

**SPIRITUAL DIRECTION AS A TOOL OF NURTURING AND DISCERNING  
VOCATIONS TO PRIESTHOOD IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MALINDI,  
KENYA**

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is a product of my own work and is not the result of anything done in collaboration. It has not been previously presented to any other institution. All sources have been appropriately cited and duly acknowledged in full.

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## **DEDICATION**

To all those who work in the ministry of vocations discernment, accompaniment, and formation.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I thank God for the gift of life and knowledge and for accompanying me in the entire process of writing this research.

I would like to thank my late Bishop Emmanuel Barbara (O.F.M.Cap) and our Diocesan Administrator Very Rev. Fr. Albert Buijs, for giving me the opportunity, support and time to complete my studies. I thank all my lecturers in the Institute of Spirituality and Religious Formation, for their dedication and inspiration throughout this research. I equally extend my appreciation to all my classmates for according me their support in many ways.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS**

<b>CCC</b>	Catechism of the Catholic Church
<b>CDM</b>	Catholic Diocese of Malindi
<b>EG</b>	Evangelii Gaudium
<b>GS</b>	Gaudium et Spes
<b>KCCB</b>	Kenyan Conference of the Catholic Bishops
<b>LF</b>	Lumen Fidei
<b>LG</b>	Lumen Gentium
<b>NACOSTI</b>	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
<b>OT</b>	Optatum Totius
<b>PDV</b>	Pastores Dabo Vobis
<b>PO</b>	Presbyterorum Ordinis
<b>SD</b>	Spiritual Direction
<b>VD</b>	Verbum Dei

## ABSTRACT

Many young men and women are often confused when it comes to choosing their vocations and careers. This study explored the use of spiritual direction as a tool of discerning and nurturing vocations to priesthood within the Catholic Diocese of Malindi, Kenya. The objectives of the study were: to investigate how spiritual direction is a means of discerning and nurturing vocations to priesthood; exploring the meaning of spiritual direction and discernment; identifying challenges in vocational discernment in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi, and to suggest appropriate strategies for addressing issues and challenges related to discernment and nurturing vocations to priesthood. The study was anchored and guided by Rulla's theory of psycho-social dynamics of Christian vocation. The research adopted a mixed method research design, which was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The target population was: 10 priests from across the diocese, 10 religious nuns from across the parishes, 10 parents, 12 seminarians, the vocation team (5), 20 Catholic male students (form IV) from different secondary schools in the diocese, and 40 Catholic male youth ranging between 18-25 years from various parishes. The sample size was 107. The study used stratified sampling procedure to get the required data for the study. Data was collected using a questionnaire and interview guide. The data collected were coded and analysed using Microsoft Excel Programme with tables, charts, and figures generated in Microsoft Word Programme. Some of the elements measured took into consideration the parishes of the respondents, age, gender, and academic levels. The data were summarized using descriptive statistics which included frequencies, percentages, and deviation means. The qualitative data was analyzed using themes based on the research objectives and presented in form of narratives using figures and tables. The study found that spiritual direction plays a crucial role in facilitating discernment, nurturing, fostering growth and guiding candidates to embrace the vocation to priesthood as confirmed by the majority of the respondents. However, the study noted that spiritual direction is not utilized fully in the discernment and nurturing of vocations to priesthood in the CDM. It was noted in the research that spiritual direction is not widely practised among the youth. The study concludes that spiritual direction should be popularised among the youth and that there should be good collaboration between the Pastoral agents and parents in helping the youth discern and nurture their vocations. The study recommended the necessity of adequate training of the vocation team in the Diocese on vocational discernment and accompaniment and enhancing spiritual direction skills in both the directors and directees.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0. Introduction

This chapter deals with the background information of the study, statement of the problem, research questions and objectives of the study, justification of the study, limitations of the study, definition of key terms, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, significance of the study, the scope and delimitation of the study, and definition of operational key terms.

### 1.1. Background to the Problem

According to Pope John Paul II (1992), “Each Christian vocation comes from God and is God's gift. However, it is never bestowed outside of or independently of the Church. Instead it always comes about in the Church and through the Church a luminous and living reflection of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.” The Church, “begetter and formator of vocations”, has the duty of discerning a vocation and the suitability of candidates for the priestly ministry. In fact, “the interior call of the Spirit needs to be recognized as the authentic call of the bishop.” This necessitates the use of the available means in guiding the young people in their vocational discernment.

Pope Benedict XVI in VD (#22) affirms that; each of us is enabled by God to hear and respond to His word. However, many young men are confused when it comes to discerning what God wants in their lives. The clergy, religious, and parents have a role to play in helping the young ones discover their purpose in life. Most of the times the young ones rely on their peers, the social media and other forms of support to discover their worth. These might be misleading and the end results disastrous.

What churches are doing to the youth is commendable. Still, the absence of church involvement in the lives and issues of many of these youngsters is conspicuous. Many of these linger in crises without religious care. Youth do yearn for much, but many have abandoned hope; impediments seem insurmountable. Through spiritual guidance we can strengthen them with hope to face their daily struggles and above all make better choices in life (Elizabeth, 2008). Amidst the contemporary challenges facing the youth, it would be appropriate to find ways of helping the youths find God in their daily struggles.

Spiritual direction requires that the director and directee - recognize that human ways are often not Gods ways. They must nurture a willingness to be divested, day by day, of anything that contradicts the ways of God. This implies learning to discern God's voice hidden in the chaos of other worldly voices. The worldly allurements seem to have a great impact amongst the youth. They therefore require some guidance from their parents and spiritual leaders in order for them make the right decisions. This is what Saint Ignatius meant by discernment, and this is the work of the director: It may be true that "the devil is in the details," but God is most certainly there too. Spiritual direction disciplines us to pay attention to the details where God dwells, because what we pay attention to, grows (Buckley, 2005, 54).

In his message for the 49th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, Pope Benedict said, "It is my hope that the local churches will become places where vocations are carefully discerned and their authenticity tested; places where young men and women are offered wise and strong spiritual direction." This affirms the role of the parishes in helping the young people in their vocational discernment.

The period of transition from childhood to adolescence, emerging adulthood, and adulthood for most young people is challenging and confusing. It may be a time of alienation and self-doubt when it seems that God may not even exist. This is true especially when one is about to make fundamental choices in life (Montgomery, 2004). Today, more than ever before, an increasing number of individuals are exploring spirituality and searching for ways to integrate the spiritual dimension into their lives. One of the first places seekers turn for help is to spiritual direction (Sperry, 2002, 1). One of the greatest difficulties in vocational discernment process especially the vocation to priesthood is learning to wait for God's timing.

St. Francis De Sales confirms the importance of spiritual direction. In his *Introduction to the Devout Life*, he says that for a person who seeks holiness, the most important thing is to find a good person to provide guidance. One can delude oneself into thinking, "I know my faults and my strengths and I can guide myself." But one would be wrong on both counts. Having a spiritual companion is therefore of paramount importance (Buckley, 2005, 47). St. Teresa of Avilla in her *Autobiography* (Ch. 13) also re-echoes the importance of having a spiritual director with good qualities.

Aylward Shorter (1991), in his reflections before the first African Synod, affirmed the importance of spiritual accompaniment. According to him, spiritual guidance must be taken very seriously. Candidates need to be initiated into the practice of a daily mental prayer that becomes a life-long habit, and into daily habits of Bible and Spiritual reading. They must also be drawn to appreciate the strength and beauty of frequent examination of conscience and confession. Without these, priestly holiness is impossible.

This research aided by Rulla's theory of Christian vocation, will explore the possibility of using spiritual direction in discerning and nurturing vocations to priesthood in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi. Having been the Vocations Director for Three years (2011-2013) and the youth Chaplain in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi, the researcher is convinced that Spiritual Direction is indispensable in discerning and nurturing vocations to Priesthood.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The discernment of vocations is not simply a venerable tradition. Now, more than ever, it is a central preoccupation of the Church. The discernment of vocations has been a recurring issue ever since the Church came into being. Bearing in mind Christ's words; "it was not you that chose me , it was I that chose you" (Jn. 15:16), the apostles were concerned, at the very first election from among the members of the Church, to make that the man replacing Judas should be the Lord's chosen one (PDV Ch.1).

The spiritual director's role begins, as always, by attending to the directee from within his/her frame of reference. The content of the spiritual direction session remains that which is appropriate to the spiritual direction covenant: prayer, relationships and decisions in light of God's call. But the spiritual director can attend to this content through a lens which includes an awareness of the individual's developmental stage. As the transition continues, the new meaning system frames an increasingly greater portion of the directee's life. The director then helps the directee with issues of self-identity in terms of the new vision of God's call (Liebert, 2000, 72).

Looking at the current pastoral environment in Malindi Diocese, it is clear to the researcher that immediate and aggressive efforts are needed on multiple fronts with regard to the promotion of vocations to priesthood. Pastoral Agents and parents are at a loss regarding

mentoring the youth and guiding them to make clear vocational choices. This is made even more difficult by the lack of involvement of the youth in church programmes. This research offers the means for helping them through spiritual direction to discern and nurture the vocation to priesthood. The study will also include the accompanying of the vocations of seminarians and on priest's on-going formation.

### **1.3. Research Objectives**

The study will seek to respond to the following general and specific objectives.

#### **1.3.1. General Objective**

The study will explore the possibility of using spiritual direction as a tool of nurturing and discerning vocations to priesthood (in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi, Kenya).

#### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives**

The study will be guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To investigate how spiritual direction is a means of discerning and nurturing vocations to priesthood in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi;
2. To explore the meaning of spiritual direction and discernment in general;
3. To identify the challenges in vocational discernment in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi;
4. To suggest appropriate strategies for addressing issues and challenges related to discernment and nurturing vocations to priesthood in the catholic diocese of Malindi;

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. How is spiritual direction a means of discerning and nurturing vocations to priesthood in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi?
2. What is the meaning of spiritual direction and discernment?
3. What are the challenges in vocational discernment in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi?
4. What strategies can be used for addressing issues and challenges related to discernment nurturing vocations to priesthood in the catholic diocese of Malindi?

#### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

All of us can and should pray for vocations, but that is not enough. Vocations must be discerned and promoted. Two significant places where this happens are the family and the parish. This study therefore will be very useful for the family and parishes in helping the young people discern their vocations. Every Catholic shares the responsibility to encourage young men and women to at least think about the possibility that God might be calling some of them to give their lives to Christ and to the building of the Kingdom of God in this way.

This study will help the priests, religious (pastoral agents), the vocation team, and parents in promoting and nurturing the vocations of young men to priesthood and other vocations. One thing each of us in the parish might do is to be aware of the potential vocations among our young people. The study will help the young people regain a sense of belonging to the Church. It will also help them recognise the connection between their unique potential and what they can contribute from within their particular life field toward the transformation of the world (Gratton,

1992). Finally, it will be beneficial for further researches as the findings are envisaged to be helpful in creating a healthier atmosphere for discernment and holistic growth.

## **1.6. Scope/Delimitations of the Study**

As at 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017, of the 26 Dioceses in Kenya, Malindi Diocese was the youngest having been created in the year 2000. The research will specifically be based on this diocese. The diocese has 17 parishes covering Kilifi County, Tana Delta and Lamu Counties. Mombasa Archdiocese, from which Malindi Diocese was carved from, will be used for pilot studies having been established more than 80 years ago. The study will deal with Diocesan Priesthood (Malindi Diocese) and not Religious Priesthood.

Theoretically, one major limitation in this study is that most of the young people in Malindi Diocese may not be fully aware what spiritual direction is in the first place. The young people may not be exposed to competent literature on spiritual direction and this may hinder the interactions with them. From the methodological point of view, some of the respondents might feel incompetent in responding to the questionnaires or the interviews.

## **1.7. Theoretical Literature Review**

The study will be anchored on Luigi M. Rulla's psycho-social dynamics of Christian vocation.

### **1.7.1. Psycho-Social Dynamics Theory of Christian Vocation**

The long years of research undertaken by Luigi Rulla (1922-2002) and his colleagues into the psychology of vocation culminated in two volumes, published in 1986 and 1989, entitled: *Anthropology of the Christian Vocation*. Rulla did empirical tests and conducted depth-psychological interviews with religious and seminarians, and was able to show that the decisions

regarding entry, perseverance and leaving were significantly influenced by unconscious motives. He thus developed the theory of vocational motivations to religious life (Rulla, 1971).

The theory is chosen because of its recognition of the human capacity in responding to the Christian Vocation and the challenges experienced. The theory is based on divine – Christian revelation and therefore very vital for the Spiritual directors to help the youth in discerning their vocations and respond to their vocations. The theory hence is indispensable in attaining the objectives of this study.

### **1.7.2. Christian Vocation and the Nature of Humanity**

According to Rulla, Christian Vocation is an unmerited gift. Humans can accept the call only because of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit within them. God's call touches two fundamental features of human nature. In the first place, human beings have a capacity to orient themselves to God, to go beyond themselves. This fundamental capacity within the human person for God-centeredness and self-transcendence is the basis not only of the divine call, but also of an innate sense of duty: the human duty towards objective values beyond the self as these values confront people during their lives (Rulla, 1976).

### **1.7.3. Psychology and the Christian Vision of Humanity**

If psychology is to be used fruitfully in Christian formation, it is of central importance—as Rulla sees the matter—that an operative model of the human person be established which can incorporate what psychology has to offer while at the same time honouring the theological reality of Christian vocation. Why the use of psychological approaches may at times lead to negative consequences, is often because people have taken on board, along with the psychological

method, a secularist vision of the human person underlying it, often only unconsciously (Rulla, 1971).

For Rulla, therefore, it is important that we pay attention to the differences between the Christian vision of humanity and the implicit visions of humanity informing humanistic psychologies. The Christian vocation to theocentric self-transcendence is in no way reconcilable with accounts of humanity which link its capacities of self-transcendence simply to personal fulfilment, or to social and political ends, rather than to an ultimate communion with God. Rulla's theory of Christian vocation therefore, orients the human person to ethical and religious values, and to a theocentric self-transcendence (Rulla, 1971, 22).

#### **1.7.4. Strengths of the Theory**

The empirical researches of Rulla and his collaborators in the Gregorian University's Institute for Psychology have shown that the spiritual motivation and development of priests and religious are decisively shaped by unconscious psychological dynamics. His Anthropology of the Christian Vocation and his other psychological researches have a pastoral purpose. He is trying to render our shared Christian life, and the apostolic mission of the Church and its institutions, more credible and trustworthy. These consequently will be very important in this study in trying to discern the motivations of the candidates to priesthood in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi.

Rulla propagates the promotion of freedom and maturity in discernment and response to the Christian Vocation. If this inner freedom and maturity are not there, the candidates to the various vocations will simply identify themselves with their vocational ideals, and adapt to conventional expectations and customs, but without really internalising the values of religious life in a process of spiritual growth.

