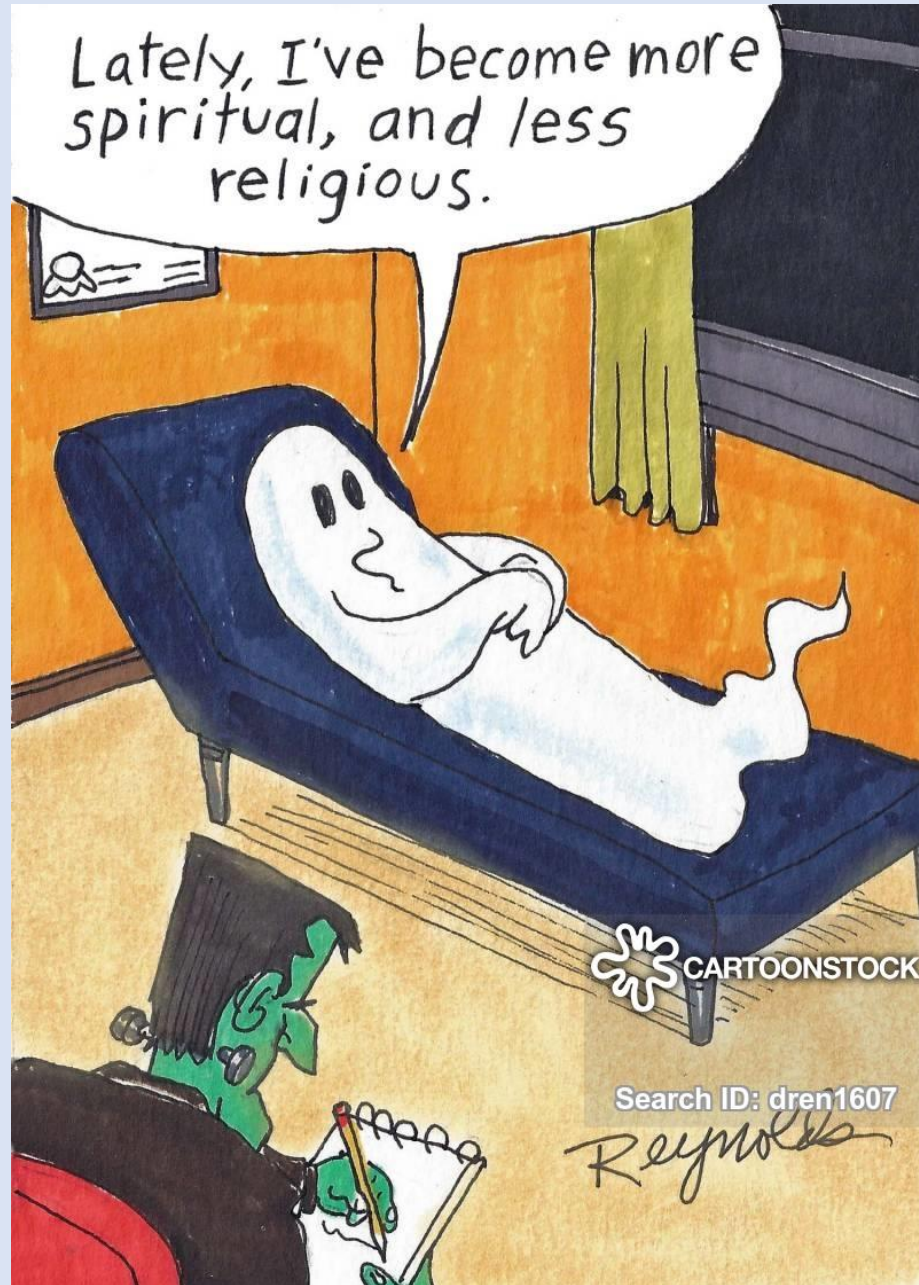


Reflections on Religion and Spirituality

created and read by Susan Rakoczy, IHM

for the Discovery section of Movement 1 of
IHM Chapter Direction – Exploration into Spirituality

