

# The Year 2000 “Best of the Web” for Spiritual Directors

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**I**t's no news that the Internet has changed the way we live. Email has replaced much of our letter-writing, and the World Wide Web has replaced the library as our first stop when doing research. It has also affected our ministry as spiritual directors, in that it has made a wide variety of resources available right at our fingertips, allowed for greater conversation and collaboration between directors, and has revolutionized how we present ourselves to the world. We here at Presence thought that there would be no better way to welcome the new century than to “review” this technological revolution, and to feature “the best that we could find” that might be of interest to spiritual directors. Below you will find numerous websites, pages, and email lists to help you in your ministry. Happy New Year!

## ART & ICONS

### Orthodox Byzantine Icons

<http://www.skete.com>

A beautiful and efficient place to shop for literally hundreds of Orthodox icons, all of which you can view online. The interface is attractive, and as easy to use as amazon.com or any other top-notch commercial site, and a lot less confusing than most. Worth visiting just to gaze on the fantastic assemblage of images. This site also includes a nice selection of Orthodox books, crosses and other jewelry. Not to be missed.



"SILOUAN OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN"

### The Artifact

<http://www.theartifact.com>

The Artifact is a site filled with art reproductions from around the world. Represented are Egyptian,



Greek, Roman, and Celtic pieces. Plaques, statues, and tapestries ranging in price from under \$20 to \$600. This is a graphic intensive site, so you need to be patient waiting for the images to load. They offer a 5% discount for orders on-line. The ordering process is simple and all the math is done for you!

### Bridge Building Images

<http://www.bridgebuilding.com>

This is the online source for the well known Bridge Building Images products, which offers outstanding icons and other artwork. The graphics load quickly and getting around in the site is not difficult. The codes for the different available formats are a bit confusing, but the ordering process is simple. They have regular specials (like "buy 3 get one free"), and



**Bridge  
Building  
Images**

offer a variety of products: note cards, meditation cards, icons, large plaques, posters—even refrigerator magnets!—by artists Robert Lentz, Fr. John Giuliani, and others. This is a great resource for small and large icons at reasonable prices.

### SEEscapes.com

<http://www.netacc.net/seescapes>

This site "celebrates all that we can see spiritually, through all that we see."

It is a photo gallery by Len Sroka featuring

photo montages accompanied by spiritual meditations. This is a hard site to leave, as so many of the photos are evocative and inspiring. Attractive and simple, this site contains many more pictures than you would expect. A true visual treat.



### BOOKS & CDs

#### Advanced Book Exchange

<http://www.abebbooks.com>

A great resource for finding out-of-print books. ABE has a good selection of spirituality-related material on this site. Getting around might be a bit confusing at first, but it's worth taking the time to learn.

#### Spiritual Rx

<http://www.spiritualrx.com>

This online supplement to the print-magazine is attractive and, unlike ABE, simple to navigate. I hesitated to include it as it is such an obviously commercial site, but as I perused it, its value to spiritual directors became immediately clear. The editors of Spiritual Rx really have their fingers on the pulse of spiritual publishing. Every Friday they update their site with new reviews of recently published books. This is a perfect way to stay current on what's "out there." It also features a searchable database including every review they've ever run! The site also

reviews videos and feature films, offers a good selection of articles on spirituality, and includes a “News” section for spiritually-related news stories. There is even a “daily meditation” list you can join. Although the major funder is Trinity Episcopal Church, Wall Street, it is interfaith in its focus. Oh, and of course, any of the books or videos may be purchased right there on the site. Check out their mother site, focused on the relationship between spirituality and health at: <http://www.spiritualityhealth.com>



## CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

### Christian Classics

#### Ethereal Library

<http://ccel.wheaton.edu/>

Absolutely fabulous! Everything from St. John of the Cross to John Calvin and everything in between. Texts from authors ranging from early Christian Church Fathers to the present. Want to hear what St. Athanasius had to say on the incarnation, click here. Want to read the entire *Interior Castle* or the *Divine Comedy*? Only a click away. So are the sermons of Martin Luther and the mystical poetry of John Donne. Simply the most extensive collection of Christian texts available in one place. Also includes sections on fiction (*Anna Karenina* or *At the Back of the North Wind*, anyone?), hymns (200 midi files ready for download) and reference (numerous Bible versions, Matthew Henry's *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, and more!).

### Online Concordance

<http://www.concordance.com/scripture.htm>

A wonderful resource for online searchable Concordances for Scriptures including the Bible (KJV), Apocrypha, Koran, Bhagavad-Gita, Tao Te Ching, Confucius, and more. It is easy to use and fast. Allow plenty of time to explore the links page, which is fascinating.