### **1.7.5. Weakness of the Theory**

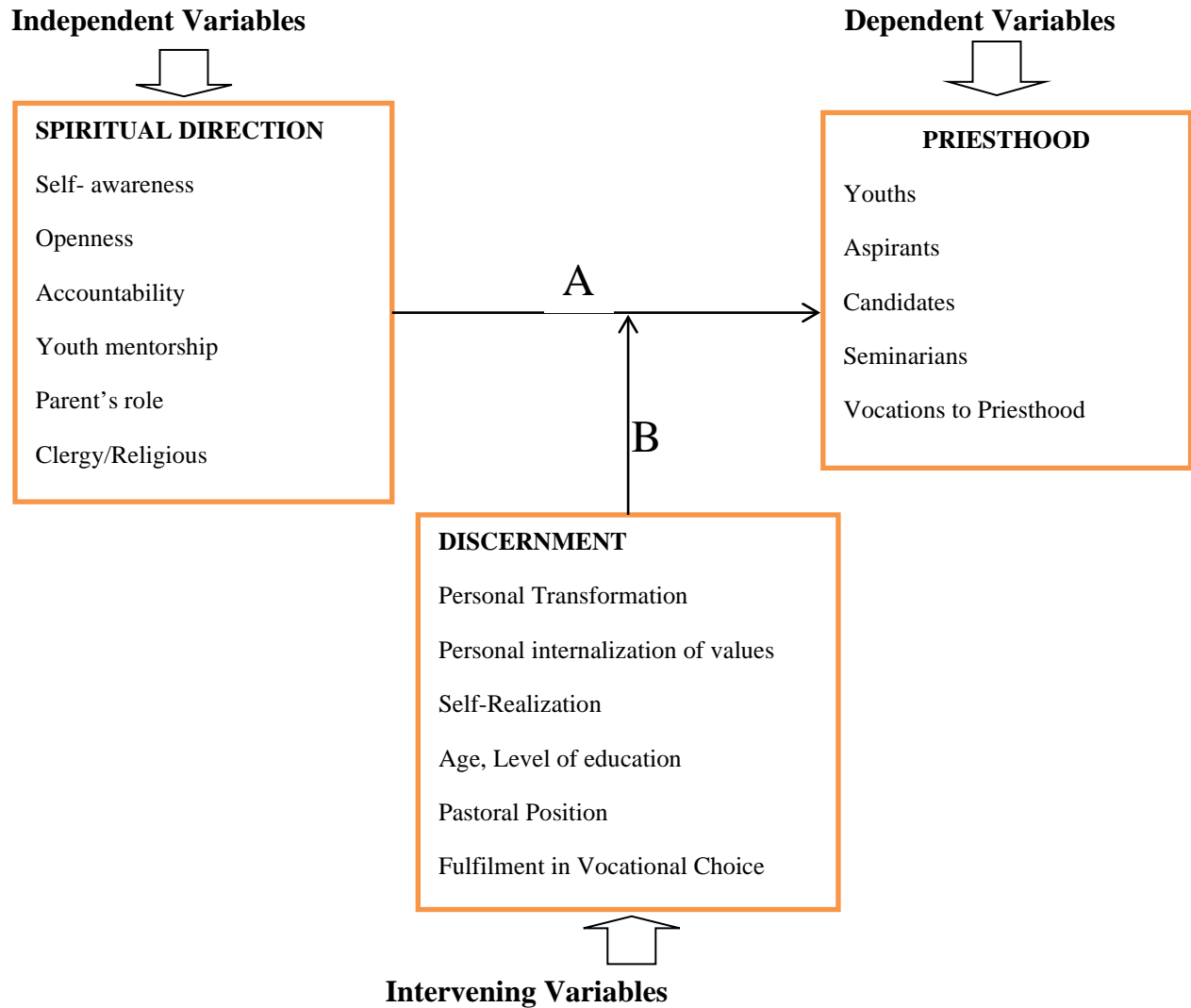
Rulla takes ‘theocentric self-transcendence’ as the starting-point and as the criterion for an adequate vision of the human person. He criticizes what he sees as the quasi-religious claims made by secular developmental theories. But then, conversely, he runs the risk of contrasting far too blatantly a theological concept like ‘theocentric self-transcendence’ with psychological categories. His researches were more concerned with the priests and the religious instead of focusing first on the young people grappling with issues of vocational discernment.

### **1.7.6. Justification and Application of the Theory in the Study**

Rulla’s theory of vocational self-transcendence offers pastoral agents and parents an opportunity to understand motivations behind religious and priestly vocations. This is very vital especially in spiritual direction.

## **1.8. Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework comprises of the following variables: independent variable, dependent variable and the intervening variable. The independent variable is spiritual direction. The intervening variable is discerning and nurturing while the dependent variable is the vocations to priesthood.



**Figure 1:1:** Conceptual Framework

**KEY:**

**Arrow A** indicates the connection between the Independent Variables and the Dependent Variables.

**Arrow B** indicates the Intervening Variables and how they link the Dependent and the Independent Variables.

## 1.9. Operational Definitions of Key Terms

<b>Discernment:</b>	It is the term used to refer to the judgment determining from what spirit (good /evil) the impulses of the soul emanate.
<b>Nurturing:</b>	To take care of, and protect someone or something.
<b>Priesthood:</b>	It is the Sacrament of Sacred Ministry in the Church.
<b>Spiritual Direction:</b>	Spiritual Direction is that function of the sacred ministry by which the Church guides the faithful in their relationship with God.
<b>Students:</b>	In this Thesis it means those in secondary schools.
<b>Young People:</b>	A generic term referring to the students and the youth.
<b>Youth:</b>	Young people who have finished high school or working.
<b>Vocation:</b>	A divine call to God's service or to the Christian life. A function or state in life to which one is called by God

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0. Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to review the empirical studies relevant to the topic of research that would enable a deeper theoretical understanding of the study. The literature review has been organized into four sections following the objectives of the study. The study reviewed literature on spiritual direction and vocational discernment, the general meaning of spiritual direction, the challenges in vocational discernment, and strategies in addressing issues and challenges related to discernment and nurturing of vocations to priesthood. After appraising the objectives, the chapter presents a summary of the reviewed literature as well as the research gap.

#### 2.1. Spiritual Direction and Vocation Discernment

The main focus of the XV Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> October 2018) was on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment. This shows how the issue of young people and vocational discernment is very important in the Church. Vocational discernment is the process by which a person makes fundamental choices, in dialogue with the Lord and listening to the voice of the Spirit, starting with the choice of one's state in life. The three verbs in *Evangelii Gaudium*, #51, used to describe discernment, namely, "to recognize," "to interpret" and "to choose", can be of assistance in mapping out a suitable itinerary for individuals or groups and communities, fully aware that, in practice, the boundaries in the different phases are never clearly delineated.

In furthering vocational discernment Pope John Paul II (1992) affirms that, in discernment, and throughout the entire process of formation for ministry, the Church is moved by two concerns: to safeguard the good of her own mission and, at the same time, the good of the

candidates. In fact, like every Christian vocation, the vocation to the priesthood, along with a Christological dimension, has an essentially ecclesial dimension: “Not only does it derive `from' the Church and her mediation, not only does it come to be known and find fulfilment `in' the Church, but it also necessarily appears – in fundamental service to God – as a service `to' the Church. Christian vocation, whatever shape it takes, is a gift whose purpose is to build up the Church and to increase the kingdom of God in the world” (PDV Ch.1). Vocation as a gift therefore, must be nurtured with care by those entrusted by the Church.

The history of every priestly vocation, as indeed of every Christian vocation, is the history of an inexpressible dialogue between God and human beings, between the love of God who calls and the freedom of individuals who respond lovingly to him. These two indivisible aspects of vocation, God's gratuitous gift and the responsible freedom of human beings, are reflected in a splendid and very effective way in the brief words with which the evangelist Mark presents the calling of the Twelve: Jesus “went up into the hills, and called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him” (Mk. 3:13). On the one hand, we have the completely free decision of Jesus; on the other, the “coming” of the Twelve, their “following” Jesus (DV#36).

Vocational discernment is not accomplished in a single act, even if, in recounting the development of a vocation, identifying specific moments or decisive encounters is possible. As for all important things in life, vocational discernment is a long process unfolding over time, during which one continues to monitor the signs used by the Lord to indicate and specify a vocation that is very personal and unique. The discernment of vocations is not simply a venerable tradition either. Now, more than ever, it is a central preoccupation of the Church (PDV Ch.1).

The director is at the service of the person he directs, and this service has its own precise and inescapable conditions. He carries out his work as a facilitator, and this means that he must make the one directed aware of his responsibilities while under no circumstances acting as a substitute for him. The decision of the one under direction must remain entirely personal. The director may not take advantage of his knowledge, his experience, his function, or the grace of his state of life to go beyond the task allotted him in the process of discerning a vocation, for by doing so he usurps the rights of the competent superiors and their possible delegates and also deprives the candidate of his liberty, by acting as a substitute for him. All he can do is to help the candidate perceive clearly the movements of grace, so that the candidate may decide with full knowledge of the case and act upon what he knows (Hostie, 1963, 33).

PDV highlights the important roles of different groups involved in vocational discernment as explained below.

**Young People:** According to PDV (#65-68), without exception in pastoral activity, young people are not objects but agents. Oftentimes, society sees them as non-essential or inconvenient. The Church cannot reflect such an attitude, because all young people, without exception, have the right to be guided in life's journey. Consequently, each community is called to be attentive to young people, especially those who are experiencing poverty, marginalization or exclusion and lead them to become involved in life. The Church herself is called to learn from young people. Many Saints among youth give shining testimony to this fact and continue to be an inspiration for everyone.

**Community:** The entire Christian community should feel the responsibility of educating new generations. In fact, many Christians involved in this work deserve recognition, beginning

with those who have assumed this responsibility within ecclesial life. The efforts of those who bear testimony every day to the goodness of the Gospel life and the joy that flows from it should equally be admired.

**People of Reference:** The role of credible adults and their cooperation is basic in the course of human development and vocational discernment. This requires authoritative believers, with a clear human identity, a strong sense of belonging to the Church, a visible spiritual character, a strong passion for education and a great capacity for discernment. Sometimes, however, unprepared and immature adults tend to act in a possessive and manipulative manner, creating negative dependencies, severe disadvantage and serious counter-witness, which can even intensify to the level of abuse.

**Parents and Family:** The irreplaceable educational role played by parents and other family members needs to be acknowledged in every Christian community. In the first place, parents in families express each day God's care for every human being through a love which binds them to each other and to their children. In this regard, Pope Francis has offered valuable information in a specific chapter on the subject in *Amoris Laetitia* (#259-290).

**Shepherds of Souls:** Meetings with clergy, who have the ability of a genuine involvement with youth by dedicating their time and resources, and consecrated women and men through their unselfish witness, are decisive in the growth of new generations. In this regard, Pope Francis said: "I ask this especially of the Pastors of the Church, the Bishops and the Priests: you are the ones principally responsible for Christian and priestly vocations and this task cannot be relegated to a bureaucratic office. You too have experienced an encounter that changed your life, when another priest — a parish priest, a confessor, a spiritual director — helped you

experience the beauty of God's love. Thus, you too: going out, listening to young people — it takes patience! — You can help them understand the movements of their heart and guide their steps” (Pope Francis’ address to Participants in the International Conference on Pastoral Work for Vocations, 21 October 2016).

**Teachers and Other Persons in Education:** Many Catholic teachers are involved as witnesses in universities and schools in every grade and level. Many are also ardently and competently involved in the workplace. Still other believers are engaged in civil life, attempting to be the leaven for a more just society. Many engaged in volunteer work devote their time for the common good and the care of creation. A great many are enthusiastically and generously involved in free-time activities and sports. All of these people bear witness to the human and Christian vocation which is accepted and lived with faithfulness and dedication, arousing in those who see them a desire to do likewise. Consequently, responding generously to one’s proper vocation is the primary way of performing pastoral vocational work.

It is clear from the foregoing that adequate knowledge and practice of spiritual direction is important in Vocational Discernment among the youth. However, the literature studied did not indicate how the youth should be inducted in the practice of spiritual direction.

## **2.2. The Meaning of Spiritual Direction and Discernment**

According to the Catholic Encyclopaedia, spiritual direction is that function of the sacred ministry by which the Church guides the faithful to the attainment of eternal happiness (<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/discernment-spiritual>).

It is part of the commission given to her in the words of Christ: “Go, therefore, teach all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19). She exercises this function both in her public teaching, whether in word or writing, and in the private guidance of souls according to their individual needs; but it is the private guidance that is generally understood by the term “spiritual direction”. The focus of spiritual direction is on experience, not ideas, and specifically on religious experience. Spiritual direction thus deals with one’s relationship with God (Barry and Connolly, 1982, 9).

Reiser in his book, *Seeking God in all things* (2004) affirms that spiritual direction might take place in a group setting or as one-on-one. It can be formal or informal (p. 21). In this study we shall limit ourselves to one-on-one spiritual direction: approaching someone for the express purpose of seeking direction.

That God directs all things is a clear teaching of our faith and well attested to in Sacred Scripture. The Bible has many references to God’s all-powerful guidance of his creation, but perhaps none more extensive than the final chapters of the Book of Job. Also the Epistle to Ephesians tells us, in a very mysterious statement, “We are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the purpose of carrying out those good works which God has prepared beforehand” (Eph. 2:10) (Kelly, 1993, 12). Our desires energize the spiritual quest and lead us to God. Of even greater surprise is the possibility that God longs for us much more than we do for God. Desire is so present in human experience in spiritual experience that spiritual directors are likely to spend a considerable amount of time exploring and even focussing directee’s desires. Directors need to develop great skill in recognizing and responding to their directee’s desire for God and in helping directees uncover illusory desires (Ruffing, 2000, 9).

The Primary Spiritual Director therefore, is God Himself. The human spiritual director helps the directee discern God's will in his /her life. There are numerous challenges however in this process that needs to be overcome by both the director and the directee in order to have a fruitful direction. In this study however, we shall not dwell much on the challenges but on the positive influence of the process of spiritual direction.

### **2.2.1. Spiritual Direction and Prayer**

Spiritual directors need to be people of prayer and be familiar with literature about prayer. If directors are trained to notice the Holy and help their directees tend the Holy, they also must be faithful to their relationship with God. Spiritual growth and transformation are not primarily fostered by a particular form of prayer, but by the intentional and disciplined practise of prayer. Spiritual directors need to be able to teach basic prayer practises that are organically related to the lives of their directees. By listening carefully to the directee's affective interior movements and for the significant aspects of their narrative, the director invites the directee to notice how God is present. The focus during their time together is on the directee's relationship with the Divine (Buckley, 2005, 47).

Francis de Sales urges his readers to "most insistently beseech God to provide you with (a guide) after his own heart". Once you have found such a person, do not look upon him or her as a mere mortal. Listen to him rather as the voice of God. "God will put into his heart and mouth whatever is requisite for your welfare. Hence you must listen to him as an angel who comes down from heaven to lead you". A good guide to holiness is a rare thing, Francis insists. "There are fewer men than we realize who are capable of this task".

He requires charity, knowledge and prudence (De Sales, 1949). Spiritual direction and prayer therefore, go hand in hand.

Merton (1960) gives us an insight of the indispensability of spiritual direction in vocation discernment. He states: “Spiritual direction is therefore a continuous process of formation and guidance, in which a Christian is led and encouraged in his special vocation so that by faithful correspondence to the graces of the Holy Spirit, he may attain to the particular end of his vocation and to union with God” (p.13). It is the seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit in a given psychological or spiritual situation. The director and the directee are parts of a spiritual direction, a current of spirituality, a divine-human process of relationship (Leech, 2001).

### **2.2.2. Spiritual Direction and Theology**

According to Barry (2004) tradition has consistently taught that everyone who wants to develop his or her relationship with God is well advised to seek the help of someone else, even granted that the ultimate spiritual director is the Holy Spirit (p.90). All ministries in the Church must have as its ultimate aim to facilitate the move toward developing communities of shared experience of God’s own community life. Here we have the theological ground for a strong statement in the practise of spiritual direction. It helps people to pay attention to and to share with another member of the community experiences of God, and, in the process, to learn how to discern what is authentically of God from what is not. In this way, they also learn how to talk about their experiences of God with other members of the community. The ministry of spiritual direction, thus, is formative of the religious community God desires (p.92).

Reiser (2004) argues that spiritual direction can be described as practical in nature, but behind the practise there lies a theory-or better, a theology.

First and foremost, spiritual direction rests upon a theology of revelation. Secondly, spiritual direction rests upon a theology of the Church. The Church, like the process of revelation, is not an abstraction but a reality that we experience and that which shapes us into what we are. A person cannot claim to be Christian and pretend to have no connection with or dependence upon those who have followed Jesus before us. Thus the director stands in the tradition of belief and practise.

Spiritual direction presupposes, thirdly, that the one giving direction has grasped in its totality the sacred narrative of Christian faith that comes to us in the Sacred Scriptures and especially in the Gospels. Finally, the practise of spiritual direction presupposes an understanding of what it means to be human and thus incorporating theological anthropology. We come from God. We live, move, and have our being in God (pp. 1-8).

### **2.2.3. Different Perspectives on Spiritual Direction from Selected Catholic Saints**

**Saint Francis De Sales:** St. Francis writes, in his *Introduction to the Devout Life* (Part III, c. 28), that no one can be an impartial judge in his own case because of a certain self-complacency “so secret and imperceptible that it remains hidden to those who suffer from it”. St. Francis of Sales says that a good director “must be full of charity, of knowledge, and of prudence”, if one of these three qualities be wanting in him, there is danger. Knowledge is required of the spiritual life and of the means which lead to union with God: prudence is essential for the practical application of principles to the individual being directed: fervent charity is required so that the director inclines his will towards God and not towards himself, leading souls to God and not to himself.

This spirit of sincere and fervent charity is opposed to sentimentality which is merely pretence of love existing in the emotions and hardly at all in the will (Introduction to the Devout Life, Part I, c. 4).

**Saint Ignatius of Loyola:** St. Ignatius of Loyola is best known for his Spiritual Exercises and the founding of the Society of Jesus in 1540, better known today as the Jesuit Order. The Spiritual Exercises are a four week retreat, meditating on the life of Jesus. St. Ignatius utilized contemplative prayer and imaginative prayer in the Spiritual Exercises (Martin, 2010).

Muldoon (2004) provides numerous examples of Ignatian Contemplation including Jesus baptism, temptation in the desert, call of the disciples, the beatitudes, on the sea of Galilee, the raising of Lazarus, washing of feet, the Last Supper, Gethsemane, Peters denial, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and Emmaus. These examples in Muldoon parallel the directions in St. Ignatius Spiritual Exercises regarding the use of imagination in Ignatian contemplation of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Ignatian contemplation provides awareness of the life of Christ as an example for our lives, how God moves in our lives, walking with Jesus through his final days, and how the resurrection changes the meaning of Jesus' death and the meaning of life. God calls us to greater life, passing through death.

