

Spiritual Lives Of Women

You hardly have time for a shower let alone your life!



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Spiritual Lives Of Women

Helping women to SLOW down
Celebrate their Spiritual Selves

For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven. Ecclesiastes 3:1

Welcome to Spiritual Lives Of Women.

Carla Barnhill, editor of Christian Parenting Today, has written in her book: *The myth of the Perfect Mother: Rethinking the spirituality of Women*; that “Motherhood isn’t about the work involved in raising children...It isn’t a set of tasks or expectations, either...” it’s about relationships. Her book speaks to something many of us have known: That motherhood is not a job, an occupation, it is far more profound. Through motherhood women can find God, know God and relate with God in a far more intimate way than they have ever before. In the book *Authentic Catholic Woman*, by Genevieve Kineke, Ms. Kineke explores the model of spousal love in relation to the sacraments of Matrimony and Holy Orders. Her book speaks of the many ways women, within their roles as mother, (Queen), teacher, (Prophet), and nurturer, (Priest) can help create a deeper richer personal and societal culture. And finally: *Motherhood and God*, by Margaret Hebblethwaite, explores the spiritual connection of pregnancy, childbirth and mothering to see how these connections create a deeper understanding of God. I have used these three books as resources in creating Spiritual Lives Of Women and its programs. In each of the books perspectives we can see a full picture of motherhood as the hub of cherished relationships, as the source of edification, and as a spring board towards a life rich with purpose.

Spiritual Lives Of Women was created as a response to those Catholic/Christian mothers who felt, and feel, a great need to reconnect with God and themselves while dealing with the busyness of their lives as mothers, wives, workers and Daughters of God. As a spiritual director I work with mothers of children of all ages and I hear these moms complain that they have lost time for their spiritual lives, they have lost a sense of themselves and they have lost the direction in which they believe God has been calling them. These losses have come because the women have become so involved with their children, responsibility and “life”, that they feel they have become a role and no longer a person. They yearn to be reconnected: Reconnected to God, to themselves and life.

From this description one might be lead to believe that Spiritual Lives Of Women is a support group, it is not. There are fine support groups already for those women who feel a need. Rather Spiritual Lives Of Women holds to the maxim of spiritual direction: “Through God you are already healed, you now are in the process of realizing that healing.” Through an examination of Scripture Spiritual Lives Of Women helps the women discern God’s calling in their lives as mothers, wives, workers and Daughters of God; but it is not a Bible Study; though there are aspects of Bible study in the groups.

Spiritual Lives Of Women as a program has been designed to work in the group spiritual direction model. In group spiritual direction, we listen for God's voice with and through others. The process includes periods of silence, reflection on scripture or on a God-related question, time to speak about your faith journey, and time to listen contemplatively to others. Group spiritual direction isn't about giving or getting advice or solving each other's problems, but instead is a time to hold each other prayerfully in God's presence and trust that God's response is far richer and more healing than our own would be.

The program is also a celebration of motherhood and womanhood. Each season, our groups run from September to May, we begin with a retreat that sets the theme for the year. This year our retreat and theme is Mary Our Mothering Role Model. We are seeking to understand how God is calling each of us to fulfill the Divine Purpose He has for us. To help us achieve this Spiritual Lives Of Women, in its small gathering groups, retreats and times of renewal, will look at our mothering using Mary as our role model. Through her example we will explore how she lived out her calling as Priest, Prophet and Queen. We will learn from her how to be the gentle strong servant leader those roles call us to be. To assist us in understanding our individual spiritual nature and how that affects us as we strive to be strong gentle leaders Spiritual Lives Of Women employs the many techniques of spiritual direction, most importantly journaling, insightful discussion, prayer and meditation on Scripture. We will also look at the four basic spiritual personality models: Thomastic, Augustinian, Ignatian, and Franciscan, to help us determine our own spiritual personality. Using this knowledge we will be able to create prayer lives that fit us, create prayer practices that help us hear God's call, and help us to reach out to others in love and charity.

We journey on as we build community within our family and within our neighborhood, parish and city, reaching out through Acts of Mercy, Hope and Faith. To aid us in this endeavor the days of the week have been given a specific spiritual practice and activity using the Acts of Mercy, Hope and Faith. These simple acts can help us move closer to our goal of being in greater touch with ourselves, others and God. This will lead us as a group to support various Christian organizations, participate in community building activities such as clothing exchanges, praying for the new mothers of the parish, and choosing causes for our families to champion. Discernment will help us determine how we are to answer God's call in our lives and we will spend time learning its technique. Finally, as women we need bonds of deep true friendship and fellowship, so we will gather together for social and family cookouts, park play and anything that the Spirit moves us to do to help us bond as Sisters-in- Christ.

