

COMMUNITY DIMENSIONS OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

1. Spirituality is a joining of our awareness to *all* that is vibrant in life – one is fully conscious and prayerfully aware.¹
2. Spirituality must include *solitude* – whether retreating or finding a quiet corner, or a moment of stillness – in order to sustain the life in community to which one is called.² People are both individually distinct and at the same time deeply related to one another and to all things – knit together, body and spirit, in the interwovenness of the whole world and of all people.³
3. Spirituality needs to see both the goodness and the evil in the world, and to be conscious that the good and evil are also within one's own soul.⁴
4. Spirituality involves an awareness of heaven's company of light surrounding us on earth and that even in death one is not separated from others and the saints before us.⁵
5. Spirituality is not divided – that is, God is on one side, and one's life and the life of the world are on the other. Rather, in every moment and every place, one may look more deeply into life in order to more clearly see God – and community can be the place of God's deepest and sometimes most painful revelations to a person.⁶
6. Spirituality is *ecclesial* – this includes an understanding of Church, an awareness of community, and the life of the People of God.⁷ Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ – a Christian needs others because of Jesus Christ.⁸
7. Spirituality is *incarnational* – this implies a positive appreciation of the world and that which leads to an integration of the spiritual and temporal.⁹
8. Spirituality involves *service to the world* – this includes all forms of ministry to the Church and to the world.¹⁰

9. Spirituality (the spiritual life in man) necessitates *corporate experience* (a church) – where there is continuity, authority, loyalty, and common belief. A church or spiritual institution provides:

- (a) common practice and custom,
- (b) discipline and humbling submission to rule,
- (c) traditional and theological standard, and
- (d) missionary effort and enthusiasm.¹¹

10. Spirituality involves *an organized cultus* – some form of religious service. This may include the rituals of historic Christianity such as music, rhythmic chanting, symbolic gesture, and solemn periods of recited prayer. Consequently, there is a genuine loss in this respect for a person who is unchurched.¹²

¹ Philip Newell, “Spirituality, Community and an Individualist Culture”, *The Way Supplement* 84 (1995): 123.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 125.

⁴ Ibid., 124.

⁵ Ibid., 124-125.

⁶ Ibid., 125.

⁷ L. Doohan, “Church”, in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, ed. M. Downey (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 172.

⁸ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (London: SCM Press, n.d.), 10.

⁹ L. Doohan, “Church”, 172.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Evelyn Underhill, *The Life of the Spirit and the Life of Today* (Pennsylvania: Mowbray, 1994), 127-128.

¹² Underhill, *The Life of the Spirit and the Life of Today*, 135.