



# Spirituality

What is it? What is it not?

The first appearance of spirituality in Scripture occurs in the story of Adam and Eve in the garden, which is early in the course of events. It was that first encounter God had with them. That is what spirituality is: our direct encounter with God. It is a first hand experience. Spirituality is not *about* God. Rather, it is the immediate encounter itself that we have *with* God as described in the Adam and Eve story in Genesis—an encounter with two-way communication.

Spirituality is not a secondary by-product of our religious experience. Rather, it is the origin of all that makes up our religious experience. All else evolves from our original encounter with the Holy One. Our Baptism is a case in point.

Unfortunately, one can be quite religious without any relationship with God. That can become extremely dangerous. Unmitigated travesties have been committed in the name of religion throughout history, including the present. Religion has to do with the way in which we live

our lives, whom or what we worship, and how we act out our beliefs.

Spirituality, on the other hand, which can also go astray, seeks to allow the Holy One to enter and direct our spirits, that part of our being that is created in God's own image. That image of God within us is where and how God hooks up with us. It is a spiritual connection, a receptacle through which God activates, energizes, nourishes and directs us.

Whenever we open this spiritual valve to God's Holy Spirit, all kinds of life changing powers flow into us.

Fine tuning of our spirits occurs. Our purpose in life becomes more apparent. New sources of strength for facing our pains and trials in life become available to us. Our lives as Christians become less matter-of-fact and much more meaningful. It is truly a win/win experience.

