

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Description

Spiritual formation is at the heart of our formation program for the laity and distinguishes it from strictly academic-oriented opportunities. Class sessions integrate prayer and faith-sharing with the course content. Days of Reflection each semester provide extended periods of time for personal and communal prayer, reflection and dialogue. Resources for spiritual direction and various retreat experiences are posted on the Pastoral Institute website. Participants are also introduced to optional activities that will enhance their own self-understanding and spiritual growth.

Days of Reflection

Days of Reflection are scheduled every semester for each class. These sessions take place on Sunday afternoons in both Brooklyn and Queens so that participants have an option. Because spiritual formation is at the heart of the diocesan program, attendance on these days is mandatory. Extenuating circumstances are handled on an individual basis.

The themes for our Days of Reflection are:

First Semester:	The call to lay ministry and the spirituality needed to sustain it
Second Semester:	The call to prayer and the experience of different prayer forms
Third Semester:	Spirituality for evangelization
Fourth Semester:	The call to ministerial leadership
Fifth Semester:	Theological reflection on beginning a new ministry
Sixth Semester:	Theological reflection on the practice of ministry

Attention is given to providing a variety of presenters with particular expertise in spirituality and retreats. Locations are also carefully selected so that a prayerful environment enhances the experience.

Theological Reflection

Early in the program, participants are introduced to the theological reflection process that is used throughout their formation experience. The Days of Reflection each semester are designed around a process of making “faith sense” out of the experiences associated with the lay formation program.

A theological reflection process is also used in the fifth and sixth semesters while the participants are engaged in their supervised ministerial practicum.