February 1, 2021 – July 31, 2021



Reflections on Religion and Spirituality



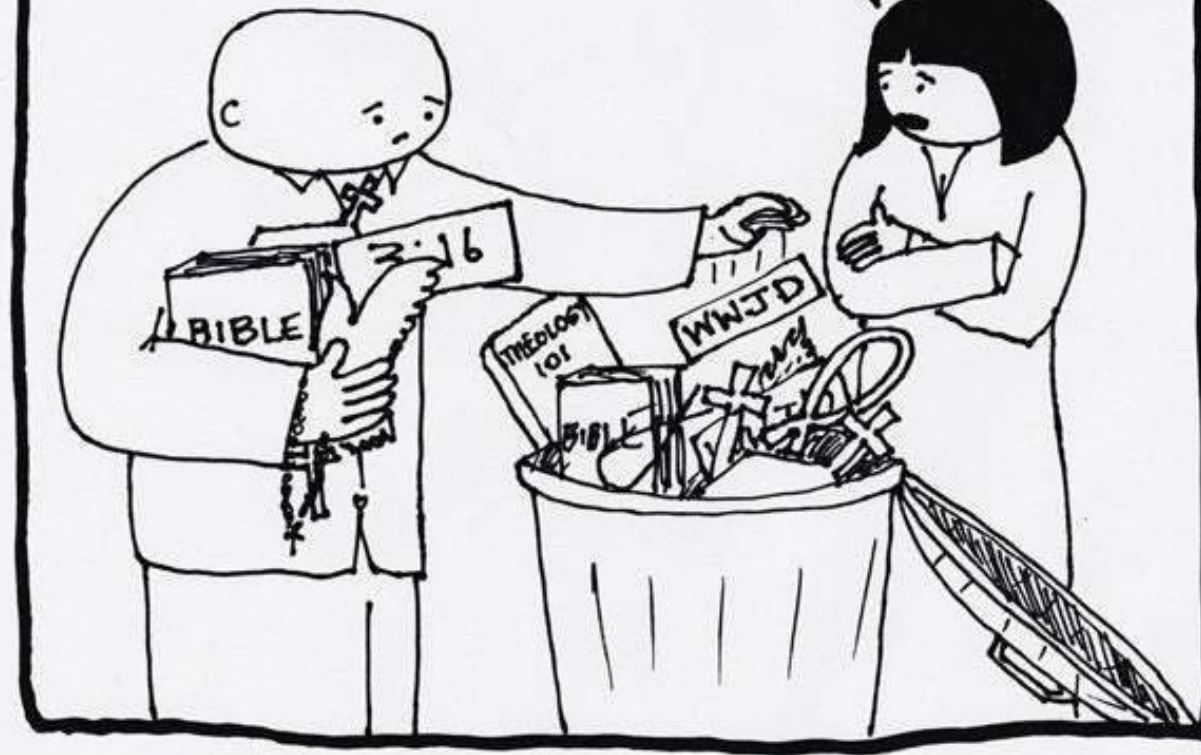
Spirituality? Religion?

- Today it is not unusual to hear people say, “ I am spiritual but not religious.”
- They usually mean that they are on a personal spiritual quest which is not linked to any organized religious body such as Christianity or Buddhism.
- Spirituality is a very elastic word.
- It usually means a search for the sacred, the ultimate, which gives meaning to life.