## CONTEMPLATIVE MINISTRY

The Collaborative Ministry Office at Creighton University

<http://www.creighton.edu/>

[CollaborativeMinistry/cmo.html](http://www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/cmo.html)

A simple site with a couple of outstanding features. First, there are daily spiritual reflections written by the Creighton faculty, corresponding to lectionary readings. Most impressive, however is the 34-week online retreat based on the Ignatian Exercises. Each week comes with extensive material for reflection, including suggested pictures to use each week as your computer wallpaper (such as the one above). Also worth noting on this site is the online stations of the cross, complete with photos of alabaster plaques. A small collection of articles on finding God in everyday life is the icing on the cake. A remarkable site for daily spiritual nurture.

### Contemplative Outreach

<http://www.centeringprayer.com>

Contemplative Outreach is a spiritual network of individuals and small faith communities committed to living the contemplative dimension of Christian life through the practice of Centering Prayer. Fr.

Thomas Keating is their most well-known speaker. This site is easily navigated and filled with interesting information about programs offered and materials available. Check out their Archives and Links pages.

#### Lord Teach Us To Pray

<http://www.cptryon.org/prayer>

This website, run by Passionists, is an eye-pleasing site, and contains many features similar to the Collaborative Ministry site. This site is specifically devoted to helping people pray. There is a special



section for children, and again, an online guided retreat including an online prayerbook for the daily offices. In addition to articles on prayer, this site also contains an online stations of the cross and collections of prayers for various liturgical seasons.

#### ECUMENISM & INTERFAITH

##### Ecumenical and Interfaith Dialogue Resources

<http://www.gtu.edu/library/LibEcumenism.html>

Here is a simple site containing the Ecumenical and Interfaith-Dialogue Resources list maintained by the Graduate Theological Union's Flora Lamson Hewlett Library in Berkeley, CA, USA. It includes international organizations, North American organizations, Schools, Research Institutes, and Scholarly Associations. It also has a link to the On-Line Ecumenical Documents Project.

#### United Religions Initiative

<http://www.united-religions.org/newsite>

The URI is working to found the spiritual counterpart of the



United Nations, the "United Religions" where all spiritual traditions can put aside their dogmatic differences and speak with one voice on issues of human and animal rights, peace, environmental justice, and other pressing concerns. The URI site is a sleek and attractive introduction for this visionary organization. It contains the URI charter, a worldwide calendar of events, a great set of links to religious sites of every stripe, and a photo gallery of folks from around the world at URI meetings and celebrations.

#### HUMOR

##### Teresa's Center: Clean

##### Humor and Christian Spirituality

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/5655/>

This is as large a compendium of good, clean religious fun as we have ever seen. You can select jokes in alphabetical order or search by category. It's hard to leave this site, believe me. As a bonus, webmaster Teresa Carrigan includes a good introduction to Centering Prayer! There are several articles available, and links to other centering prayer sites. Also helpful are links to daily joke and contemplative readings email lists. The site even includes an e-hug — what more could you ask for?

### How NOT to Pray

[http://www.acts17-11.com/pray\\_tell.html](http://www.acts17-11.com/pray_tell.html)

This is a humorous list of pray-ers I'm sure most of us will recognize. Dean and Laura Van Druff's pages are about as attractive a personal site as you could want, and contains some other humorous content as well. Don't miss their "Conversational Terrorism" page ([http://www.vandruff.com/art\\_converse.html](http://www.vandruff.com/art_converse.html)).

### LECTIO DIVINA

#### Lectio Divina: The Contemplative Prayer Online Magazine

<http://www.lectiodivina.org/index.htm>

A fine online newsletter that is both easy on the eye and packed with contemplative tidbits. This site



contains articles, full texts of books, book excerpts (personally lent from such luminaries as Basil Pennington), and sermons on Centering Prayer and *lectio divina*. This site also

boasts an up-to-date listing of centering prayer workshops throughout the USA, with a few in other countries as well.

#### The Order of St. Benedict / Lectio Divina

<http://www.osb.org/lectio/>

This is a small, no-nonsense site that nonetheless contains links to many classic texts regarding *lectio*. Articles and excerpts from *The Cloud of Unknowing* (by an anonymous 14th-century English author), Guigo II's *Scala Claustralium*, and *The Nine Ways of Prayer of St. Dominic* (1260–1288) are just a smattering of what's available from this site, but it gives you an idea of the "classical" nature of this site. It's not much to look

at, but contains some good, contemplative reading. And with *lectio*, that's what it's all about, isn't it?

### MYSTICS & MYSTICISM

#### Mysticism in World Religions

<http://www.digiserve.com/mystic/index.html>

This site contains a smorgasbord of quotations organized by topic, or by author/source. There are no fancy graphics, but the design is nonetheless clean and attractive (and loads quickly even on slower machines). It focuses on six religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism, and covers each tradition's wisdom on the basic foundations of mysticism, from the realization that there is a reality beyond the material world to embodying that reality. The quotes are from many disparate (and some unusual) sources. Truly a not-to-miss site.

