



# **POLICY COMMITTEE**

## **Best Practice Document**

# **BEST PRACTICES FOR QUALIFYING PESCADORES TO SERVE AS SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS**

**ORIGINAL DATE: Oct, 2015**

**REVISION DATE: July 4, 2023**

**APPROVED BY SECRETARIAT: July 15, 2023**

**DISTRIBUTED TO COMMUNITIES: August 16, 2023**

**NOTE:** This document supercedes "Clarification of Essentials as Related to Clergy in Leadership" (TDI-001 and as revised in 2015 and 2017)

## BEST PRACTICES FOR QUALIFYING PESCADORES AS SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS

**ISSUE:** The Policy Committee routinely receives inquiries from communities concerning what qualifications should be used to determine if a pescadore qualifies to serve as a Spiritual Director.

It should be noted that this document is NOT intended to impose any new mandates to the communities other than as already mandated by the Essentials. Its sole purpose is to provide information to be considered Best Practices that communities should seriously consider when choosing Spiritual Directors.

**HISTORY:** The Essentials are purposely vague in setting requirements for a pescadore to serve as a Spiritual Director; preferring to provide as much leeway as possible for the local communities to set their own standards. The minimum requirements set by the Essentials are as follows:

- Section 3.2.2: *“That the Spiritual Directors be qualified to teach and counsel in Spiritual Matters by his/her church or denomination.”*
- Section 3.2.3: *“That at least one of the Spiritual Directors on the Weekend be ordained, licensed or credentialed and be authorized to regularly celebrate Holy Communion by his/her church or denomination.”*

In addition, all team members, including clergy, are required to affirm their agreement with the “Qualifications for Community Leadership” and the “Tres Dias Statement of Belief” without qualification. These documents are found in the By-Laws of every Tres Dias community.

**DISCUSSION:** First and foremost we acknowledge that it is preferable to have currently serving Pastors serve as Spiritual Directors on Tres Dias weekends. All efforts should be made by local communities to engage the local churches in their area to participate in the Tres Dias experience at every level in their churches. That includes asking pastors to consider serving from time to time as Spiritual Directors on Tres Dias weekends.

We also recognize that there have been many changes in the Church over the years that Tres Dias has been in existence. During that time many independent churches have been born, and mainline denominations have undergone dramatic changes in qualifications for ordaining pastors (clergy). It is not Tres Dias International Secretariat’s position to pass judgment on what constitutes valid ordination in any church. We do, however, have an obligation to the Tres Dias Movement to promote best practices as to qualifications to serve as Spiritual Directors on Tres Dias weekends.

It is our belief that Tres Dias is a Christian renewal experience which is designed to put Christians more in touch with their connection to the risen Lord, Jesus Christ and with His body, which is the Church, so that these pescadores can go back, become actively involved, and lend support to their local churches and take their place of service in that local body.

Tres Dias is a non-denominational movement focused on our common beliefs as Christians. The tenants of our faith as outlined in Scripture and enumerated in the Apostles Creed form the basis of our Statement of Belief as Christians. If there are other differences that do not conflict with the Scripture as reflected in the Apostles Creed and the Tres Dias Statement of Belief; we take the position as outlined in Philippians 3:15-16, *"Therefore, all who are mature should think this way. And if you think differently about anything, God will reveal this to you also. In any case, we should live up to whatever (truth) we have attained."*

As noted above, Spiritual Directors who serve on Tres Dias weekends must be willing to subscribe and commit to the Tres Dias Statement of Belief without qualification as well as the Qualifications for Community Leadership. They must agree not to promote any denominational or doctrinal point of view which is not consistent with our statement of belief, to team or candidates.

Since we cannot pass judgment on the validity of ordination from one denomination or independent church to another, it is our position that while ordination is an indication of qualification to serve; it is not and should not be the only qualification. Nor should it be considered an automatic qualification.

Under advisement from the Policy Committee's Clergy Advisory Board, we believe that persons serving as Spiritual Directors on Tres Dias weekends must to be held to God's standards for Christian leadership as outlined in Scripture. As such we believe that there should be a Spiritual Director qualification process in every community before a Spiritual Director is confirmed to serve.

To that end, we strongly recommend that every community consider utilizing the following checklist as a tool to determine if a pescador qualifies to serve as a Spiritual Director.