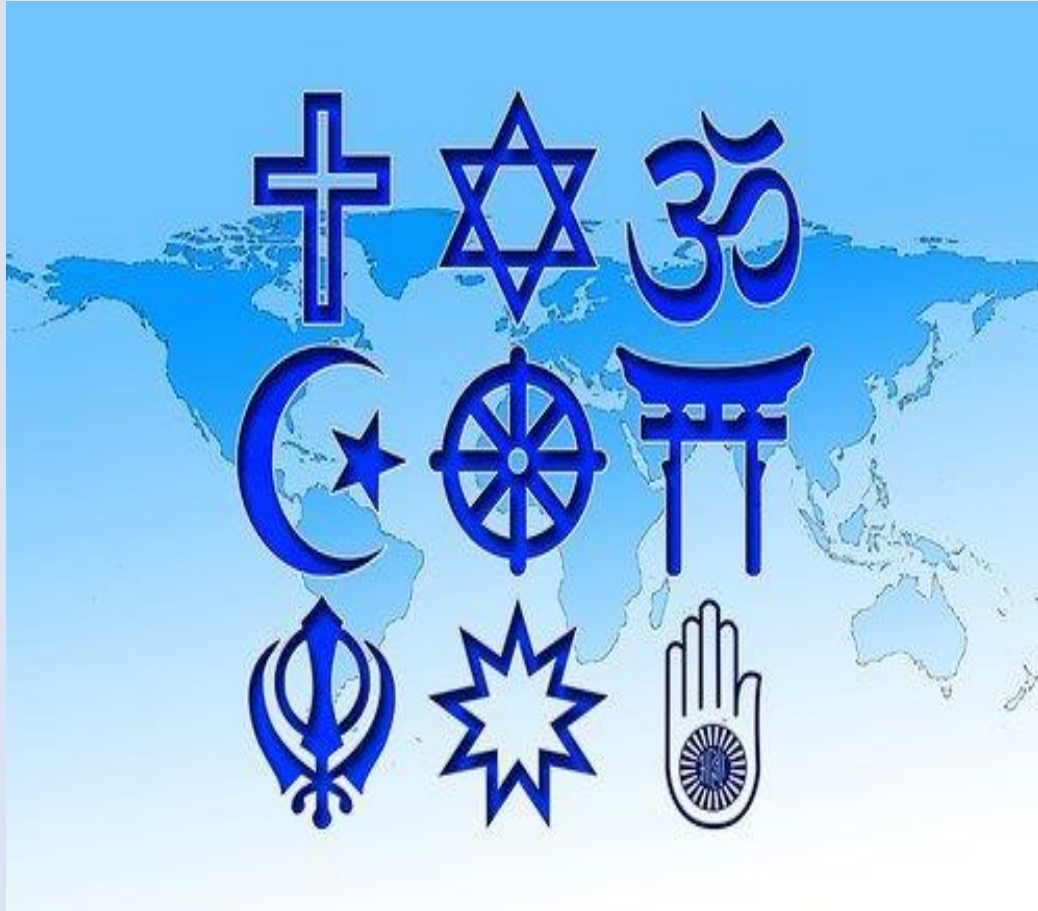
© naked pastor

KeyWord

Decluttering
your
spirituality?



Religion



- “Religion” comes from the Latin *religio*, which means to “bind together.” Healthy religion enables people and communities to integrate all dimensions of their lives.
- A specific religion can be spoken of in the language of “creed” (what I/we believe), “code” (ethics) and “cult” (communal ritual, personal prayer and meditation).