#### The Christpath: The Ezine of Christian Mystics, Traditional and Contemporary

<http://christpath.com/>

A beautifully designed site with a subject equally pleasing. This monthly-magazine format site edited by Brian Robertson includes features and regular



departments. Back issues are also available. The traditional artwork is all appealing, rarely cloying, and gives the peruser an uplifted, inspired feeling. A friendly, joyous site that celebrates Christian mystics while remaining relevant to contemporary culture. A *USA Today* Hot Site.

### **Mysticism & Mystics**

<http://www.concentric.net/~Cosmas/mysticism.htm>

This site features a very accessible list of mystics. Though the site below is to be commended for having descriptions of its mystics, this one is clearer visually, making it quicker to access information.

### **Who's Who in the History of Mysticism**

<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/gthursby/mys/whoswho.htm>

A simple site that will astound and amaze! This is a chronological list of every major figure in the history of mysticism. Prepared by Bruce B. Janz of Augustana University College, in Camrose, Alberta, Canada for the free use of scholars, this site hyperlinks each of these persons to articles about them somewhere else on the worldwide web. It covers not only Christian mysticism, but also mystics from ancient Greek, Jewish, and Islamic traditions as well. It also includes a good bibliography. One to have bookmarked!

## **PRAYER**

### **Sacred Space**

<http://www.jesuit.ie/prayer/>

One of the most beautiful and soulful sites we have ever beheld. Sacred Space, maintained by Irish Jesuits, is one of the few places on the web that doesn't feel like you've stepped onto the Las Vegas strip. From the moment it pops up on the screen, the simple image and relaxing wallpaper draw you in and invite you to prayer. Each day has a course of

prayer and meditation that is innovative and profound. Not your standard Daily Office! Prayers are offered in English, Spanish, and Gaelic. This site is popular, too: over 188,000 people have prayed there since Ash Wednesday 1999.

### **The Christian Prayer and Contemplation Forum**

<http://www.innerexplorations.com/forum/the.htm>

An attractive site that sees itself as the meeting place for an online community, this site is by and for people seriously interested in the life of prayer and contemplative practices like Centering Prayer. Several newsletters are available, and also a form so that you can "join" the community. Information is also available for living a "lay" monastic discipline. This site includes a Christian Mysticism page that contains many texts, articles, photo galleries, and links to mysticism sites, especially Carmelite sites.

## **PERSONALITY TYPES & PSYCHOLOGY**

### **Enneagram Personality Dynamics**

<http://graphics.lcs.mit.edu/~becca/enneagram/>

Don't let the simplicity of this site deceive you. It is a very complex and rewarding site to bookmark. This site contains a test to determine one's Enneagram type, as well as detailed descriptions of the types. Most exciting is that this site contains message boards to discuss all things Enneagram. There's even a special message board for fours (God love 'em!). Newly added to the site is live chat access. Rebecca Xiong has done a non-flashy, but truly impressive feat of webmastering. A no-miss site for Enneaphiles.

### **The Keirsey Character Sorter**

<http://www.keirsey.com/cgi-bin/keirsey/kcs.cgi>

Dr. David Keirsey's online abbreviated version of the Myers/Briggs Personality Inventory is called the Keirsey Personality Sorter. (Dr. Keirsey is the author

of *Please Understand Me*.) He looks at four temperaments called Artisan, Guardian, Idealist, and Rational. His understanding is easily approachable and some people may find it more helpful than the Myers/Briggs.

### **The Personality Project**

<http://pmc.psych.nwu.edu/personality.html>

Literally a clearinghouse of psychology, specifically for those interested in personality theory and research. William Revelle, Director of the Graduate Program in Personality, Department of Psychology at Northwestern University, runs this site which is updated frequently. The Personality Project offers links to an almost endless list of articles on such topics as personality theory, personality taxonomies, and assessment and applications. It also includes links to academic and non-academic webpages, journals, discussion groups, psychological organizations, and a special section on advice for students.