According to Saint Ignatius, the minister as spiritual director works knowing that one aspect of the hearts' activity, such as the emotions, thinking, or willing, can be overemphasized. By focusing on the phenomena of desiring, a harmonious coalescing of the heart's activities can be seen occurring in the directee's relationship with the Holy Spirit. Attending to this relationship is really the only reason for spiritual direction (Horn, 1996, 144).

**Saint Teresa of Avila:** St. Teresa in her Autobiography (Ch.13) also re-echoes the importance of having a spiritual director with good qualities. The spiritual director's charity must be free of all desire for personal advantage; he must not attract souls to himself but to God. Beginners in spiritual direction should imitate the practice of St. Teresa and always use some spiritual book for their meditation. They should be advised by their director to choose those subjects which incite them to greater devotion, and to pause and dwell on those points which make a stronger appeal to their affections, so that they may make penetrating acts of faith. Meditation should not occupy the whole time of mental prayer. When souls establish themselves in prayer they find it extremely difficult to renounce their original conversion to God.

**Saint John of The Cross:** According to St. John of the Cross, at times, the directee experiences some trials in his quest to have deep communion with God. According to him, this period of aridity, when prolonged and accompanied by spiritual progress, coincides with the passive purification of the senses, which marks the passage of the soul to its “second conversion”, to the illuminative way of proficients, in which begins infused contemplation proceeding from the virtue of faith enlightened by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The spiritual director must do all in his power to encourage the soul to remain faithful to its prayer and Holy Communion (McKee, 2006).

According to St. John of the Cross, (*The Dark Night, I, c. 9*), the spiritual director should attend to three signs which indicate the transition of the soul from discursive meditation to the beginning of infused contemplation. This higher form of prayer is not to be attributed to the soul's own efforts aided by sanctifying grace but to the virtue of faith perfected by the gifts of the Holy Ghost: that is to say, it results from a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, a special grace

under the influence of which the soul does not move itself but is moved by the third Divine Person.

#### **2.2.4. Discernment**

According to the Catholic Encyclopaedia, “Discernment” is the term given to the judgment whereby it is possible to determine from what spirit the impulses of the soul emanate, and it is easy to understand the importance of this judgment both for self-direction and the direction of others (<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/discernment-spiritual>).

Christian ascetical tradition has adopted from two places in the New Testament (1 Cor. 12.10; 1 Jn. 4.1) the formulas “discernment of spirits, to discern spirits”. In Jewish literature such formulas do not appear until the *qumran* period, when they are applied uniquely to the testing of candidates for the monastic community: “Each year their spirit and actions shall be examined to promote each candidate, should his formation and the perfection of his conduct warrant it, or, to demote him in view of his faults” (Schneiders, 1982). This discernment supposes the principle that two spirits may possess man, the spirit of good and the spirit of evil; its purpose is the community's good order; its execution is by an “expert” invested with an official duty; its norm is conformity to a set of rules. There is no question yet of a spiritual experience as a source of one's own conduct. The spirit is not conceived as a power one invokes or with whom one communes, but as an asset from which one may profit.

In the Middle Ages, St. Thomas Aquinas introduced an important distinction between simple *discretio*, which he rarely treats, and the charism of *discretion spirituum*, an extraordinary gift allowing a man who enjoys it to know future contingents or secrets of hearts (*Summa*

*Theologiae* 1a2ae, 111.4). Simple discernment becomes, then, a potential part of the virtue of prudence. It intervenes when duty is not clearly indicated by the ordinary norms for acting. The Christian should then be guided by more elevated and more interior principles. By the virtue of prudence, grace grants him a habitual skill in judging, by which he discerns the divine will behind the common rules of Christian living. Thus, St. Thomas avoids using the word "discernment" and attributes to the "virtue of prudence" the task of perpetuating the constant teaching of spiritual authors (2a2ae, 51.4).

St. Ignatius of Loyola began to learn about the discernment of spirits while convalescing from serious battle injuries. For St Ignatius, spiritual consolation and desolation are major elements of the experience of spiritual life and the discernment of God's will therein. He noticed different interior movements as he imagined his future. In his autobiography, Ignatius writes (in the third person) that: he did not consider nor did he stop to examine this difference until one day his eyes were partially opened and he began to wonder at this difference and to reflect upon it. From experience he knew that some thoughts left him sad while others made him happy, and little by little he came to perceive the different spirits that were moving him; one coming from the devil, the other coming from God (Autobiography, #8).

The key question in interpreting consolation and desolation is: Where is the movement coming from and where is it leading me? Spiritual consolation does not always mean happiness. Spiritual desolation does not always mean sadness.

Sometimes an experience of sadness is a moment of conversion and intimacy with God. Times of human suffering can be moments of great grace. Similarly, peace or happiness can be illusory if these feelings are helping us avoid changes we need to make (Horn, 1996, 154).

Contemporary discussions on discernment build on the long history of the discernment of spirits in the Christian tradition. This is done through: an assessment of inspirations, intuitions, impulses and affective states in general, and an appraisal of their congruity with the overall direction of a person's life. Discernment focuses on God's action in life and man's appropriate response to that action. It allows an individual to become more aware of the elements involved in personal decision making. Discernment results in a better knowledge of the self and a better knowledge of the various influences which affect the self in its movement toward God. In addition, contemporary authors explore such topics as a foundational structure for Christian discernment, the relationship of interpretation and discernment, and the role of discernment in moral life (Gustafson, 1981).

Literature in this section has demonstrated the meaning of spiritual direction and Discernment adequately. The studied literature however, lacked practical implications of the process of spiritual direction.

### **2.3. Challenges in Vocational Discernment**

The vocational scenario is making drastic geographic shifts in the universal church which raise hopes and at the same time pose new challenges. There is greater awareness in the Church of the importance of vocational discernment adapted to the changes in the church and the society.

The preparatory document for the 2018 Synod on the Youth (*Instrumentum Laboris*), affirms that today's generation of young people live in a world which is different from that of their parents and educators. Economic and social changes have affected the gamut of obligations and opportunities. Young people's aspirations, needs, feelings and manner of relating to others have changed as well. Furthermore, from a certain point of view, young people, because of

globalization, tend to be more homogeneous in all parts of the world. Nevertheless, they remain in their local surroundings and their unique cultural and institutional settings, which have repercussions in the process of socializing and forming a personal identity.

The challenge of multi-culturalism is present in a special way in the world of young people. The economic and social hardship of families, the way in which young people adopt certain characteristics of contemporary culture becomes a major challenge. The impact of new technologies on the other, hand requires a major responsibility in responding. This is the educational emergency highlighted by Pope Benedict XVI in his Letter to the City and the Diocese of Rome on the Urgency of Educating Young People (21 January, 2008). On the global level, inequalities between countries need to be taken into account as well as their effect on the opportunities offered to young people. Furthermore, cultural and religious factors can lead to exclusion by, for example, gender inequality or discrimination against ethnic or religious minorities, which drive the most enterprising among the young to revert to emigration.

The global village of interdependence and diversity is evident every day. The increasingly multicultural and interreligious character of cities and neighbourhoods is evident in our societies. We are all challenged to meet and embrace diversity. Spiritual directors and directees are not exempt from these experiences since they accompany or are accompanied by those diverse in culture, religion, gender, race and ethnic background, sexual identity, economic class, and age cohort (PDV).

Merton (1960) writes on some other challenges that can be experienced in spiritual direction. Some people lament the fact that they cannot find a suitable director (p. 30). It takes courage to face oneself in the presence of another person. But this is needed to advance in the

spiritual life. Youth shy off from sharing their experiences to the clergy and the religious. A major challenge for the director is self-knowledge and self-awareness. This is a constant topic in the literature of the Christian spiritual tradition and other religious traditions. Augustine of Hippo prayed, “O unchanging God, this is my prayer: let me know myself and let me know you.” Teresa of Avila wrote often of the importance of self-knowledge as the foundation of the life of prayer (Kavanaugh, 1979).

Questions that facilitate this self-knowledge and self-awareness are these: Who am I? What is my cultural background, my religion, my racial and ethnic identity? What does it mean for me to be a woman, man, heterosexual, single, married? What generational age cohort do I belong to, and how does it shape my worldview? How does my economic class inform my choices? Some directors have lived all their lives in one culture, while others have moved in and out of various cultures, learning new languages and world views. Geertz (1973) asserts that “there is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture”. The ideas, values, convictions, ways of organizing life are all human creations; they were shaped at some historical moment, evolve, and change (p. 49).

#### **2.4. Strategies in Responding to the Challenges of Vocational Discernment**

According to PDV (#38-40) a vocation is a fathomless mystery involving the relationship established by God with human beings in their absolute uniqueness, a mystery perceived and heard as a call which awaits a response in the depths of one's conscience, which is “a person's most secret core and sanctuary. There, one is alone with God whose voice echoes in his “depths” (106). But this does not eliminate the communitarian and in particular the ecclesial dimension of vocation. The Church is also truly present and at work in the vocation of every priest.

The Church should daily take up Jesus' persuasive and demanding invitation to “pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Mt. 9:38). Obedient to Christ's command, the Church first of all makes a humble profession of faith. In praying for vocations, conscious of her urgent need of them for her very life and mission, she acknowledges that they are a gift of God and, as such, must be asked for by a ceaseless and trusting prayer of petition. This prayer, the pivot of all pastoral work for vocations, is required, not only of individuals but of entire ecclesial communities.

In addition, the liturgy, as the summit and source of the Church's existence (SC, 10) and in particular of all Christian prayer, plays an influential and indispensable role in the pastoral work of promoting vocations. The liturgy is a living experience of God's gift and a great school for learning how to respond to his call. As such, every liturgical celebration, and especially the Eucharist, reveals to us the true face of God and grants us a share in the paschal mystery, in the “hour” for which Jesus came into the world and toward which he freely and willingly made his way in obedience to the Father's call (Jn. 13:1). It shows us the Church as a priestly people and a community structured in the variety and complementarity of its charisms and vocations.

In carrying out her educational role, the Church aims with special concern at developing in children, adolescents, and young men a desire and a will to follow Jesus Christ in a total and attractive way. This educational work, while addressed to the Christian community as such, must also be aimed at the individual person: Indeed, God with his call reaches the call of each individual, and the Spirit, who abides deep within each disciple (1 Jn. 3:24), gives himself to each Christian with different charisms and special signs. Each one, therefore, must be helped to

embrace the gift entrusted to him as a completely unique person, and to hear the words which the Spirit of God personally addresses to him (PDV).

Offering others the gifts that one has received means accompanying them and walking beside them on their journey as they deal with the weaknesses and difficulties in their lives, and especially supporting them in the exercise of freedom which is still being formed. Consequently, the Church, beginning with her Pastors, is called to make a self-examination and to rediscover her vocation of caring for others (especially the youths) in the manner recommended by Pope Francis at the beginning of his pontificate: "...caring [and] protecting demand goodness; [they] call for a certain tenderness". In the Gospels, Saint Joseph appears as a strong and courageous man, a working man, yet in his heart we see great tenderness, which is not the virtue of the weak but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love." (Homily at the Beginning of the Petrine Ministry of the Bishop of Rome, 19 March 2013).

The Dioceses should view the ministry of spiritual direction as valid and necessary, and should be committed to the on-going training courses and support of all who offer the ministry of spiritual direction. This ministry will not only offer solutions to our subject of study, but also be part of pastoral care to all the Christian faithful. Consequently, the laity should be enlightened on what spiritual direction is and its importance in their spiritual maturity. Spiritual direction is a vital element within the overall life and ministry of the Diocese and of the Church. It is important that this ministry is made more widely accessible and known to all (PDV).

From the pastoral point of view, the Christian youth of today must not only be taught God's word, they must be mentored in ways to apply the word to their lives. They must be

inspired to live more like Christ, remembering Jesus is the model (Lk. 2:48-52). Training youth in what it means to be excellent will equip and inspire them to be excellent leaders in the future. Christian youth must be taught *how to be doers of the word* (James. 1:21-26) not just how to come and sit an audit the Bible classes and training sessions. Youth need to be taught how to set and reach meaningful spiritual goals.

Lippman (2015) asserts that, mentoring programs are especially important for life-skills development. Soft life-skills “refer to a broad set of skills, competencies, behaviours, attitudes, and personal qualities that enable people to actively navigate their environment, work well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals”. These skills can be as important as academic and technical achievements. Some of the key soft skills for youth workforce success are communication, self-control, positive self-concept, and higher-order thinking skills. This is consequently true in spiritual mentorship and spiritual direction especially in vocational discernment.

PDV and other relevant literature have demonstrated some strategies in responding to vocational discernment challenges which we have elaborated above. However, in the Diocesan set-up the challenges of Vocational Discernment still remain. Spiritual Direction is taken as a routine or a duty to be fulfilled and therefore does not yield the expected results.

## **2.5. Knowledge Gap**

From the foregoing literature review and analysis, a knowledge gap is explicit with respect to the following: Spiritual direction seems to be mainly a preserve of the clergy and the religious. The laity often feels that they are incompetent in terms of guiding and being guided in

spiritual matters. Discernment and nurturing vocations is not a common feature in spiritual direction although the former cannot be fruitful without the latter.

The literature review does not treat spiritual direction for the youth exclusively. The youth are a unique group in the Church with their special needs and therefore special attention to their needs is vital. In the study, not much has been highlighted on the formation of clergy and religious on spiritual direction. Priests are not taught in the Seminary how to be spiritual directors, or how to benefit from spiritual direction. This is a serious shortcoming and should be remedied. In something that is so important, almost by default, seminarians and priests are left to learn this important art by doing without any help from our rich Christian tradition and experience over the years. It is therefore important to stress the importance of studying and acquiring the necessary skills on spiritual direction for discerning and nurturing vocations to priesthood.

Other works of literature reviewed in this study have shown the necessity of spiritual direction in fostering the growth of candidates to priesthood towards a greater awareness of their own fears, gifts, identity, prospects, strengths, and weaknesses. Through spiritual direction, they learn to listen to their conscience, to judge the interior urges that motivate their actions and to experience a gradual inner growth. The researcher agrees with Portelli (2014) that a continuous process of self-awareness, acceptance and positive regard will enable candidates to make proper vocational discernment.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODS**

#### **3.0. Introduction**

This chapter discusses the methodology of the study, covering the plan that is to be followed during gathering in the data, the research designs that are to be adopted to investigate the problem, the target population of the study and its sampling design, the research design that is to be used, dealing with validity and reliability of the instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis procedures.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

According to Kothari (2004), research design “is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data” (p. 31). Mvumbi and Ngumbi (2015), note that the design ought to convince the reader that the researcher is proficient and can ably conduct the study. A good research design is normally; flexible, appropriate, efficient, and economical (Kothari, 2004). Kothari continues to point out that such a design, “minimizes bias and maximises the reliability of the data collected and analysed” (p. 33). The study adopted mixed methods of research design that is both qualitative and quantitative. Particularly, it employed convergent parallel method so as to have triangulation of the study to allow the researcher to use all the possible methods of finding information. The descriptive survey design was used in this study. The survey data was collected by administering questionnaires with open ended and closed ended items to sampled individuals aiming at investigating their attitudes and opinions on the study at hand qualitatively and quantitatively. The same items were administered through the interview to the sampled individuals. The

research findings were useful to explore the possibility of using spiritual direction as a tool for vocational discernment and nurturing in the CDM.

### **3.2. Location of the Study**

The study was carried out in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi. The researcher visited selected parishes within the Diocese. The diocese covers Lamu County, Tana Delta County and part of Kilifi County.

### **3.3. Target Population**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2012), a target population is a group of people, that shares one thing in common, from which the researcher wants to draw a conclusion about once the research study is finished. The target population for this study included: 10 priests from across the diocese (primary spiritual directors), 10 religious nuns from across the parishes (also involved in spiritual guidance), 10 parents (on how they are involved with their children's vocational discernment), 12 seminarians (on their journey of discernment), the vocation team (5), 20 Catholic male students (form IV) from different secondary schools in the diocese, and 40 Catholic male youth ranging between 18-25years (emerging adults) from various parishes. The population of the respondents was 107. The strata was aimed at capturing members from as diverse backgrounds as possible. The priests and nuns were included because they are directly involved by virtue of their vocations to offer spiritual direction. The parents cannot be left behind because they should be involved with the wellbeing of their children. The youth in secondary schools and outside were the main targets because it is from them that we can get potential candidates to the vocations of priesthood in the CDM.