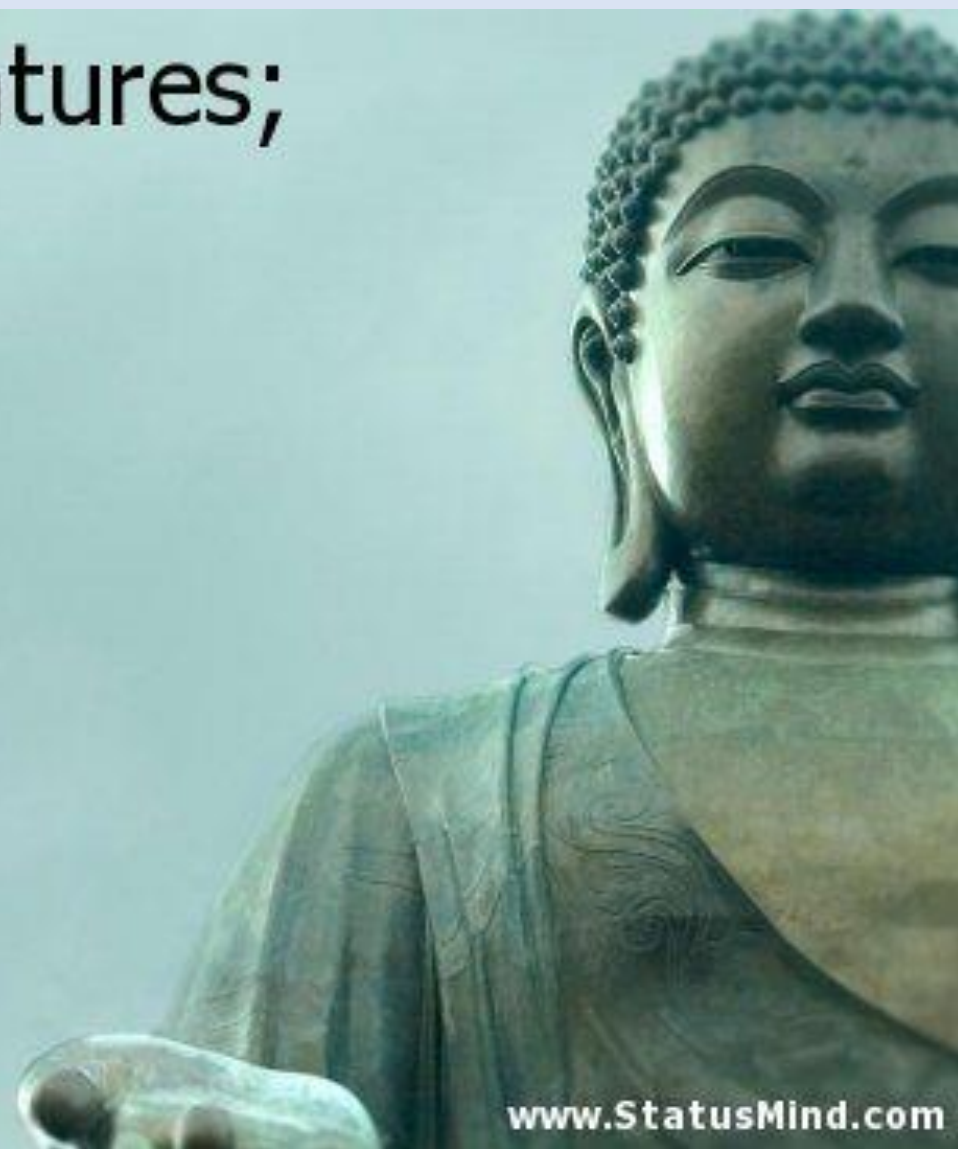
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**“DOG is GOD spelled backwards.
That’s pretty much all the religion
I know, but it works for me.”**

Be kind to all creatures;
this is the true
religion.

~ Buddha ~



Sandra Schneiders: Spirituality



Spirituality is “the experience of conscious involvement in the project of life-integration through self-transcendence towards the ultimate value one perceives.”

Dimensions of Spirituality

“Conscious involvement”—a person creates their spirituality over their lifetime and so it develops organically.

All life experiences become the matrix of our spirituality.

“Life integration ”—there is no split between spirituality and “life.”

We live our spirituality in the world in all its dimensions.
There is no “abstract” spirituality.

“Self-transcendence ”—I am not sufficient of myself. Search and desire are the inner dynamics of spirituality.

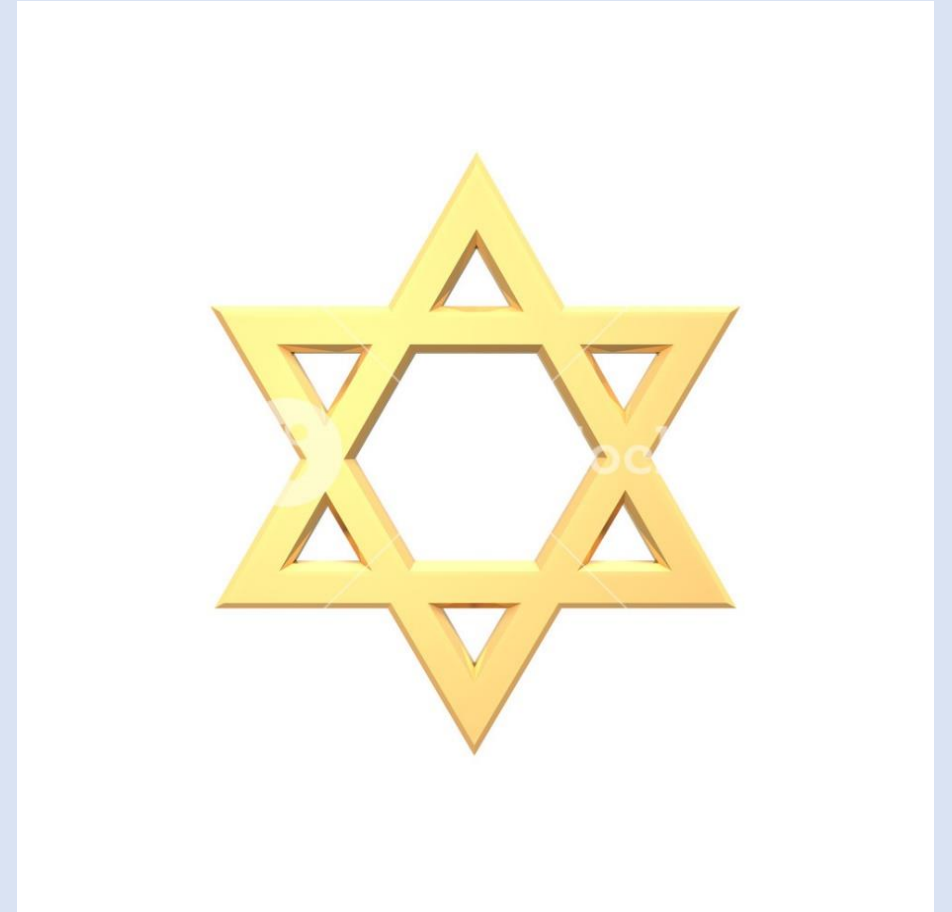
“Ultimate value ”—What is the “pearl of great price” for which a person would give everything?