There will be times and circumstances that might prevent you from being able to join or participate in a group; Spiritual Lives Of Woman has taken that in account by creating a website with many opportunities to connect was Catholic/Christian women of faith. The site is designed to explore the spiritual practice of motherhood that we all share: On it you can participate by: downloading the latest version of Seasons the newsletter of Spiritual Lives Of Women, involve yourself in poll and web discussions, read the Group Gathering notes, learn what topic will be for the next Gathering, listen to the Podcast:

Chocolate for the Comfort of the Soul, obtain supplementary spiritual activities, and more. The website will contain resources for you, from: *Mom Recommendations* for and by other moms, *Book Shelf* with its reviews of books that help you create a deeper spiritual life, material on understanding your child's spiritual development, readings on ways to enhance your own spiritual life, to joining in the *Yahoo! Informational Chat* held every Wednesday from 9:00 to 11:00 AM, reading *Daily Spiritual Thoughts*, and signing up for *Weekly Personal Email Words of Encouragement*. You can also check out the calendar of events to learn of upcoming seminars, workshops and retreats around the Lansing area. There is a fee of \$4.00 a month to help defray the cost of materials and the upkeep of the website.

The Orthodox Church calls mothers Priest of the home and as priest of the home we nurture our "flock" spiritually and emotionally. Being Prophet, the Church has called us to be the first teachers of our children. And Queen reminds us that we, in concert with our husbands, have the authority over our resources and are establisher of the morals and values of our children. It is my hope that together we can find the support, strength and wisdom from one another as we journey toward our God and learn more about ourselves as mothers and believers to become, like Mary, that strong gentle servant leader.

July 2007

Blessings,

Wilson Perkowski

What is Spiritual Lives Of Women

Spiritual Lives Of Women is for Catholic moms and women who are seeking a deeper relationship with God

Spiritual Lives Of Women is for Catholic moms and women who wish to bring more spirituality into their lives.

Spiritual Lives Of Women is for Catholic moms and women who wish to understand their own spiritual growth and help those around them grow spiritually as well.

Spiritual Lives Of Women is for Catholic moms and women who wish to be of greater service to their community and wishes to build a better community for themselves, their family, their society.

Spiritual Lives Of Women is for Catholic moms and women who wish to spend time in spiritual renew refreshment and rejuvenation.

Spiritual Lives Of Women is for Catholic moms and women who wish to follow Mary by exploring her own pregnancy, birth and mothering experience to see how God is present in all of them.

Spiritual Lives Of Women is for Catholic moms and women who understand that like Moses they will not see the “promised land” their children will see but want to help those children to a mature spirituality.

What Spiritual Lives Of Women Is Not

Spiritual Lives Of Women is not counseling or psychotherapy. The focus of Spiritual Lives Of Women is to pay attention to and nurture the women and moms’ relationship with God.

- Spiritual Lives Of Women can not/will not provide emotional counseling.
- Spiritual Lives Of Women can not/will not provide therapy.
- Spiritual Lives Of Women can not/will not provide financial advice.
- Spiritual Lives Of Women can not/will not provide psychotherapy.

Spiritual Lives Of Women does not offer quick solutions. A Gathering Groups Leader cannot answer or solve all spiritual dilemmas, quandaries, and questions, nor are the groups, retreats, times of renewal designed to do that. No one can do another’s spiritual "work." The Gathering Groups Leader is also a mother who is a seeker rather than mother who has "arrived."

Spiritual Lives Of Women Is Not A Forum For Controversial Topics, Issues and Actions

- Spiritual Lives Of Women will not discuss feminist theology
- Spiritual Lives Of Women is not the appropriate forum to discuss the role of women in the priesthood
- Spiritual Lives Of Women will not endorse political issues
- Spiritual Lives Of Women will not endorse political candidates

Spiritual Lives Of Women Can Not Provide The Emotional Support Suitable For Those Deeper Emotional/Spiritual Issues

Those with complex emotional problems or dilemmas will need the assistance of a therapist or twelve-step groups. However, Spiritual Lives Of Women can work in tandem with therapy.