### **3.4. Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

The study adopted the following sampling technique and sample size

#### **3.4.1. Sampling Techniques**

Sampling allows one to obtain a representative picture about the population, without studying the entire population. According to Creswell (2013) phenomenological studies recommends that researcher interview 5 to 25 individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon. Sampling allows the researcher to avoid subjecting the entire population under attention to investigation (Mvumbi & Ngumbi, 2015). The researcher sampled 107 respondents who were involved in the study. After stratifying the target population into six groups; simple random sampling method was adopted in the homogenous groups to offer each participant the opportunity of participating in the study and attain objectively in the sampling of the population in the study. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the respondents for interview guide from the six strata. This was meant to obtain their feelings, Perceptions, and attitudes towards spiritual direction as a means of nurturing vocations in the CDM.

Kombo and Tromp (2006), affirm that purposive sampling is powerful because it allows for the inclusion of information rich sources for profound scrutiny of the issues under study. The vocation team are the witnesses and direct promoters of vocations within the diocese. Thus in this view they were resourceful for the study. They are the Diocesan administrator, vocations director and his assistant, one religious priest and one religious nun (5). The remainder of the sample (102 participants) were divided proportionally between the youths in schools and those who have finished studies, seminarians, other religious men and women and parents.

### **3.4.2. Sample Size**

Mvumbi and Ngumbi (2015, 81) noted that “the sample size should be large enough to represent the salient characteristics of the target population”. The target population to which this study seeks to generalize its findings consists of (107) participants, comprising of parents, youths, students, vocation team, and seminarians in the CDM, Kenya. In this study the non-sampling method of census was used to determine the sample size. In a census, the entire population is studied: sample = population. Therefore, the sample size for the proposed study was  $n=107$ .

### **3.5. Research Instruments**

In collecting data, it is essential for the researcher to establish the most appropriate means of eliciting data from the participants (Mvumbi & Ngumbi, 2015). This study used an interview guide and self-administered questionnaires as the instruments for data collection. To collect data, questionnaires were used and interview guide was scheduled. The researcher used the interview guide to interview the vocation team. The other respondents filled out self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaires contained closed-ended and open-ended questions. The respondents were able to communicate their opinions, views, suggestions and give recommendations freely. In the study, the questionnaire was administered to the stratified respondents to access their attitudes, perceptions and opinions on our subject of study.

The researcher engaged in one-to-one interview with all the respondents. By motivating the respondents to express their feelings, data was to be collected to provide their views and perceptions on the subject at hand, as well, the respondents’ opinions for further suggestions that

could enhance the findings on the subject at hand was sought. Information obtained from the interview was transcribed and then analyzed.

### **3.6. Pre-Testing**

According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011), validity and reliability are vital concepts in research. They are used for enhancing the accuracy of the assessment and evaluation of research work. As observed by Creswell (2013), depending on the type of research, that is, quantitative or qualitative, they have different meaning.

#### **3.6.1. Validity**

Validity refers to the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretation of test scores entailed by use of tests. The validity of instruments is the extent to which it does measure what it is supposed to measure. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2012), validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results. It is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the variables of the study. The research instruments for the study were validated in terms of content and face validity. The content related technique measures the degree to which the questions items reflected the specific areas covered (Rosnow and Rosenthal 2013). What is asked is the question: Is the relevant material adequately sampled? Additionally, as advanced by Thatcher (2010), with respect to qualitative research - as is the case with this study - content validity is the extent to which an empirical measurement reflects a specific domain of content.

### **3.6.2. Reliability**

Reliability is the ability of a research instrument to consistently measure characteristics of interest over time. It is the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. If a researcher administers a test to a subject twice and gets the same score on the second administration as the first test, then there is reliability of the instrument (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2012). The researcher measured the reliability of the questionnaire to determine its consistency in testing what they are intended to measure.

A pilot study can reveal deficiencies in the design of a proposed experiment and this can be addressed before fieldwork. The data is to be collected by the researcher because he knows areas that he is interested in. From the responses obtained, the Cronbach's alpha formula was used to calculate coefficient of the correlation ( $r$ ) in order to establish the extent to which the items in the questionnaire were consistent in eliciting the same responses every time they were used. In this study, a Cronbachs' coefficient alpha of 0.7 was obtained which implies that the research instruments were reliable and therefore adopted for the study (Hair, 2014). The questionnaire score is acceptable statistically.

After validating the research instruments, the researcher purposefully selected a parish in the Diocese (Mida Parish) for the purpose of piloting the instruments and ensuring their reliability on the study of spiritual direction as a means of vocation nurturing. The researcher sampled 10 participants. Data collected was analyzed and interpreted. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who recommend 1-10% of the study sample for a descriptive study support the pilot-test sample. The participants in the pilot test were chosen because they will not participate in the study though they are similar to the intended participants. According to Borg and Gall (2003),

piloting of research instruments is important for validity and reliability tests of the instruments. Mvumbi and Ngumbi (2015) states that the purpose of pilot testing is to establish if any questions will make respondents feel uncomfortable and to make sure that all the participants in the sample understand the questions in the same way.

By this the researcher knew how valid the instruments were before distributing them to the population targeted. The test re-test technique was used to estimate the reliability of the instruments. This involved administering the same test twice to the same group of respondents who have been identified for this purpose.

### **3.7. Data Collection Procedures**

According to Mvumbi and Ngumbi (2015), data collection procedures imply the steps stipulated so as to gather data. They term these as vital to the data collection process. The researcher obtained all the required documents beforehand. These include: Letter of Introduction from Tangaza University College Research Ethics Committee (TUCREC) and a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher sought permission with the Diocesan administrator of Malindi before proceeding to conduct his research. The Diocesan Administrator gave permission and an authorization letter for the research. Upon getting clearance, the researcher in person distributed the questionnaires to the sampled individuals. During the distribution of the instruments, the purpose of the research was explained. Finally, the researcher collected the data from different persons within the diocese with the assistance of parish priests.

### **3.8. Data Analysis**

According to Mvumbi and Ngumbi (2015, 100), “data analysis is the process of organizing data into meaningful and useful information that helps to answer the research questions”. It is, therefore, the process of bringing order and meaning to raw data. This research used quantitative and qualitative data analysis procedures. Quantitative data were obtained from the close-ended items in the questionnaires. The data collected were coded and analysed by the researcher using Microsoft Excel Programme with tables and charts generated in Microsoft Word Programme. The data were summarized using descriptive statistics such as percentages and presented using tables and pie charts. The way the percentages were presented was by calculating the total number of responses and then dividing the number into each category by the total. This is called relative frequency statistics.

### **3.9. Ethical Considerations**

Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) attest that research must be carried out by people of integrity; sincerely concerned about the quality of life of their participants and not for personal merit. They also point out that researchers must abide by the respective laws that prohibit unethical conduct. In this study therefore, the researcher sought to expand knowledge in an honest and sincere manner.

Prior to administering questionnaires and conducting interviews, the researcher obtained the informed consent of the participants. According to Wiles (2013), the informed consent encompasses: giving clear information to the participants as to what the research will involve as well as offering them the prospect of deciding whether to or not to take part. Thus the researcher allowed the respondents the freedom to respond or not to respond to any questions in the instruments. The participants were also informed that their participation is voluntary at all times.

The participants were assured of confidentiality. This implies that identifiable information about individuals collected during the process of research was not to be disclosed and that the identity of the research participants was to be protected (p. 42). Thus, the researcher sought to establish a rapport with the participants so as to allow them to open up in sharing their thoughts and opinions. The respondents were guaranteed that any information obtained was to be used only for academic purposes. Thus they were requested not to reveal their identity on the research instruments.

Throughout the data collection, the researcher strived to abide by relevant steps such as ensuring that data collection is accurate (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). The researcher informed the respondents of the time for interviewing and filling out the questionnaires to avoid inconveniences. Information gathered was kept carefully for analysis and interpretation.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings, discussion, and interpretations that focused on the objectives of the study. The main purpose of the study was to present the responses in a way as to address the research objectives. The study was descriptively analysed and findings summarized as percentages, presented as figures and tables.

#### 4.1. Response Rate

The response of the Vocation Team on the questionnaires and interviews was 100%. All the participants took part in the exercise. A summary of the response rate of the questionnaires administered to participants in the study, which included: parents, religious priests and sisters, parents, students, seminarians and youth in the CDM is presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1:** Questionnaire Response Rate

<b>Participant Categories</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Parents	10	10	100%
Seminarians	12	12	100%
Students	20	18	90%
Youth	40	35	87.5%
Priests	10	10	100%
Religious Sisters	10	10	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>93.1%</b>

As indicated in Table 4.1, a total number of 102 respondents were targeted comprising of 10 parents, 12 seminarians, 20 students, 40 youth, 10 priests, and 10 religious sisters.

From the target population, the total number of 95 responded, giving a response rate of 93.1%. This is considered adequate given the recommendations by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) who suggested a 30-40% response; Sekaran (2010) recommends 30%, while Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) advised that the subjects who responded to questionnaires are adequate at 50.0%, good at 60.0% and very good at 70.0% rates. Based on their view, the return rate of 93.1% is acceptable for this study.

#### **4.2. Demographic Information**

This information was sought to help understand the respondents better considering their ability to effectively provide the necessary data needed. The researcher used the participants who would provide the depth experience in telling their narratives (Morse & Singleton, 2001). Data was collected from both male and female participants to ensure gender-sensitive research and quality in the representation of views and experiences.

The researcher gathered information on locality, age, gender, and academic status. This demography will help in the contextualization of the findings and formulation of appropriate recommendations. The summary of the demographic details of the respondents is presented in below.

#### 4.2.1. Respondent's Parishes

The study sampled 6 Parishes in the CDM as presented in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2:** Respondent's Parishes

Parishes	Students In Schools	Youth	Priests	Vocation Team	Parents	Sisters	Seminarians	Percentage
Parish A	3	6	1	1	2	2	4	19%
Parish B	3	4	1	0	3	1	1	13%
Parish C	5	6	2	2	2	3	2	22%
Parish D	3	4	1	1	1	1	1	12%
Parish E	2	5	2	1	1	2	2	15%
Parish F	2	10	3	0	1	1	2	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

From Table 4.2, it is clear that the researcher gathered information from 6 Parishes in the CDM. Two Parishes had the highest number of respondents 19% respectively and the least was 12%. The Parishes were selected at random and so were the respondents. The variance was occasioned by availability of the respondents at the time of the data collection. However, from the analysis the researcher realized that the variance in representation did not have any impact on the study.

#### 4.2.2. The Age of the Respondents

The researcher sampled respondents from different age groups as illustrated in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3:** Age of Respondents

<b>Ages</b>	<b>Youths</b>	<b>Priests</b>	<b>Students In Schools</b>	<b>Sisters</b>	<b>Vocation Team</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Seminarians</b>	<b>Totals In Percentage</b>
17-25	23	0	18	0	0	0	8	49%
26-35	12	2	0	8	2	4	4	32%
36 And Above	0	8	0	2	3	6	0	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

The results in Table 4.3, shows that the majority of the respondents in the study were above 20 years of age and therefore mature enough to give their own views objectively on the subject of the study. This is deemed sufficient for the study. From the above, it is clear that the respondents represented diverse age groups and therefore enriched the data collected for the study. Today, more than any other time in the history of the Church, there is a need to make a proper discernment of vocations. Individuals and communities are called to discern the Will of God for them in the concrete circumstances of their lives. Young people discern the meaning of their vocations as well as the challenges and opportunities arising from their call. In order to grow and mature in the spirit, attain understanding and wisdom to strengthen and live their faith, the young people must seek the guidance of those experienced in the art of listening to the interior voice. Sometimes, when someone is called they do not truly realize it; at other times, they may show some resistance to the call. Again, due to certain preconditions to be fulfilled, not every call receives a positive response. The Christian call involves commitment, renunciation,

and sacrifice; it demands the immediate and unconditional response of turning aside to a life that is radically new. The call of the disciples represents a classic case (Mk. 1:18-20).

#### 4.2.3. Respondent’s Gender

The researcher sampled respondents from both gender as illustrated in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4:** Respondent’s Gender

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Youths</b>	<b>Students In Schools</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Priests</b>	<b>Sisters</b>	<b>Vocation Team</b>	<b>Seminarians</b>	<b>Totals In Percentage</b>
Male	25	12	5	10	10	4	12	78%
Female	10	6	5	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

From Table 4.4 we can infer that majority of the respondents involved were men 78%. This is because the subject matter; the discernment and nurturing of the vocations to priesthood, involves young men primarily. However, parents and religious sisters are also involved in providing guidance and mentorship to the youth. The question of gender therefore did not have any impact on the findings of the study.

#### 4.2.4. Level of Academics of the Respondents

The researcher wanted to find out whether the level of academics of the respondents would have any implications in the study. The findings are presented in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5:** Respondent’s Level of Academics

<b>Academic Level</b>	<b>Youths</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Sisters</b>	<b>Priests</b>	<b>Vocation Team</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Seminarians</b>	<b>Totals In Percentage</b>
Certificate	14	18	0	0	0	2	5	39%
Diploma	18	0	8	0	0	4	2	32%
Degree	3	0	2	10	5	4	5	29%
And Above								
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

It is clear from the Table 4.5 that most of the respondents were in the category of certificates in their levels of education. This implies that most of the youth who were the primary target in the study 39% all had at least a certificate. It means that this is the prime age of active discernment of vocations especially during secondary school. This also implies that they had the capacity to understand in general the subject of study and on what they were responding to.

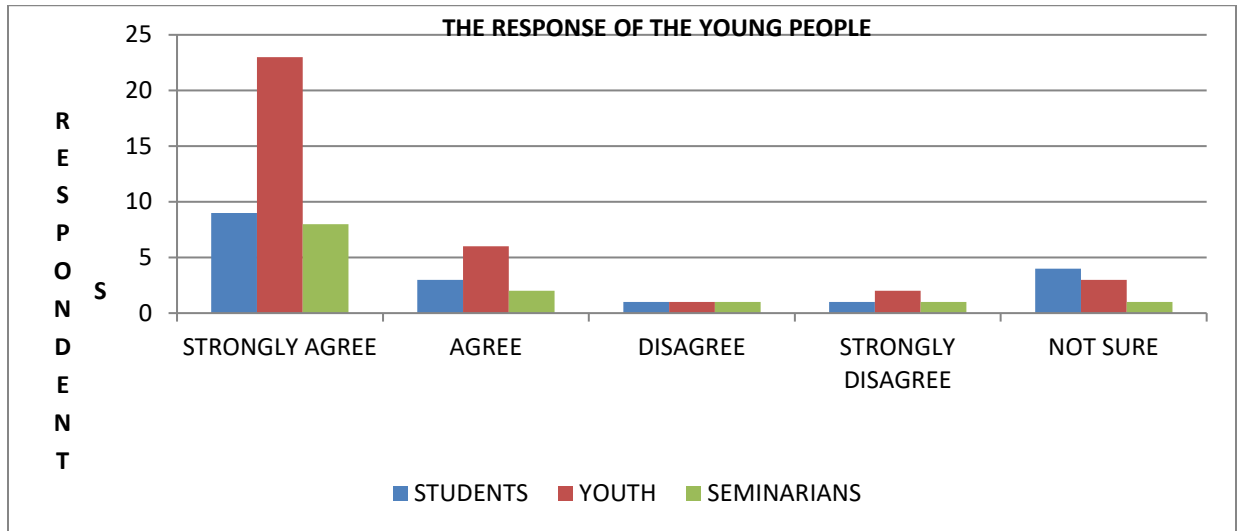
### **4.3. Spiritual Direction as a Means of Vocational Discernment**

**Objective One:** The study sought to investigate the extent to which spiritual direction helps the young people to discern and nurture their vocations especially to priesthood.

This information was obtained from two sets of questionnaires. The first set involved students in secondary schools, youths who finished secondary schools and seminarians in the CDM. The information was also sought from the priests, religious sisters, and parents who in one way or another are involved with discernment and nurturing of vocations. The responses are presented in figures and tables.

### 4.3.1. Commitment of Priests, Religious and Parents in Vocational Discernment

The researcher sought to find out whether parents, priests, and religious sisters were committed in helping the young people to discern and nurture their vocations and make right decisions for commitment. The responses obtained from the respondents are presented in Figure 4.1.