## **SPIRITUAL DIRECTION**

### **Spiritual Directors International**

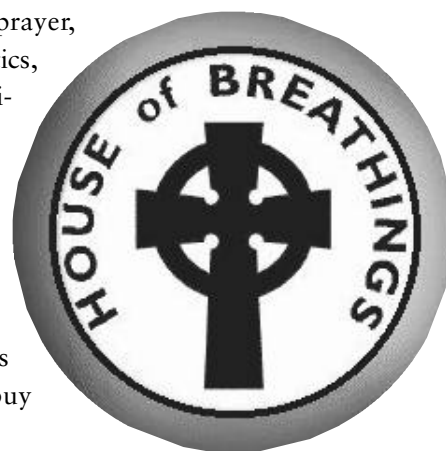
<http://www.sdiworld.org>

Not to toot our own horn or anything, but the SDI website is a valuable addition to our list. If you haven't been in a while, make sure to stop by soon! Webmaster Lyle Kesecker-Dotson has put in a lot of hard work making this site useful as well as informative. Useful for members is the listing of retreat centers and training centers for spiritual directors, many listings with links to the centers' own websites. There is also a page listing every audiotape available from SDI Conferences dating back to 1991! "What is Spiritual Direction" takes you to an interview with SDI executive director Jeff Gaines, and on the *Presence* page you can become acquainted with the journal's editorial board (marginally embarrassing photos included).

### **House of Breathings**

<http://www.anamchara.com/foyer.htm>

The House of Breathings is quite simply the finest personal website on the subject of spiritual direction I have seen to date. Simply go to the URL above and click on "Spiritual Formation Online" for well-written articles on spiritual direction, contemplative prayer, spiritual formation, and rule of life. The brainchild of spiritual director Carl McColman, it is a fine introduction to the ministry, with practical helps for those searching for a spiritual director. The site also features pages on contemplative prayer, the English mystics, Celtic spirituality, and inter-faith dialogue. To top it off, Carl gives lists of suggested books and music, with links to places to buy them, naturally.



## **EMAIL LISTS**

### **IHP-NET**

Forum for dialogue and resource sharing among persons of all religious traditions, regarding the dynamic relationship between spirituality and health. To subscribe, email: [IHP-NET-REQUEST@synasoft.com](mailto:IHP-NET-REQUEST@synasoft.com). In the message field, type: subscribe

### **LUXDIVINA-L:**

#### **The Prayerful Art of Spiritual Companionship**

The Prayerful Art of Spiritual Companionship is an ecumenical formative mailing list for mature Christian contemplatives who feel called to accompany others on their path. The list members must have a regular and daily practice of Centering Prayer

and *lectio divina*. To subscribe, go to: <http://maelstrom.stjohns.edu/archives/luxdivina-l.html>

### The Meditation List

Most of the list members have a mystical orientation to their own religious tradition. Religious or "spiritual" proselytizing is contrary to the list's guidelines. To subscribe, write: [major@johnco.cc.ks.us](mailto:major@johnco.cc.ks.us)

### Music and Spirituality

The purpose of this list is to discuss the transformations contemporary music is undergoing at the end of this millennium and speculate on the form which new music creation will take in the next millennium. To subscribe: go to [www.chass.utoronto.ca/8080/~chatzis](http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/8080/~chatzis) (click on "Music and Spirituality," bottom of the list on the left side of the page).

### SDITALK

SDI's own email list is finding its sea-legs and developing into a friendly and helpful community.

Spiritual Directors from around the world share their insights, struggles, and questions daily. SDITALK serves the SDI community, and is open to SDI members only. To subscribe, send a message to: [sditalk-request@lists.best.com](mailto:sditalk-request@lists.best.com) with the following word in the body of the message: subscribe.

### Spiramed

The spiramed list is for discussing all aspects of the integration of spirituality in medicine, psychology, and psychiatry. All therapists are invited to join, but it is also a place for non-therapists who would like to share their experiences. To subscribe: [listserv@maelstrom.stjohns.edu](mailto:listserv@maelstrom.stjohns.edu). In the message field, simply type: sub spiramed firstname lastname z

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### About the Cover

Our cover this year is "The Alef-Bet of Renewal" by Rose Ann Chasman (for more on the artist, see page 52). About this piece, Chasman writes:

"The letters of the Hebrew alphabet—the *Alef-Bet*—have profound mystical symbolism. Traditionally seen as G-d's first creation, the letters become Divine tools in the formation of the universe. Each letter has numerical value. *Alef* ("A") is "one," *bet* ("B") is "two," etc., suggesting the numbered particles in atomic nuclei. Playful and profound religious commentary is based on *gematria*—the permutation of numerical values of letters and words.

"The four letters of the Divine Name are objects

of mystic meditation. The very structure of the letters has meaning. The diagonal of the *Alef* suggests an axis linking heaven and earth; the circular *Samekh* suggests a gateway.

"Legends tell of simple folk, ignorant of text and liturgy, who recited the letters of the *Alef-Bet*, trusting that G-d would weave them into words of prayer, and of how their prayers were answered.

"'The Alef-Bet of Renewal' is one of my many *Alef-Bet* pieces. I have in mind the words of Franz Rosenzweig, an associate of Martin Buber, celebrating Jewish renewal in the modern world, as a movement from immersion in the assumptions of secular culture to a renewed appreciation of the religious tradition—'from the outside in—from the periphery back to the center'." z