- Spiritual Lives Of Women is not appropriate for women with sexual abuse issues
- Spiritual Lives Of Women is not appropriate for women with post abortive issues
- Spiritual Lives Of Women is not appropriate for women with emotional issues
- Spiritual Lives Of Women is not appropriate for women with spousal abuse issues
- Spiritual Lives Of Women is not appropriate for women with marital issues

The Ethics Of Spiritual Lives Of Women

For the safety of all those who participate in Spiritual Lives Of Women must report any suspected abuse of a child, elder, participate, or vulnerable individuals.

What is the main purpose of Spiritual Lives Of Women

Spiritual Lives Of Women allows women to come share by:

- Providing a place for women to feel free to share the sacred story of their lives, dreams, hopes and needs without fear of judgment. In the gatherings we support each woman's unique calling, gifts and talents. We gather as a prayerful community to help each other on the journey God has called us to take.

Each woman and mother who joins receives the weekly gathering newsletter, (On-line as well), which includes:

- The weekly focus topic for a group gatherings
- Examination of the spiritual development of children of all ages
- Activities for Catholic family and personal enrichment

- Discussion and poll questions that participants can discuss in the gathering groups or on-line

There are also:

- Retreats specifically created for busy mothers and women
- Opportunities for the women and mothers to engage in deeper explorations of her faith

She also has access to Spiritual Lives Of Women on-line there she can:

- Download Seasons, the newsletter of Spiritual Lives Of Women
- Participate in Poll and Web Forums
- Read the Group Gathering notes for past and upcoming Gatherings
- Listen to the Pod cast: Chocolate for the Comfort of the Soul
- Read Mom Recommendations
- Read Book Shelf with its reviews of books
- For resources for understanding her own and her child's spiritual development, Participate in Yahoo! Informational Chat held every Wednesday from 9:00 to 11:00 AM
- Read Daily Spiritual Thoughts
- Sign up for Weekly Personal Email Words of Encouragement.
- Read the Calendar of events

She may also seek individualize spiritual direction for those spiritual issues she feels are not being addressed by, or too private for, the group.

Gathering Topics

Topic One: Introduction:

- a. Introduction and explanation of program
- b. Spiritual personality inventory
- c. Mary our motherly role model
 - Priest
 - Prophet
 - Queen

Topic Two: Exploring our spiritual strengths

- a. Understanding Each of Our Baptismal Calls and its role in Our Lives
- b. Understanding Our Spiritual Personality
- c. Understanding Our Children's Spiritual Development

Topic Three: Creating spiritual wisdom through Journaling and the benefits of each

- a. Dream
- b. Gratitude
- c. Prayer

Topic Four: Discovering God's call and discernment

- a. The five aspects of God's call.
- b. The types of calling
- c. The five steps and suggestions of discernment

Topic Five: Creating your spiritual place

- a. Creating a Spiritual Life that Works for You
- b. Spiritual personality revealed
- c. How Your Spiritual Personality Helps You Determine a Spiritual Practice that's Right for You

Topic Six: Building community within your family and with the world

- a. The power of community
- b. Personal mission, connected mission
- c. Each community building is unique
- d. Building the Kingdom of God

Topic Seven: Encouraging spiritual growth

- a. Living for Others Strengthens Us
 - Acts of Mercy
 - Acts of Hope
 - Acts of Faith
- b. Short Daily Spiritual Activities

Topic Eight: Keys to Discernment: The power of.....

- c. Our emotions
- d. Our words
- e. Our thoughts...to hear and understand God's call to us

Topic Nine Creating Strong Mothers

- a. You are What You Read
- b. You are What You Do
- c. You are What You See
- d. You are What You Say

Who is Patricia (Wilson) Perkowski

Wilson Perkowski Csd, BA

* Member of Spiritual Direction International

* Member of the Theophostic Prayer Ministry

I have been a practicing Spiritual Director since 1998. I have presented workshops

for Head Start, created support groups for Family Growth Center, taught parenting classes for Child Abuse Prevention Service was Director of Project Rachel and worked as a home visiting social worker with Catholic Social Service.

Schooling:

- * Aquinas College, Grand Rapids: Social Work
- * University of Maryland: Psychology
- * Saint Francis Religious Formation Center: Spiritual Direction

Community activity:

- * Member of the Lansing Area Spiritual Directors Planning group
- * Past member of Holy Cross Education Commission and Development Committee
- * Alternate member of St. Casimir Pastoral Council

Personal Information:

- * Married
- * Mother of four
- * Executive Director of Miracles Happen
- * Creator of Spiritual Lives Of Women
- * Director of Religious Education Holy Cross Parish
- * Member of Pastoral Council Saint Casimir Parish