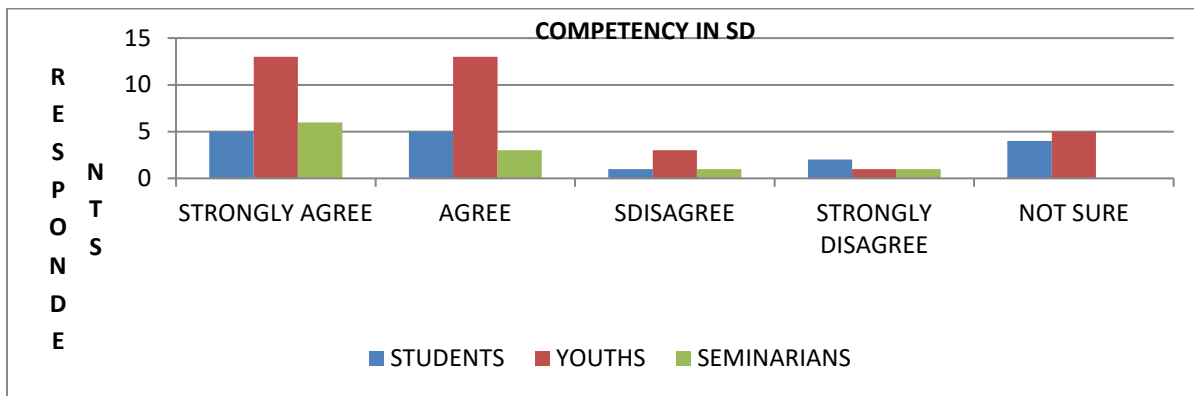
**Figure 4.1:** The Response of the students, youths, and seminarians

From Figure 4.1, it is clear that most of the young people agreed that priests, religious sisters and parents were committed in helping the young people in vocational discernment. Pope Francis (2013) in the *Evangelii Gaudium* noted: “spiritual direction must lead others ever closer to God in whom we attain true freedom some people think they are free if they can avoid God; they fail to see that they remain existentially orphaned, helpless, homeless” (# 170). Genuine spiritual direction therefore is a source of true conversion and reclaiming back drifters. However, a few youth, and students disagreed citing the reason for this as the unapproachability of some priests and religious on the issues affecting young people. The table shows that almost all the

seminarians (10) agreed that parents, priests and religious play a vital role in vocational discernment.

### 4.3.2. Competency of Spiritual Directors

The researcher sought to determine the competency of spiritual directors in interpersonal skills of active listening, empathy, non-judgmental and genuineness which enhances fruitful spiritual direction. The results are presented in Figure 4.2.

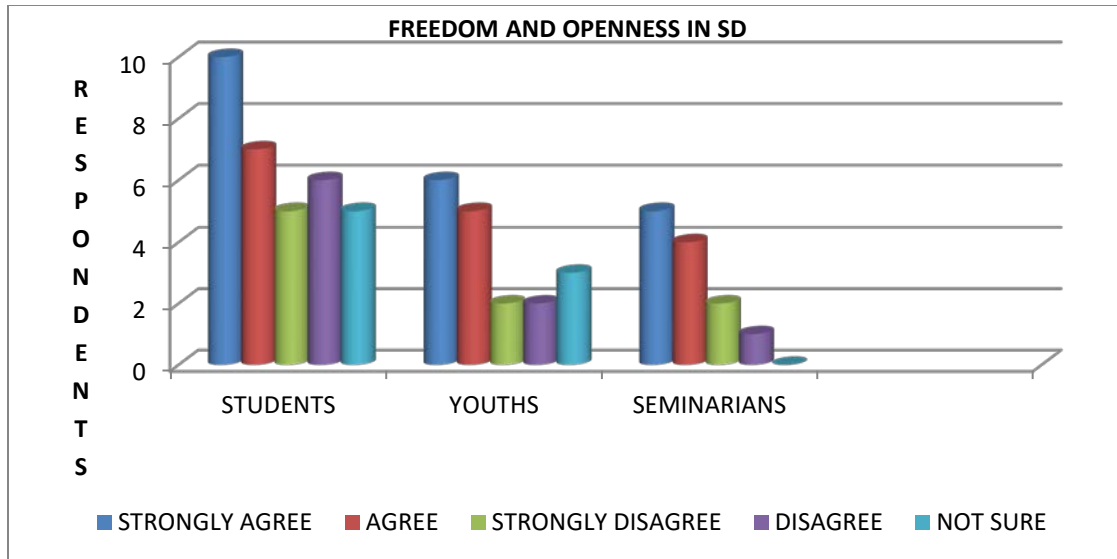


**Figure 4.2:** On the Competency in Spiritual Direction

As noted in Figure 4.2 majority of the respondents agreed that Spiritual directors exhibited some competency in spiritual direction. It is also alarming that a significant number of respondents were not sure about the competency of spiritual directors. This can be explained by the fact that majority of the respondents apart from the seminarians had only a general notion of what spiritual direction is but never practised it directly.

### 4.3.3. Freedom and Openness in Spiritual Direction

The researcher sought to determine the level of freedom in SD that enhances growth and self-awareness. This consequently enhances openness and interior freedom in discerning vocations freely. The results are presented in Figure 4.3.

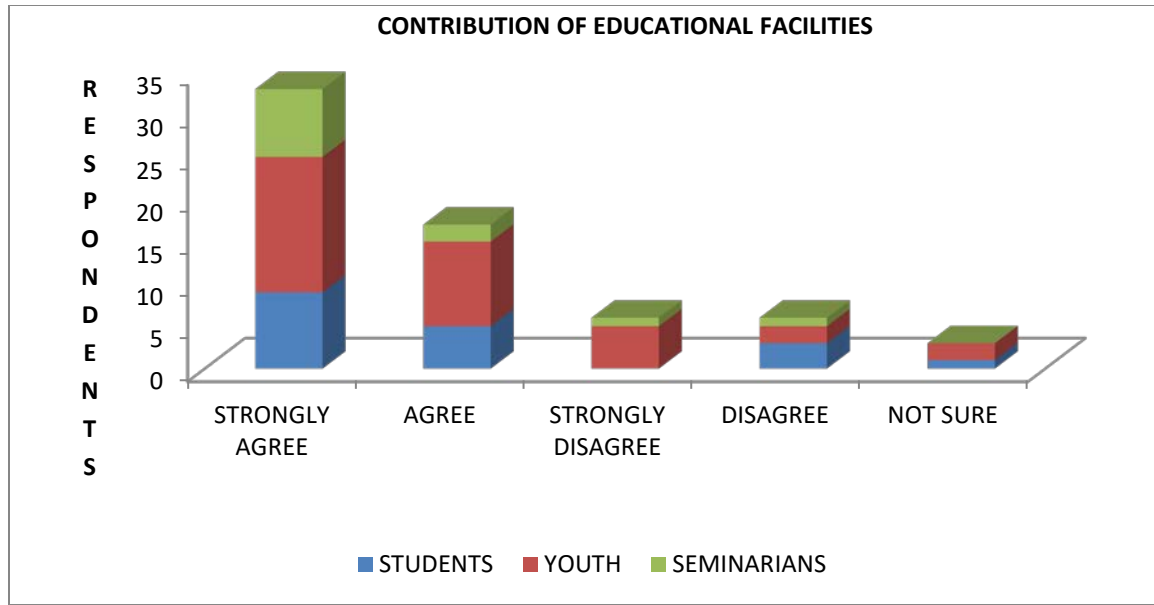


**Figure 4.3:** Freedom and Openness in Spiritual Direction

From Figure 4.3 above, it is clear that majority of the respondents felt free to share with their Spiritual Directors openly and freely. Surprisingly, none of the respondents expressed doubts in this question (no one responded “not sure”). This means that, the respondents sought some guidance freely and openly. Those who disagreed expressed the fact that they are more free and open to their peers than with Parents, Priests or the Religious. There is no authentic discernment without openness and self-awareness, just as no real, meaningful action and authentic change can take place in one’s life without coming to self-acceptance. Mc Clone (2011, 4) asserted that “awareness is a fundamental principle of holistic psycho-spiritual change and growth”. SD fosters growth in self-awareness and acceptance. An essential element of self-awareness is appreciating the fact that we are each distinctive in terms of personality traits.

#### 4.3.4. Contribution of Schools and Educational Facilities

The Researcher sought to find out whether educational facilities offer opportunities to the students on vocational awareness. The findings are presented in Figure 4.4.



**Figure 4.4:** Contribution of Schools and Educational Facilities

Figure 4.4 shows that majority of the respondents affirmed that schools and other educational facilities offer a platform and play a significant role in shaping the vocational choices of the young people. Only a few of the respondents disagreed or were not sure about the contribution of educational institutions in this. This shows that majority of the respondents get their vocational discernment seeds while still in schools. According to Singarayar (2018), growing in maturity for the young people in educational facilities, implies the harmonious development of all the potentialities God has given to the human person. To feel called is not enough, there can be illusions, unconscious motivations, unresolved emotional needs and baggage of the past (Bala, 2018). The choice and motivation may be strongly influenced by ambition for upward social mobility, careerism, social security and so forth. Spiritual direction enables a fuller insight into the attractions, desires, fantasies, and impulses of the young candidates.

#### 4.3.5. Motivation and Freedom in Vocational Discernment

The study elicited by way of an open-ended item on the questionnaire, on whether spiritual direction promotes motivation and freedom in vocational discernment. Table 4.7 presents the findings of the students, youth and seminarians.

**Table 4.6:** Motivation and Freedom in Vocational Discernment

<b>SD: Motivation: Freedom</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Youth</b>	<b>Seminarians</b>	<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
SD offers one an opportunity to open up and leads to self-awareness	3	16	5	24	40.7%
Offers young people a forum to discern Gods Will in their lives	2	4	2	8	13.6%
Helps young people to clear doubts on vocational choices	7	3	2	12	20.3%
Helps young people to make informed choices	4	8	3	15	25.4%
<b>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.6 shows that not all respondents responded to this question, 2 students and 4 youths did not respond to this question. This can be explained by the fact that spiritual direction is not popularized in the CDM. However, all the seminarians responded to the question because they had experiences in spiritual direction in the seminaries. 47.7% indicated that spiritual direction offers one an opportunity to open up and leads to self-awareness. 13% asserted that spiritual direction offers them a forum to discern Gods will in their lives. 20% said that spiritual direction helps them clear doubts about vocational choices while the rest affirmed that spiritual direction helps them make informed choices.

According to Chi (2017), “God always loves humans and communicates with them, inviting all people to open their hearts and their minds to receive the Holy Spirit and to cooperate with God’s grace” (p.72). This emphasizes on human beings’ openness to God who communicates to us. Authentic spiritual direction is the necessary aid that guides the candidate in opening, discerning and owning the natural bent that candidates must have as a basic requisite for living consecrated life and carry out the mission of the Church. The openness that one has to the Holy Spirit becomes an incident in life and a starting point for deeper conversion, leading to union with God. This confirms the indispensability of spiritual direction in vocational discernment.

#### **4.3.6. Priests, Religious Sisters, and Parents on Spiritual Direction**

The Response of the priests, religious sisters, and parents on the indispensability of spiritual direction on vocational discernment was also sought. The information sought also included competency, commitment and skills of priests, religious sisters and parents in assisting the young people in vocational discernment.

Four statements (Q.5-8) examine the competency, commitment, skills and availability of priests, religious sisters and parents on the subject under study. While describing the findings, the researcher has merged the score of the responses ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ into agree; ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’ into disagree, and ‘not sure.’ The responses from priests, sisters and parents are illustrated in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7:** Responses of Priests, Sisters and Parents on Vocational Discernment.

Statements	Likert	Priests	Religious sisters	parents	Totals	Percentage
Priests, religious and parents are committed to listen and guide the youths on vocation discernment	SA	8	7	7	22	73%
	A	2	1	2	5	17%
	D	0	2	1	3	10%
	SD	0	0	0	0	0%
	NS	0	0	0	0	0%
	Total	10	10	10	30	100%
I do not exhibit the interpersonal skills of active listening, empathy, non-judgmental and genuineness	SA	0	3	5	8	27%
	A	1	2	3	6	20%
	D	6	1	0	7	23%
	SD	3	1	0	4	13%
	NT	0	3	2	5	17%
	Total	10	10	10	30	100%
I feel free and safe to share my personal life with my spiritual directee	SA	5	4	3	12	40%
	A	4	2	4	10	33%
	D	1	1	0	2	7%
	SD	0	1	0	1	3%
	NS	0	2	3	5	17%
	Total	10	10	10	30	100%
Schools and other educational institutions contribute to young people's formation in vocational discernment	SA	3	4	7	14	47%
	A	4	3	2	9	30%
	D	1	1	0	2	7%
	SD	0	1	0	1	3%
	NS	2	1	1	4	13%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.7 Indicates that 73% of priests, religious and parents are committed in journeying with the young people in their vocational journey. Only 10% disagreed two sisters and one parent. The religious and parents who disagreed expressed their incompetency in dealing with youth issues. About 47% of the respondents felt that they were competent enough to deal with the youth especially on their vocational discovery. The rest felt that they did not have the

required skills and training to deal with vocational discernment issues. More than 70% expressed that they were free to share their own vocational journeys with the youth aimed at helping them learn from them and make their own informed choices. About 77% of the respondents acknowledged the vital role that schools and other educational facilities play in discerning and accompanying the vocations of the young people. Majority of them affirmed that teachers play a significant role in the young people’s choice of vocations because most of them become mentors to the students.

**4.3.7. The Response of the Vocation Team on Vocational Discernment**

The researcher sought to determine the views of the respondents (Vocation Team) by form of interview on the indispensability of spiritual direction in the discernment of vocations (Q5-6). The results are illustrated in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8:** Spiritual Direction as a Means of Promoting Vocational Discernment

<b>Collaboration between vocation team and parents</b>	<b>Likert Scale</b>	<b>The vocation team</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
On the Use Of adequate skills in the accompaniment of young people including active listening, empathy, non-judgmental and genuineness/congruence	SA	3	60%
	A	2	40%
	D	0	0%
	SD	0	0%
	NT	0	0%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>
On the vocations team collaboration with parents regarding their children’s needs, feelings, and relationships in a manner that enhances their growth	SA	2	40%
	A	2	40%
	D	0	0%
	SD	0	0%
	NS	1	10%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.8 indicates that all the respondents agreed 100%, on the use of adequate skills in the accompaniment of young people including active listening, empathy, non-judgmental and

genuineness/congruence. This is very vital in the study in coming up with appropriate strategies and recommendation for the study. 80% of the respondents reiterated the importance of collaboration between parents and priests and sisters in vocational promotions.

#### 4.4. The General Meaning of Spiritual Direction and Discernment

**Objective Two:** Four statements (Q.13-16) examine the general understanding of spiritual direction amongst the students, youth and seminarians. The same set of questions were also modified and given to the Priests, Religious and Parents. Their knowledge of spiritual direction and embracing it fosters personal awareness and promotes vocational discernment. While describing the findings, the researcher has merged the score of the responses ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ into agree; ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’ into disagree, and ‘not sure’.

##### 4.4.1. Description of Spiritual Direction

The researcher sought to determine whether the respondents: students, youth, and seminarians - understand what spiritual direction entails in general.

**Table 4.9:** Spiritual Direction Deepens Ones Relationship with God

Likert Scale	Students	Youths	Seminarians	Total	Percentage
Strongly Agree	13	24	9	46	70.8%
Agree	3	5	3	11	16.9%
Disagree	0	1	0	1	1.5%
Strongly Disagree	0	2	0	2	3.1%
Not Sure	2	3	0	5	7.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.9 shows that more than 76% of the respondents understand spiritual direction as an attempt at deepening ones relationship with God and growth in Spiritual life. This was very

encouraging to the researcher because the whole subject matter of the study was anchored on that. However, about 10% of the respondents disagreed or were not sure of the meaning and a few of the respondents had little or no experience with spiritual direction and what it entails. All the seminarians (12) affirmed that they understood well what spiritual direction is and what it entails.

#### 4.4.2. Spiritual Direction as an Aid of Spiritual and Vocational Growth

The researcher sought to determine to what extent spiritual direction can promote spiritual growth and vocational discernment.

**Table 4.10:** Spiritual Direction as a Means of Promoting Vocational Discernment

<b>Likert Scale</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Youths</b>	<b>Seminarians</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	10	25	7	<b>42</b>	62%
Agree	5	3	3	<b>11</b>	17%
Disagree	1	2	1	<b>5</b>	8%
Strongly Disagree	0	2	0	<b>2</b>	3%
Not Sure	2	3	1	<b>6</b>	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.10 shows how the respondents were able to link spiritual direction with vocational discernment. It is clear from the figures that 79% agreed that spiritual direction aids in vocational discernment. Only 11% disagreed which is understandable due to the fact that table 4.9 had shown that not all respondents were sure of what spiritual direction is all about. 10% of the respondents were not sure of the relationship between spiritual direction and vocational discernment. One of the seminarians had a negative experience with one of the Spiritual

Directors in the seminary and therefore expressed the view that some of the seminarians fulfill the duty of attending spiritual direction because it is “required” and hence doesn’t grow from it. According to the insights of St. Ignatius of Loyola, “discernment is the discovery of one’s greatest hope for happiness and peace within one’s providential life setting” (Burke-Sullivan, 2004, 10). This hope is grounded in the discovery of God’s desire for each person. Spiritual direction fosters this.

#### 4.4.3. Involvement of Families and Communities in Vocational Discernment

The researcher was seeking from the respondents the role of families and communities in vocational discernment and nurturing.