NOTE: These are in addition to the requirement in the Essentials that the person *"be qualified to teach and counsel in spiritual matters by his/her church or denomination."*

- 1) Is the person ordained or serving in full-time ministry?
- 2) Can the person serve communion in his/her church?
- 3) Is the person known in the community?
- 4) Does the person have a Christian witness?
- 5) Does the person have a solid foundational knowledge of Holy Scripture?
- 6) Is the person willing to commit to the authority of the local Tres Dias Secretariat?
- 7) Is the person actively involved in ministry in their local church?

- 8) Does the person have the endorsement of their local church leadership?
- 9) Is the person willing to commit to serve in the local Tres Dias community on a regular basis?
- 10) Is the person willing to honor the cloister for the entire weekend?

**IMPORTANT:** These qualifications should be looked at as general guidelines and not as an "absolute" checklist. In other words, if a person is missing one or more of these qualifications it should not necessarily be a reason for disqualification.

The local community must ensure due diligence to determine qualifications are met through approved means discussed, reviewed and approved by the local community. We therefore recommend a Spiritual Director qualification process be put in place in each community to qualify Pescadores, whom the community determines would be good candidates, for Spiritual Director service.

**SELECTION PROCESS:** We recommend that each community set up a committee consisting of one or more trusted Spiritual Directors along with several lay members of the local Secretariat. This committee, with approval of the local Secretariat, would be empowered to create an application form, review all references and other qualifications, and then interview each candidate to determine their qualifications for this important role.

Because Tres Dias is designed to be an example of how clergy and laity work together:

- The clergy's role in this selection process should be limited to evaluating the candidate's knowledge of scripture, aptitude for spiritual counseling, assessment of their doctrinal base, confirm that they are in agreement with the Statement of Belief and Qualifications for Community Leadership, etc.
- On the same token, the role of the lay members should be limited to evaluating the candidate's personality and aptitude for collaborative team service, willingness to honor cloister, agreement that it's a lay led movement, etc.
- It is recommended that the clergy make a decision concerning the candidate's qualifications from their perspective, and the lay members make a decision from their perspective. If both groups agree, then the candidate should be selected to serve as a Spiritual Director. However, if the two groups cannot agree, then the candidate is likely needing further review at a later date by both group.

Once a person is qualified and serves as a Spiritual Director, the Essentials require that clergy not serve in lay leadership positions. In addition they are not to serve as a table leaders/silent professors. Our Clergy Advisory Board therefore recommends that clergy not be permitted to serve in any lay positions on any weekend.

For those communities who use a “Head” Spiritual Director on a weekend, our Clergy Advisory Board recommends the following:

- Have given a majority of the Meditations and Spiritual Director Rollos
- Have led each of the three daily communions; thus having served at least 3 weekends.

**GRANDFATHER CLAUSE:** Those communities who choose to adapt these Best Practices should seriously consider “grandfathering” currently serving Spiritual Directors without them having to submit to the new process.

## **SUMMARY**

**BASIC REQUIREMENTS:** These are long-standing requirements that apply to all Spiritual Directors:

- Meet the requirements of the Essentials Sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 as noted above.
- Spiritual Directors must be willing to subscribe and commit to Tres Dias Statement of Belief without qualification as well as the Qualifications for Community Leadership.
- They must agree not to promote any denominational or doctrinal point of view which is not consistent with our statement of belief, to team or candidates.

**BEST PRACTICES:** Please understand that, except for the items directly related to the Essentials, the positions stated in this Best Practice document are NOT MANDATES. Instead, they are our recommendations for effectively selecting potential Spiritual Directors. Although not every question or situation can be anticipated, the principles supplied in this document can be applied to making the best decisions:

- Although desirable, ordination should not be considered an automatic qualification when weighed against other attributes of pastoral ministry as noted in the list of qualifications above.
- The ideal is to utilize pastors who are currently active in ministry in a local church; understanding that this may not be feasible.
- The committee feels that using the guidelines above as tool/guide (not as an absolute measure) will provide significant insight into each candidate’s qualifications for the role of Spiritual Director.
- We strongly recommend that selection of Spiritual Directors be a joint effort between clergy and laity, with each having input into their own realms as

described above. Lay input MUST be involved in the selection process

- We recommend that Spiritual Directors NOT serve in any lay team position.
- Prayer, fasting and reliance on the Holy Spirit on important decisions is a priority and should be practiced by local communities to ensure excellence in candidate and team member care.

Respectfully re-submitted,

*Mike Shellman*

Mike Shellman  
Policy Committee Chair

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