World Religions and Spirituality: African Traditional Religion, Buddhism



World Religions and Spirituality: Christianity and Judaism



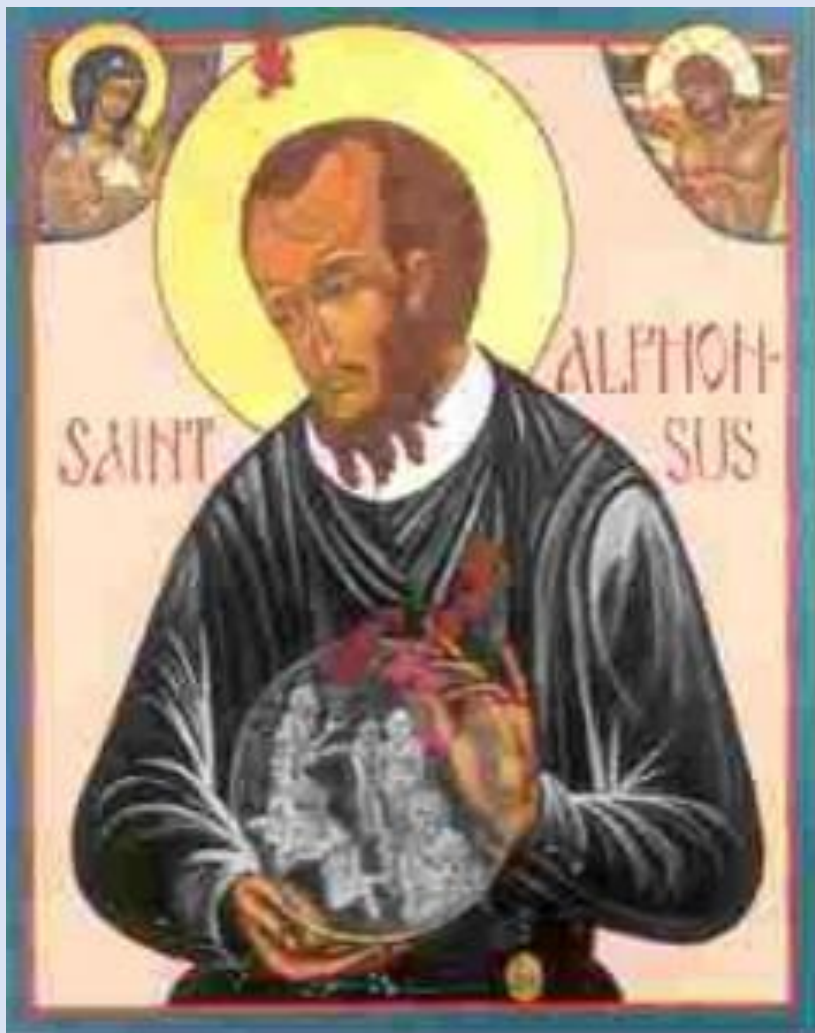
World Religions and Spirituality: Hinduism and Islam



Reflection Questions

- How has your personal spirituality been enriched by other world religions?
- Do you have relatives or friends who practice other religions?
- Which of these religions attracts you now?
- Think of ways you can learn about this religion.