**Table 4.11:** Involvement of Families and Communities in Vocational Discernment.

<b>Likert Scale</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Youths</b>	<b>Seminarians</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	7	21	6	<b>34</b>	54%
Agree	5	6	4	<b>15</b>	24%
Disagree	2	2	1	<b>5</b>	8%
Strongly Disagree	1	3	0	<b>4</b>	6%
Not Sure	1	3	1	<b>5</b>	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.11 shows the respondents views on the role of families and communities in vocational discernment. 68% agreed that Families and communities have a role to play in shaping the future vocations of their children. 14% disagreed that families and communities have any role to play in vocational discernment while 8% were not sure. Some respondents sighted the

fact that some families were broken, some orphans make it big on their own and that sometimes what the parents want may clash with individual's interests.

#### 4.4.4. Respondents Frequency to Spiritual Direction

The researcher wanted to find out whether students, youth and seminarians frequent spiritual direction. The findings are presented in Table 4.12.

**Table 4.12:** Respondents Views on Seeking Spiritual Direction

<b>Likert Scale</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Youths</b>	<b>Seminarians</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	3	15	8	<b>26</b>	<b>41%</b>
Agree	5	4	4	<b>13</b>	<b>20%</b>
Disagree	6	8	0	<b>14</b>	<b>22%</b>
Strongly Disagree	2	3	0	<b>5</b>	<b>8%</b>
Not Sure	2	4	0	<b>6</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.12 shows that 61% of the respondents have attended spiritual direction sessions. All the seminarians responded positively (12). One youth did not respond to this question. However, 20% indicated that they have never attended spiritual direction and 9 % were not sure. The results show that there are a number of young people who seek spiritual direction once a month, while others are not aware what it is or do not seek it. As Jackson (2004) argued, genuine discernment requires for the discernor to have the ability to reflect on the ordinary events of life, the ability to reflect what one experiences, a habit of daily prayer, self-knowledge which includes knowledge of one's deepest desires, feelings, urges, and openness to God's will. Self-reflection

with the help of spiritual direction is an important aspect of discernment. These clearly indicate that with proper planning, the youths could be inducted to spiritual direction and embrace it.

#### 4.4.5. Spiritual Direction according to Priests, Religious Sisters, and Parents

The study sought from the respondents their general understanding of SD. Three statements (Q.9-11) examine the respondent’s understanding of SD in general. While describing the findings, the researcher has merged the score of the responses ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ into agree; ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’ into disagree, and ‘not sure.’

**Table: 4.13:** Presents the Responses of the Priests, Religious Sisters, and Parents.

Statements	Parameters	Priests	Religious sisters	parents	Totals	Percentage
Spiritual direction is the help i give or receive in an attempt to deepen my relationship with God, or to learn and grow in my personal spirituality.	SA	7	6	4	17	57%%
	A	2	4	2	8	27%
	D	0	0	1	1	3%
	SD	0	0	0	0	0%
	NS	1	0	3	4	13%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>
Guidance in Spiritual direction facilitates spiritual growth and vocational discernment.	SA	5	3	4	12	40%
	A	5	5	4	14	47%
	D	0	0	0	0	0%
	SD	0	0	0	0	0%
	NT	0	2	2	4	13%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>
Families and communities are involved in helping young people in all forms of discernment.	SA	4	4	9	17	58%
	A	5	2	1	8	27%
	D	1	1	0	2	6%
	SD	0	1	0	1	3%
	NS	0	2	0	2	6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.13 shows that all the Sisters understand spiritual direction as the help given or received in an attempt to deepen ones relationship with God, or to learn and grow in personal spirituality. 87% of the respondents agreed that spiritual direction facilitates vocational discernment which confirms our initial assumptions in line with the Subject matter of study. 85% of the respondents affirmed the role of families and communities in the development of the vocations of young people. According to Walters (2015), “The spiritual director will encourage the person seeking to know God’s will to find work or service in line with his interests and skills, where he can have the satisfaction of bringing the kindness of Christ into other people’s lives” (p. 65). Spiritual direction is not only a place of discernment and encouragement but also bedrock of one’s mission and nourishment of skills for living that life. Table 4.13 however, shows that some parents were not sure of what spiritual direction is entirely but they unanimously agreed the contribution of families and communities in vocational discernment. This shows that majority of them are committed in nurturing the vocations of their children.

#### **4.4.6. Spiritual Direction according to the Vocation Team**

The researcher sought to determine the views of the respondents (Vocation Team) on their general understanding of spiritual direction by way of interview and its applicability in the discernment of vocations in the CDM (Q7-8). The results are illustrated in Table 4.14.

**Table 4.14:** The Vocations Team’s Response on their Understanding of Spiritual Direction

<b>SD and Vocations discernment</b>	<b>Likert Scale</b>	<b>The vocation team</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
On whether provisions are made in the CDM for SD aimed at helping them in vocational discernment	SA	4	<b>90%</b>
	A	1	<b>10%</b>
	D	0	<b>0%</b>
	SD	0	<b>0%</b>
	NT	0	<b>0%</b>
	TOTAL	5	<b>100%</b>
On whether SD is helpful in making genuine discernment for commitment to join priesthood in the CDM	SA	3	<b>60%</b>
	A	2	<b>40%</b>
	D	0	<b>0%</b>
	SD	0	<b>0%</b>
	NS	0	<b>0%</b>
	TOTAL	5	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.14 indicates that 90% of the respondents agreed provisions are made in the CDM for spiritual direction aimed at helping them in vocational discernment. According to majority of them however, this provision is faced with so many challenges as will be presented in the next section. 100% of the respondents agreed that there is a strong connection between spiritual direction and vocational discernment.

#### **4.5. The Challenges in Vocational Discernment**

**Objective: 3.** The researcher was seeking to find out the challenges in vocational discernment in the CDM. Four statements (Q.14-17) examine the challenges in vocational discernment among the youth, students and seminarians in the CDM. Finding the challenges and finding solutions offers a platform for vocational promotion in the CDM. While describing the findings, the researcher has merged the score of the responses ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ into agree; ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’ into disagree, and ‘not sure.’

#### 4.5.1. Openness to Priests, Religious, and Parents on Vocational Discovery

The researcher was seeking to find out whether the students, youth and seminarians feel free in sharing their vocational inclinations with their priests, religious and parents. The findings are presented in Table 4.15.

**Table 4.15:** Respondents Views on Openness to Priests, Religious and Parents

<b>Likert Scale</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Youths</b>	<b>Seminarians</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	8	17	7	32	54%
Agree	5	8	1	14	23%
Disagree	2	2	2	6	10%
Strongly Disagree	0	2	0	2	4%
Not Sure	1	3	1	5	9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.15 shows that 77% of the respondents are open to priests, religious sisters and parents on their journey of discovering their unique vocation. However, 3 youths and one seminarian did not respond to this question. One seminarian who had disagreed said that he was once victimized in the seminary because he was open in the spiritual direction. In spiritual direction freedom and openness leads to a fruitful discernment. Discernment is an art of observing, choosing and doing the will of God. Spiritual direction is of great importance to enable the directee proceed on the way of establishing a relationship not only with God but also with the self, others and environment around. Walters (2015), affirms that “discernment is constantly at work in spiritual direction - in knowing whether a given inspiration comes from God, or in making vocational choices” (p. 54). This confirms the vital role of spiritual direction as a means of vocational discernment. Openness from the Spiritual director and the directee is

very vital in a fruitful spiritual direction. To enhance openness, the spiritual director is not supposed to be involved in the general assessment of the candidate in the seminary setup.

#### 4.5.2. Behavioural Style and Attitudes of Spiritual Directors

The researcher sought from the respondents the attitude of the spiritual directors. Hospitality and sincerity are vital elements in SD.

**Table 4.16:** Behavioural Style and Attitudes of Spiritual Directors

Likert Scale	Students	Youths	Seminarians	Total	Percentage
Strongly Agree	6	13	4	23	35%
Agree	3	11	1	15	24%
Disagree	2	4	4	10	15%
Strongly Disagree	3	5	1	9	14%
Not Sure	4	2	2	8	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.16 shows that all the respondents responded to this question. 59% of the respondents felt that spiritual directors exhibited attitudes that encouraged openness. The 29% who disagreed supports the researchers view that priests, religious and parents need some basic training in helping the young people in vocational discernment. One respondent was referred to more than 3 priests when he was seeking some guidance on vocational choice. Some priests felt that they were not competent enough to help him.

#### 4.5.3. Spiritual Direction as a Means of Empowering One to Develop Self-Identity

The researcher sought from the respondents the extent to which spiritual direction empowers individuals and helps them cultivate virtues leading to discernment of vocations. The findings are presented in Table 4.17.

**Table 4.17:** Respondents Views on Spiritual Direction and Self-identity

<b>Likert Scale</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Youths</b>	<b>Seminarians</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	5	13	6	<b>24</b>	<b>40%</b>
Agree	3	10	1	<b>14</b>	<b>24%</b>
Disagree	2	1	2	<b>5</b>	<b>8%</b>
Strongly Disagree	1	3	1	<b>5</b>	<b>8%</b>
Not Sure	4	7	1	<b>12</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.17 shows that 5 respondents did not respond to this question. 64% of the respondents agreed that spiritual direction empowers individuals by helping them cultivate virtues and vocational values. 20% of the respondents were not sure and therefore the question might not have been clear to them or they were not sure of the benefits of spiritual direction. Rulla (2004) affirms that “human freedom does not only have the psychological character of a capacity for personal choices made with awareness; it essentially possesses a deeper character which is ontological and at the same time theocentric” (p.237). What is emphasized by Rulla is the awareness of all circumstances surrounding a person in making choices bearing in mind that, God effects everything. Human being is free on the fact that in virtues of his freedom he is called to transcend beyond oneself and take position before God. Authentic spiritual direction frees, uncovers and enables self-transcendence of a person. Growth in virtue is one of the fruits of spiritual growth perpetuated by spiritual direction.

#### 4.5.4. On the Availability of the Clergy, Religious and Parents

The researcher sought the availability of the clergy, religious sisters, and parents to listen to the needs of the young people especially on their vocational discernment. The findings are presented in Table 4.18.

**Table 4.18:** Availability of Priests, Religious and Parents

<b>Likert Scale</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Youths</b>	<b>Seminarians</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	5	15	5	<b>25</b>	<b>41%</b>
Agree	3	4	3	<b>10</b>	<b>16.5%</b>
Disagree	2	6	2	<b>10</b>	<b>16.5%</b>
Strongly Disagree	2	2	2	<b>6</b>	<b>9.5%</b>
Not Sure	4	6	0	<b>10</b>	<b>16.5%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.18 clearly indicates that 4 respondents did not respond to this question. Two said that he has never sought any guidance from either priests or religious sisters but would occasionally seek help from their parents. One said that his Parish Priest is mostly unavailable for consultations while another one said that his parish priest was very harsh and unapproachable. 57% agreed that priests, sisters, and parents were available to listen to their needs. This is encouraging that some young people seek help from responsible persons.

#### 4.5.5. Spiritual Direction as Means of Self-Transformation

The study elicited by way of an open-ended item on the questionnaire, on whether spiritual direction helps to transform and nurture in the students, youths, and seminarians a

servant consciousness inspired by compassion, forgiveness, generosity, gratitude, joy, and service. The findings are illustrated in Table 4.19.

**Table 4.19:** Spiritual Direction as Means of Self-Transformation

<b>SD and inter-personal transformation</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Youth</b>	<b>Seminarians</b>	<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
SD helps in acquiring virtues	2	5	2	9	17%
SD helps one to be more dedicated in the Church	1	7	1	9	17%
SD helps one to have mature relationship with the others	8	8	1	17	32%
SD helps one to understand himself better and makes him/her be docile to the promptings of the Holy Spirit	3	10	5	18	34%
<b>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.19 shows that 12 respondents did not respond to this question. This is the only question that had the majority of the respondents failing to attempt.

As indicated in Table 4.16 earlier, some of the respondents were not aware of the significance of spiritual direction in general. Those who responded however were able to bring out very good points on the role of spiritual direction in self-transformation including: spiritual direction helps in acquiring virtues, and helps one to be more dedicated in the Church.

Spiritual direction helps one to understand himself better and makes him/her be docile to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. According Bertrand (2001) and Gallagher (2007) the

processes of discernment should be able to determine whether inspiration is coming from God, from self, from an evil spirit, or from another source. Using the Ignatian method of discernment, a candidate evaluates his feelings on each option to learn from where the thought or feeling originates. The feelings of sadness and happiness give valuable insights into the origin of the thought or inspiration (Gallagher, 2007). The candidate must eventually determine whether the choice he considers leads to fleeting happiness, doubts, anxiety, laxity, away from God (desolation) or long-lasting happiness, peace, gratitude, service (consolation). According to Bertrand (2001), based on the belief that God's Will leads to true and eternal happiness, one can determine whether a particular inspiration or vocation comes from God. Ignatius advises against making life-changing decisions while in desolation.

#### **4.5.6. The Response of Parents, Priests and Sisters on the Challenges**

The study sought from the respondents the challenges of vocational discernment in the CDM as experienced by Priests, Religious Sisters, and Parents. Three statements (Q.12-14) examine the respondent's challenges in spiritual direction and in helping young people in their journey of vocational discovery. While describing the findings, the researcher has merged the score of the responses 'agree' and 'strongly agree' into agree; 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' into disagree, and 'not sure.' The findings are presented in Table 4.20.

**Table: 4.20.** Challenges in Vocations Discernment

Statements	Parameters	Priests	Religious sisters	parents	Totals	Percentage
I find it hard to be open about my vocational discernment journey	SA	6	4	3	13	43% %
	A	3	3	2	8	27%
	D	0	1	3	4	13%
	SD	0	0	0	0	0%
	NS	1	2	2	5	17%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>
Spiritual direction empowers me to develop a strong sense of identity, cultivate virtues and internalize vocational values	SA	6	8	6	20	67%
	A	3	2	2	7	23%
	D	0	0	0	0	0%
	SD	0	0	0	0	0%
	NT	1	0	2	3	10%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>
Am always available to offer spiritual guidance and assist the young people in their vocations discernment	SA	4	5	3	12	40%
	A	4	3	4	11	37%
	D	1	1	2	4	13%
	SD	1	0	0	1	3%
	NS	0	1	1	2	7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.20 shows that 70% of the respondents finds it hard to be open about their vocational journey. For the researcher this indicates a big challenge in vocational discernment. It is by disclosing their vocational journeys to the young people that the young can learn from them.

77% of the respondents agreed to be always available to offer spiritual guidance and assist the young people in their vocations discernment. 16% of the respondents disagreed saying that other

pastoral commitments deny them time to be with the young people for guidance. 90% of the respondents affirmed the significance of spiritual direction in empowering one to develop a strong sense of identity, cultivate virtues and internalize vocational values.

#### **4.5.7. Challenges in Vocational Discernment According to the Vocation Team**

The study sought from the vocation team the challenges they encounter in vocations promotion and discernment in the CDM (Q.9). This information is very vital because it is given by the team directly involved with discerning and nurturing vocations in the CDM. The challenges include: few numbers of Catholic schools; most of the young people do not get the required educational grades to join religious life; poverty levels in the CDM; most young men would prefer to be employed to help and support their families; early marriages and pregnancies amongst the youth; lack of proper collaboration between parents and the vocation team, peer influence; and lack of support from parish priests. The suggested strategies in dealing with these challenges is presented and discussed in the next section.

#### **4.6. Strategies in Responding to the Challenges in Vocational Discernment**

**Objective 4:** The study elicited by way of an open-ended item on the questionnaire, on possible strategies to address the challenges related to discernment of vocations in the CDM.

##### **4.6.1. Suggested Strategies by the Students, Youth, and Seminarians**

The study elicited from the youths, students and seminarians on the challenges they experienced in vocational discernment. This information was very vital to understand their current predicament and in coming up with possible solutions. The findings are presented in Table 4.21.

**Table 4.21:** Suggested Strategies by the Students, Youth, and Seminarians

<b>Suggested strategies</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Youth</b>	<b>Seminarians</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Having a Minor Seminary in the Diocese	2	5	1	8	<b>13%</b>
Having frequent vocational promotional workshops and seminars	2	7	2	11	<b>18%</b>
Having Chaplains in schools and other educational facilities	1	8	1	10	<b>16%</b>
Ordinations being held in the parishes of the candidates to priesthood	3	4	3	10	<b>16%</b>
Having a physical vocations office at the secretariat	2	3	1	6	<b>10.5%</b>
Involving parents and the community in issues of vocations discernment	1	2	2	5	<b>8.5%</b>
Promoting Spiritual direction in the CDM and encouraging the young people to always seek help.	6	3	2	11	<b>18%</b>
<b>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.21 indicates that 4 respondents did not attempt this question. However, it is clear that most of the youth were positive that vocational discernment can be improved in the CDM. 18% suggested Promoting Spiritual direction in the CDM and encouraging the young people to always seek help. 8.5% expressed the view that parents must be involved in vocational promotions. 10.5% suggested that the Diocese need to have a vocations promotional office where young people can seek help. These among other sighted suggestions are vital in the study and also very important to the vocations team in the CDM.

