? I want to hear your stories.

Spiritual direction is the protected space where you are free to wrestle with the urgencies and invitations in your life as you strive toward expressing your deeper interior voice.

My closing word is inspired by the life of Dorothy Day: “Eat the Gospels. Devour them daily.”

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. How would I describe the times in which I live? In the world I encounter, who calls the shots? Who pays the price? What price?
2. What breaks my heart? What in the world feels hopeless? How do I act on those feelings of heartbreak and hopelessness?
3. What passages within the Gospels sustain me, or challenge me, or move me toward a larger way of being in the world and living for the sake of the world?

### NOTES FOR CONVERSATION

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