#### 4.6.2. Suggested Strategies by the Priests, Religious Sisters, and Parents

The study elicited by way of an open-ended item (Q 15) on the questionnaire, on possible strategies to address the challenges related to discernment of vocations in the CDM.

**Table 4.22:** Suggested Strategies by the Priests, Religious Sisters, and Parents

<b>Suggested Strategies</b>	<b>Priests</b>	<b>Religious Sisters</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
The Vocations Director should be free from other pastoral engagements	2	1	0	3	10%
The collaboration of the pastoral agents and parents in vocational promotion	2	3	4	9	30%
Organizing seminars and workshops to the students on vocations in the Church	1	3	1	5	17%
Organizing talks to families on the importance of vocations in the Church	3	1	3	7	23%
Training pastoral agents on SD and Counseling	0	1	1	2	7%
Promoting youth activities in the parishes	2	1	1	4	13%
<b>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.22 indicates various suggestions to promote vocations in the CDM from priests, sisters and parents. Majority of them 30% suggested the collaboration of the pastoral agents and parents in vocational promotion. This is in line with the feelings of the young people as indicated in Table 4.21 earlier. In a similar manner, these suggestions are very significant in coming up with recommendations for the study.

Research by Rulla, Imoda, and Ridick (2004) confirmed that most candidates entering the priestly and religious life, though apparently normal, were influenced by underlying inconsistencies. The results indicated that 86% of male and 87% of the females examined were partially or completely unaware of their major conflicts at their time of entrance into the novitiate. This means that priest, religious sisters and parents with collaboration with the vocation team can help the young people resolve some of their conflicts before they embrace various vocations.

#### **4.6.3. Vocation Team on Strategies to Overcome the Challenges**

The study sought from the vocation team by way of interviews the strategies employed in overcoming the challenges (Q.10). They gave the following suggestions: Organizing workshops and seminars on vocations; Greater collaboration between the vocation team, teachers, parents and parish priests; Establishing a vocations office; Promoting youth activities and events in the CDM; Involving the seminarians in vocations promotion during their holidays; Preparing brochures on vocations and distributing them across the diocese; Using information technology and social media in promoting vocations; Ordination ceremonies to be localized; Organizing camps for the candidates to the various vocations to religious life; and Organizing talks in schools. Some of the suggestions had been given earlier by the other groups and will be discussed in Chapter 5.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0. Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher presents a summary of the findings and the conclusions derived from the research questions. Equally, recommendations, as well as suggestions, are provided for some areas of further research. The study explored the role of spiritual direction in the discernment and nurturing of vocations to priesthood: A case study of the Catholic Diocese of Malindi, Kenya. The objectives of the study were to investigate how spiritual direction is a means of discerning and nurturing vocation, to explore the meaning of spiritual direction and discernment in general, to identify challenges in vocational discernment, and suggesting appropriate strategies in dealing with the challenges.

The above were the objectives of the study which were presented in chapter one, grounded in the existing literature in chapter two, guided by the mixed research design in chapter three, whose findings were discussed in chapter four. This implies that the previous four chapters, in a cohesive way, built up into this last chapter (five) which presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

#### **5.1. Summary of the Findings**

In this section, the findings of the study, in keeping with the topic under study and its research objectives/questions, are presented.

##### **5.1.1. Spiritual Direction as a Means of Discerning and Nurturing Vocations**

The findings indicate that spiritual direction plays a significant role in vocational discernment and nurturing. This was affirmed by the three core groups of the study (the young people, pastoral agents and the vocation team). In discerning a vocation, we reflect and choose a

way of life. The path we choose however, is in the end not a path of our own invention, but is part of God's design.

Spiritual life consists in discerning God's will vis-à-vis our human will while believing and trusting that God's plans are the best for us. This requires growth in self-awareness. Self-awareness is the crucial first step toward knowledge of God and of oneself. As Saint Augustine (2014, 174) uttered in his Confessions the prayerful words, "Lord, let me know myself, and let me know You". The years of accompanying the young people aim at deepening this two-fold knowledge of self and God so that the will of God and the specific path of discipleship may become clear to each. Spiritual Direction focuses on discovering what hinders and what promotes attentiveness and response to the Spirit's action in this particular directee. It is not simply the skilled application of techniques and strategies mapped out for the achievement of holiness or a deeper Spiritual life. Spiritual Direction is not a speculative venture, but an experiential process focused on one's lived relationship with God. Spiritual Direction is grounded in the experience of the Divine.

Spiritual direction as a means of discerning and nurturing vocations formed the backbone of the study. Majority of the respondents were in agreement that spiritual direction offers the platform where young people can discover their vocations with the help of priests, religious sisters and parents. Most of the respondents agreed that spiritual direction helps in self-awareness, growth in virtue, and in self-transformation. Some respondents were not sure about being open and free to share with priests or others on their vocational needs. Some indicated that their parish priests and those offering spiritual direction were not very friendly and did not exhibit spiritual direction skills. Two seminarians said they were not free to share freely with

their spiritual directors on some matters for the fear that they might be victimized. The above remark could point to a real problem on the ground, namely, the lack of personal (psychological, spiritual) maturity of the director. As key players in the ministry of formation, formators must deal with their own personal issues in order to avoid projections of their feelings on the candidates. “The formator must first do his or her own serious work towards human and spiritual integration, so as not to be a blind guide who increases the person’s confusion rather than giving help” (Merandi 2007, 288).

The study revealed that most of the priests, religious and parents are committed in journeying with the young people in their vocational discovery journey. Only a few disagreed; the religious and parents who disagreed expressed their incompetency in dealing with youth issues. The study established that majority of the respondents indicated that spiritual direction challenges them to be transparent, coherent and to pattern their life on the objective values and ideals that specify their vocations. The challenge to be transparent and coherent is fundamental for a healthy formation, the authenticity of life and ministerial accountability. Looking into their own growth process, formators may see how personal reflection helped them to grow in confidence and self-esteem (McClone (2009). To achieve this goal, those accompanying young people must be capable of greater patience, compassion, empathy, and genuineness. They are to become the mirror wherein the young people can see their limitations, possibilities, and strengths.

Spiritual directors and the vocation team are entrusted with the sacred duty of guiding candidates to discern God’s will in their life. Formators, who have arrived at integrating their own pain and struggles to grow up in their relational lives, will be able to foster growth in others.

By modelling self-acceptance, self-care that reflects their genuine reliance on God and encouraging growth-enhancing opportunities in the community, especially nurturing a healthy balance between pastoral ministry and study, formators can enable candidates to release dormant potentials. Priests, religious sisters, parents and the vocation team can embrace this model of guiding the young people.

The study shows that the diocese needs to have some trained spiritual directors to help the young people in their vocational discernment journeys. Personal growth requires an inward journey; it involves knowing oneself and growing in intimacy with God. According to the document *Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood (2009)*, formators are expected to have good knowledge of the human person, his rhythms of growth, his potentials and weaknesses, his way of living in relationship with God, his human and spiritual dispositions for responding to the divine call in order to provide assistance to the candidates. Catholic theology holds that grace builds on nature; however, cooperation with the work of grace becomes easier if the human personality is sound and healthy (Bala, 2018). This implies that those involved with the discernment of vocations of the young people must also be people who are open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

It is clear in the findings of the study that spiritual direction as a means of vocations discernment is not explored fully in the diocese of Malindi. The findings also indicate that new strategies need to be embraced in order to help the young people discern their vocational choices. Among these strategies include a vibrant youth ministry that responds to the needs of the young people and their recognition in the Church. The researcher's sharing with his priest confreres working in other dioceses revealed that some dioceses in Kenya are doing well in terms of

vocations promotions. Kisii Catholic Diocese in Kenya for example, has a vocation team comprising of priests, religious sisters and parents in every parish. This team is tasked in helping the vocations director in animating various vocations among the young people. The team organises workshops, talks and seminars to the Pontifical Missionary Children, Altar Servers, dancers and the youth. Some of the parishes also have a special group called “vocation group” made up of young boys and girls who are interested in pursuing a priestly or religious vocation. From this group many have joined seminaries and convents. The researcher therefore finds that vocational teams in the parishes are significant in offering assistance to the young people discerning their vocations. This is will be more successful if the team is equipped with some training on spiritual direction. This will go a long way in helping to nurture and discern vocations in the diocese of Malindi.

### **5.1.2. The General Understanding of Spiritual Direction and Discernment**

The study showed that while most of the participants clearly understood what spiritual direction is all about, there were some who did not. Most of the participants agreed that spiritual direction is the help one seeks in an attempt to deepen his or her relationship with God. They also affirmed that other than facilitating spiritual growth, spiritual direction also helps in discernment of vocation. Some of the respondents were open enough to indicate that they have never sought spiritual direction. This calls for sensitization to all the groups in the diocese on the meaning of spiritual direction and its significance in the Christians life. Majority of the seminarians, priests, religious sisters, and the vocation team clearly understood what spiritual direction is and its significant role in vocational discernment. However there are many others, as we have indicated, who need to be oriented in the practice of spiritual direction.

Some youth thought that spiritual companionship is only for the priests and the religious. But all of us are seeking a deeper connection with God in our lives. The process of spiritual direction is for everyone who feels a longing for a more peaceful and hope-filled life. Spiritual direction helps us explore the spiritual aspect of being human. Some others have a misconceived notion of spiritual directors as perfect human beings and expect them to be without any fault. While it certainly helps to find a spiritual director who is a knowledgeable, holy and prudent, yet it may not be easily possible. Some young people expressed that it was difficult to find a spiritual director. There is a popular saying that when the student is ready, the teacher will appear. But you don't have to wait for a spiritual director to come knocking on your door. In the diocese we have priests and sisters who are very good in spiritual direction as the study revealed. But we must come down to the people and enlighten them in the significance of seeking spiritual direction.

Spiritual direction is a ministry within a community of faithful. In this community Christian Theology provides the primary theoretical foundation and justification for the practice of spiritual direction, not just as theoretical psychology does for counseling or psychotherapy. Spiritual direction in the Christian community grows out of and is shaped by the Self-Revelation of God in Christ and the presence of the Spirit. One of the fundamental theological factors that shape Christian spiritual direction is the belief that God of unconditional love invites us, individually and collectively, to live and to act in partnership with God and with one another to bring about the reign of God. In this invitation the reign of God is a reality which encompasses every dimension of life.

Authentic discernment is a spiritual insight aided by grace, closely akin to wisdom. It involves making the right choices, listening to our inner selves and paying attention to the movements that arise within us. Priesthood as a vocation is not a fruit of wilful or rational thinking; it comes from listening to one's life and searching deep into our interior motives. Discernment is "the interior search for an answer to the question of one's vocation, namely, determining whether God is calling one to the married life, single life, consecrated life, ordained ministry or any other calling" (Ezeani 2017, 277). Discernment is a faith rooted experience which consists of "discovering God's direction and guidance in the concrete reality of our day-to-day lives" (Jackson 2004, 38). An interior voice invites one to follow as it leads towards a sense of meaning and purpose.

Spiritual direction is significant in spiritual formation. Spiritual formation involves an internal process of transformation and the acquiring of Christocentric values (Gitau, 2016). Regular moments of prayer, adoration, meditation of the Word, and occasions of *Lectio Divina*, will help the process of transformation. Candidates to priesthood must demonstrate not only in their external behaviour but also in their interior life a change of attitude and heart to live an authentic Christian life. They will embrace with humility the challenging task of laying down their lives in the service of their brothers and sisters at the example of Christ the good shepherd. Inducting the young people in the practise of spiritual direction will help them in their spiritual nourishment. Fostering openness in spiritual direction will help the candidates to priesthood value spiritual direction. It was sad that two seminarians expressed the fact that they had been victimized because of some of the things they had shared in spiritual direction in the seminary.

The findings of the study revealed that some young people did not know the difference between spiritual direction and advice from priests or religious sisters. Whereas we have discussed the meaning of spiritual direction above, it is worth noting that it is not synonymous with advice from either of the above mentioned people. The main protagonist in spiritual direction is the Holy Spirit. The directee and the director must be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. One of the youth indicated that, the sharing during the sacrament of penance is spiritual direction. This might be true in many cases. But often that time for Confessions is very brief and the setting may not be conducive to engage in spiritual direction. This is an indication that spiritual direction should be introduced in the parishes to all the groups and especially to the young people in order to help them nurture and discern their vocations.

### **5.1.3. Challenges in Vocational Discernment**

The study identified some of the challenges in vocational discernment in the diocese. In this section we shall look at these challenges and in the next section deal with the strategies on how to overcome them. Some of the challenges indicated included: The local culture which supports marriage more than priestly or religious life; the impacts and influence of tourism to the young people; limited numbers of Catholic schools; most of the young people do not get the required educational grades to join religious life; poverty levels in the diocese; early marriages and pregnancies among the youth, lack of proper collaboration between the parents and the vocation team, peer influence, and lack of support from parish priests. Most young men would prefer to be employed to help and support their families rather than choosing a religious vocation.

Apart from those socio-cultural challenges mentioned above, the research was also able to identify internal difficulties with both the director and the directee and structural challenges. The findings indicate that some of the respondents (young people) find it hard to be open about their vocational journey. This becomes a challenge in identifying their vocational discernment needs in spiritual direction. Spiritual directors therefore, need to be hospitable and exhibit attitudes that will encourage young people share with them. It was also noted in the study that some priests, religious and parents felt incompetent in offering spiritual guidance. We cannot give what we do not have. They should therefore nourish themselves spiritually in order to help others. The study however showed that majority of priests, religious sisters and parents agreed to be always available to offer spiritual guidance and assist the young people in their vocations discernment. Strategies on reaching out to the young people therefore have to be put in place for the young people to come freely to seek guidance. Some of the respondents (priests, sisters and parents) said that other pastoral/family/work commitments deny them time to be with the young people for guidance. Availability is important in spiritual direction and in family life. Availability and commitment are vital in a successful apostolate especially when dealing with the young people. Majority of all the groups who participated in the study however affirmed the significance of spiritual direction in empowering one to develop a strong sense of identity, cultivate virtues and internalize vocational values.

#### **5.1.4. Proposed Strategies in Dealing with Vocational Discernment Challenges**

The findings show that all the participants in the study had high hopes in overcoming some of the challenges facing vocational discernment in the diocese. The riches of the Church's spiritual tradition provide many resources in guiding the formation of conscience and an authentic freedom. In this regard the study came up with the following strategies.

The first strategy was organizing workshops and seminars on vocations. The use of vocational growth seminars and workshops as a formative instrument can help the young people address their resistances, inner conflicts, and blocks often rooted in the unconscious dimension of human life. In the Catholic Diocese of Malindi, these workshops can be organised to all young people including: missionary children, altar servers, dancers, students and the youth in general. The aim is to increase the degree of their inner freedom, self-awareness and the ability to internalize the objective vocational values. These sessions could provide an atmosphere where candidates can listen, tell their personal stories and deepen their experiences. After painful experiences, healing can only begin when our voices and stories are listened to and heard.

Other suggestions include: collaboration between the vocation team, teachers, parents and parish priests, establishing a vocations office, promoting youth activities and events in the diocese, involving the seminarians in vocations promotion during their holidays, and preparing brochures on vocations and distributing them across the diocese.

The participants further suggested the following: using information technology and social media in promoting vocations, ordination ceremonies to be localized, organizing camps for the candidates to the various vocations to religious life, organizing talks in schools, the Vocations Director should be free from other pastoral engagements, the collaboration of the pastoral agents and parents in vocational promotion, organizing talks to families on the importance of vocations in the Church, and promoting youth activities in the parishes. In addition, the respondents suggested the use of workshops and seminars for formation in human sexuality and vocational counselling. According to Dik and Steger (2008) candidates who participate in counselling workshops have higher levels of vocational discernment and self-efficacy.

As indicated earlier, establishing vocational promotional groups in the parishes is very significant. Vocational promotion is not an exclusive responsibility for the Bishop and the Vocations Director only! Families, small Christian communities, catechists, educational institutions, priests, sisters and the community at large have a role to play in shaping the vocational choices of young people.

## **5.2. Reflexivity**

This study has broadened my understanding of spiritual direction in journeying and supporting young men in vocational discernment process. The process of coding and interpreting the findings revealed to me the value of being concise and accurate in identifying issues being faced by others and to be always mindful of detaching my own interpretation in order to be in touch with the reality of the mystery of the experiences of other people.

Through the study I have realized that listening is essential in spiritual direction. I gained this insight through objective listening and giving due importance to the information provided by the respondents. The research helped to sharpen my technical skills and to ensure the correctness of what I was doing. I realized I was not only challenged to develop my skills as a researcher but even my basic virtues as an individual. I came to examine my own experiences and became more appreciative of what I have gained in this study.

## **5.3. Conclusion**

The findings of the study were in line with our literature review in Chapter Two. From the study, it is clear that spiritual direction as a means of discerning and nurturing vocations must be supported by prayer, discernment, healthy relationships, spiritual direction, and sacraments. From the study; it is clear that spiritual direction plays a crucial role in facilitating discernment,

fostering growth and guiding candidates to embrace vocational identity as confirmed by the majority of the respondents. The more we grow in our personal relationship with the Lord Jesus, the more we realize that he is calling us to holiness in and through the definitive choices by which we respond to his love in our lives. Vocation is a circular movement because it is a return to the Father, a return to the original Logos through whom and for which we were created.

The study, therefore, recommends the adequate training of all pastoral agents in the art of journeying with candidates. Those tasked with youth ministry fail as pastors if they do not have the interpersonal skills for active listening, group facilitation, and reading people's emotions. They are expected to walk closely with the young people in the context of their human and spiritual development, providing the requisite understanding, empathy, non-judgmental regard, and support them in their struggles towards growth in holiness and wholeness. Young people can be assisted to reflect more deeply on their behavioural pattern, feelings, and thoughts through a commitment to the daily exercise of prayer, mindfulness and unconditional self-acceptance. In this way, they can be helped to achieve healing and growth through deep listening.

The vocation team must include parents, families and educational institutions in their endeavour to have vocations in the CDM. To achieve this ideal, we rely firstly on the grace of God, and then we must work together, joining forces, and uniting our energies and resources. To that end, all those committed to the mission of forming priests, both before ordination and throughout their priestly ministry, should draw up a plan, sharing common criteria and a common goal. That goal is a formation which is unified, gradual and integrated, and that takes place within an environment of community life. The researcher is certain that with a well-coordinated team, all these will be achieved in the diocese.

Our study has shown that vocational discernment is important in the initial stages before one decides to join the seminary and thereafter. Vocational discernment and nurturing must be gradual. This process of formation is necessary, in order to personalize the path to the priesthood. Not everyone matures in the same way and according to the same pattern. The intention should be to offer a path which is, at the same time, progressive and cumulative, in which a definite decision is made at every step, while remaining open to continual growth. Along the entire path, a disciple of Jesus is formed, called to be a shepherd. Furthermore, the priest is exhorted to renew daily the gift received by the laying on of hands. In all these instances, spiritual direction sustains vocational discernment and strengthens it.

This year (2019) the diocese did not manage to get even a single candidate to join the seminary. Last year (2018) only two candidates joined the seminary. It is therefore necessary to reflect on new strategies of promoting vocations (especially to priesthood) in the diocese. Young people need mentorship and guidance in choosing what they want in life. This thesis therefore offers the means of journeying with the young people with the aim of helping them discern their vocations. The founding Bishop of the diocese (Francis Baldacchino OFM CAP) chose as his motto “*Duc in altum*” (“put out into the deep” Lk. 5:4). The Diocesan leadership must therefore take a collective responsibility of guiding the young people discern their vocations in the Church.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- The contribution of parents, families, and educational facilities in vocational discernment must not be under looked. Consequently, they are to be involved and wherever possible incorporated in the vocational discernment process.

- All the young people's groups should have vocational animation forums where they can be enlightened on the various vocations in the Church. These groups include: Missionary children, dancers, altar servers and the youths both in schools and out of school.
- All pastoral agents must be sensitive to the various needs of the young people. They must be interested in empowering the youth and be involved in their events so that they can offer proper guidance from where vocations can grow.
- Establishing vocational promotional groups in the parishes.
- The priests must be role models to be emulated by young men who might be inclined to join priesthood.
- The diocese should establish more Catholic schools (primary and secondary) where vocations can be nurtured. Currently we only have one Catholic secondary.
- The young people who show interest in joining the seminary in secondary schools can be helped with extra tuition so that they can acquire the grades needed.
- There should be a physical Vocations Office where young people can find assistance related to vocational discernment issues.

#### **5.4. Areas of Further Research**

Some areas for further research work that emerged from this study include:

- Further research on the significance of spiritual direction on the youth's self-transformation and self-awareness.
- Further research on the parent's role in the vocational discovery of their children.
- Further research on the contribution of educational institutions on vocational discernment.

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1: Research Consent Form – Participants**

**Research project:** Spiritual Direction as a means of discerning and nurturing vocations to priesthood in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi.

**Brief outline of the study, its purpose and the activities for participants:** The study aims at finding the role of spiritual direction in discerning and nurturing vocations to priesthood. Discernment of authentic consecrated vocations: A case of The Catholic Diocese of Malindi. This questionnaire is designed to obtain your personal perspectives in this area. Your answers and sharing is very important for this study, they will be treated confidentially within the horizon of this study. Thank you in advance for accepting to participate in this questionnaire.

**Name:** Peter Karanja Kamau

**Position:** A Priest in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi, a Masters Student at Tangaza.

**Contacts:** Catholic Diocese of Malindi. P.O. BOX 1573.Malindi. 0725278303.

Signed by the Researcher .....

Date .....

**Statement to be signed by the Participants:**

- ✓ I confirm that the organizer has explained fully the nature of the project and all the activities which I will be asked to do. I confirm that I have had enough opportunity to ask questions about this project.
- ✓ I understand that, my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time during the project, without having to give a reason.
- ✓ I agree to take part voluntarily in this project.

Signature .....

Date .....

**Appendix 2: Questionnaire for the Students/Youth/Seminarians**

**Introduction:** I am a Masters student at Tangaza University College, Nairobi pursuing my MA in Spirituality and Religious Formation. As part of the academic requirements, I am expected to do research. My topic is: *Spiritual Direction as a Means of Nurturing and discerning Vocations to Priesthood in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi Kenya*. Kindly i request your assistance in filling this questionnaire appropriately.

**Section A: Background information**

1. Parish.....
2. Gender.....Male.....Female.....
3. Age bracket...17-25.....26-35.....36 and above.....
4. Level of Education.....Certificate.....Diploma.....Degree and above.....

**Section B: On how spiritual direction is a means of discerning and nurturing vocations to priesthood in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi**

Serial No.	STATEMENT	NS	D	SA	SD	A
5.	Priests, religious and parents are committed to listen and guide the youths on vocation discernment					
6.	My spiritual director does not exhibit the interpersonal skills of active listening, empathy, non-judgmental and genuineness					
7.	I feel free and safe to share my family background and personal life with my spiritual director and it enhances my growth					
8.	Schools and other educational institutions contribute to young people’s formation in vocational discernment					

**Section C: On the meaning of spiritual direction and discernment**

Kindly tick (√) against the five-points scale where (SA) = Strongly Agree; (A) = Agree; (NS) = Not Sure; (D) = Disagree; (SD) = Strongly Disagree.

Serial No.	STATEMENT	SA	A	NS	D	SD
9.	Spiritual direction is the help I seek in an attempt to deepen my relationship with God, or to learn and grow in spirituality					
10.	Spiritual direction facilitates spiritual growth and vocational discernment.					
11.	Families and communities are involved in helping young people in all forms of discernment.					
12.	I frequently go for spiritual direction.					

**Section D: On the challenges in vocational discernment in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi**

Serial No.	STATEMENT	D	SA	SD	A	NS
13.	I find it hard to be open to priests, religious and parents on my vocational discernment journey					
14.	The behavioural style and attitude of my spiritual director encourages me to be open to him/her					
15.	Spiritual direction empowers me to develop a strong sense of identity, cultivate virtues and internalize vocational values					

16.	The clergy, religious, and parents are always available to listen to the needs of the young people					
-----	--	--	--	--	--	--

17. Spiritual direction helps to transform and to nurture in me a servant-consciousness inspired by compassion, forgiveness, generosity, gratitude, joy and service.

Yes..... No.....

Please explain your response:

**Section E: Onstrategies for addressing issues and challenges related to discernment of vocations to priesthood in the catholic diocese of Malindi**

18. May you kindly give other suggestions or strategies for promoting vocations to priesthood in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi?

**Appendix 3: Questionnaire for the Clergy, Religious and Parents**

**Introduction:** I am a Masters student at Tangaza University College, Nairobi pursuing my MA in Spirituality and Religious Formation. As part of the academic requirements, I am expected to do research. My topic is: *Spiritual Direction as a Means of Nurturing and discerning Vocations to Priesthood in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi Kenya*. Kindly i request your assistance in filling this questionnaire appropriately.

**Section A: Background information**

1. Parish.....
2. Gender.....Male.....Female.....
3. Age bracket...17-25.....26-35.....36 and above.....
4. Level of Education.....Certificate.....Diploma.....Degree and above.....

**Section B: On how spiritual direction is a means of discerning and nurturing vocations to priesthood in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi**

Serial No.	STATEMENT	NS	D	SA	SD	A
5.	Priests, religious and parents are committed to listen and guide the youths on vocation discernment					
6.	I do not exhibit the interpersonal skills of active listening, empathy, non-judgmental and genuineness					
7.	I feel free and safe to share my personal life with my spiritual directee					
8.	Schools and other educational institutions contribute to young people’s formation in vocational discernment					

**Section C: On the meaning of spiritual direction and discernment**

Kindly tick (√) against the five-points scale where (SA) = Strongly Agree; (A) = Agree; (NS) = Not Sure; (D) = Disagree; (SD) = Strongly Disagree.

Serial No.	STATEMENT	SA	A	NS	D	SD
9.	Spiritual direction is the help I give or receive in an attempt to deepen my relationship with God, or to learn and grow in my personal spirituality.					
10.	Guidance in Spiritual direction facilitates spiritual growth and vocational discernment.					
11.	Families and communities are involved in helping young people in all forms of discernment.					

**Section D: On the challenges in vocational discernment in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi**

Serial No.	STATEMENT	D	SA	SD	A	NS
12.	I find it hard to be open about my vocational discernment journey					
13.	Spiritual direction empowers me to develop a strong sense of identity, cultivate virtues and internalize vocational values					
14.	Am always available to offer spiritual guidance and assist the young people in their vocations discernment					

**Section E: On strategies for addressing issues and challenges related to discernment of vocations to priesthood in the catholic diocese of Malindi**

15. May you kindly give other suggestions or strategies for promoting vocations to priesthood in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi?

**Appendix 4: Interview Schedule with the Vocation Team)**

**Introduction:** - I am a master’s student at Tangaza University College, Nairobi pursuing my MA in Spirituality and Religious Formation. As part of the academic requirements, I am expected to do research. My topic is: Spiritual Direction as a Means of Nurturing and discerning Vocations to Priesthood in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi Kenya. Kindly I request your cooperation in this interview. The information obtained will be used for academic purposes only. Thanks in advance.

**Section A: Background Information (to be filled by the interviewer)**

1. Parish.....
2. Gender.....Male.....Female.....
3. Age bracket.....17-25.....26-35.....36 and above.....
4. Level of Education.....Certificate.....Diploma.....Degree and above.....

**Section B: On how spiritual direction is a means of discerning and nurturing vocations to priesthood in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi**

5. In your opinion, are spiritual directors adequately prepared to use the skills of active listening, empathy, non-judgmental regard, and genuineness/congruence in the accompaniment of the young people?
6. Do you engage parents in discussions regarding their children’s needs, feelings and relationships in a manner that enhances their growth?

**Section C: On the meaning of spiritual direction and discernment**

7. Are there Provisions made for spiritual direction for the young people to help them in their vocational discernment?
8. Do you feel that spiritual direction can be helpful in making genuine discernment for commitment to join priesthood?

**Section D: On the challenges in vocational discernment in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi**

9. Kindly mention some of the challenges you encounter in dealing with the youth and vocations discernment.

**Section E: On strategies for addressing issues and challenges related to discernment of vocations to priesthood in the catholic diocese of Malindi**

10. In your opinion, what strategies should be employed to promote vocations to priesthood in the diocese?

## **Appendix 5: NACOSTI Permit**

## Appendix 6: NACOSTI Authorization Letter



### NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,  
2241349, 3310571, 2219420  
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249  
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke  
Website : www.nacosti.go.ke  
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete  
Off Waiyaki Way  
P.O. Box 30623-00100  
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No. **NACOSTI/P/19/70390/30981**

Date: **27<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

Peter Karanja Kamau  
Tangaza University  
P.O Box 15055-00509  
**NAIROBI.**

#### **RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “*Spiritual direction as a tool of nurturing and discerning vocations to priesthood in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi Kenya.*” I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Kilifi County** for the period ending **24<sup>th</sup> June, 2020.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner, and the County Director of Education, Kilifi County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit **a copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

**DR. ROY B. MUGHRA, PhD.**  
**FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO**

Copy to:

The County Commissioner  
Kilifi County.

The County Director of Education  
Kilifi County.

*National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation is ISO9001:2008 Certified*

## Appendix 7: Authorization from the Diocese



# Catholic Diocese of Malindi

P.O. Box 1573 – 80200 Malindi – Kenya, E. Africa  
Tel: +254 42- 2131489 Fax: +254 42 – 2130835 Wireless: +254 020-2335189  
Email: malindidiocese@yahoo.com

17-06-2019

To whom it may concern.

Dear Sir/Madam.

Ref: **Fr. Peter Karanja.**

This is to certify that the above mentioned person is a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Malindi pursuing a

masters course at Tangaza University College Nairobi.

He is permitted to collect data for his thesis.

Kindly offer him your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Fr. Albert Buijs.

Diocesan Administration.



#### Incorporation

Caritas Malindi  
Fax: +254 4220810  
Mob: +254 723234761  
Tel: + 254 42 30767  
Email: malindidevelopment@yahoo.com

#### Development & Social Services

Liturgy  
SILC Innovations  
Gender

Pastoral  
Health & Family Life  
PMS

Education  
Youth & Vocation  
Motolese Professional School

Communication  
Justice & Peace

*Tunakimbilia Ulinzi Wako*

## Appendix 8: Authorization from Directorate of Postgraduate Studies and Research



# TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

The Catholic University of Eastern Africa

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH & POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

E-mail: [dir.pgsrc@tangaza.ac.ke](mailto:dir.pgsrc@tangaza.ac.ke)

Website: [www.tangaza.ac.ke](http://www.tangaza.ac.ke)

OUR Ref: DPGSR/ERC/05/2019

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019

Karanja Peter Kamau  
Institute of Spirituality and Religious Formation  
School of Theology  
Tangaza University College

Dear Karanja,

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORISATION FOR KARANJA PETER KAMAU, REG. NO. 17/00285**

Reference is made to your letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019 requesting for ethical review of your research tool to carry out a research on "*Spiritual direction as a tool of nurturing and discerning vocations to priesthood in the Catholic Diocese of Malindi, Kenya*".

I am pleased to inform you that, the ethics review committee has authorized your request subject to implementing the suggested corrections by the review committee. Also, the committee advises that before you proceed to collect data, you get authorisation/ research permit from NACOSTI for the same and any other body as may be directed.

This approval is valid for one year from 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

Please, ensure that after the data analysis and final write up, you submit a hard bound copy of the thesis to the Director of Research – Tangaza University College for records purposes.

Yours sincerely,



**DR. DANIEL M. KITONGA (Ph.D.)**  
*Director, Research & Postgraduate Studies*  
Tangaza University College

CC: Rev. Dr. Jude Chisanga – Programme Leader, MA Spirituality & Religious Formation (ISRF)

## Appendix 9: Authorization from Institute of Spirituality and Religious Studies



**TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**  
The Catholic University of Eastern Africa  
P.O. Box 15055-00509 Langata Nairobi  
Tell: 020-2379048/0722-204724



### INSTITUTE OF SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGIOUS FORMATION

21<sup>st</sup> May 2019.

The Commission Secretary,  
National Council for Science and Technology,  
P.O. Box 30623,  
Nairobi – Kenya.

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Ref.: Karanja Peter Kamau (17/00285)**

This is to certify that the person named above is a student at Tangaza University College (TUC). He is registered in the Institute of Spirituality and Religious Formation (Reg. No. 17/00285) and is pursuing an MA in Spirituality and Religious Formation. He has met all our provisional academic requirements leading to data collection. However, he cannot proceed to the field before he submits a copy of a Research Permit from the Kenyan Government, to the Research and Quality Assurance Office of Tangaza University College (TUC). Kindly assist him to process a permit as soon as you could.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours Faithfully,

**(ISRF MA Programme Leader)**

cc: Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and Students' Affairs.  
Director of Post Graduate Studies & Research.  
ISRF Director.  
Student.

INSTITUTE OF SPIRITUALITY  
AND RELIGIOUS FORMATION  
**TANGAZA COLLEGE**  
The Catholic University of Eastern Africa  
P.O. Box 15055, NAIROBI - Kenya