Christian Spiritualities



“St. Alphonsus of the
Fiery Heart” icon
©2002 Sisters, Servants of
the Immaculate Heart of
Mary



“St. Teresa of Jesus” icon
©2001 Sisters, Servants of
the Immaculate Heart of
Mary

Christian Spiritualities



*All shall be well and all
shall be well and all
manner of things shall be
well.*

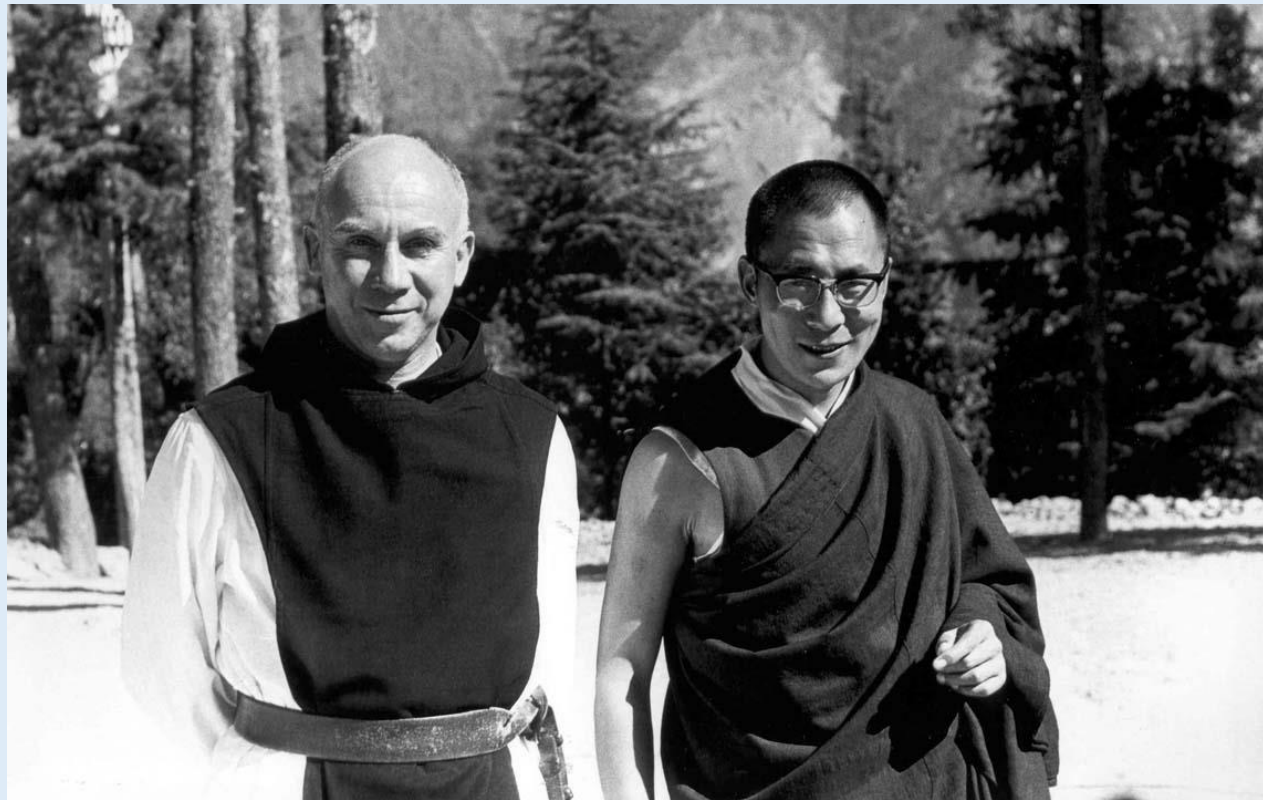
Julian de Norwich

Christian Spiritualities

If our church is not
marked by caring for the
poor, the oppressed, the
hungry, we are guilty of
heresy.

Ignacio de Loyola





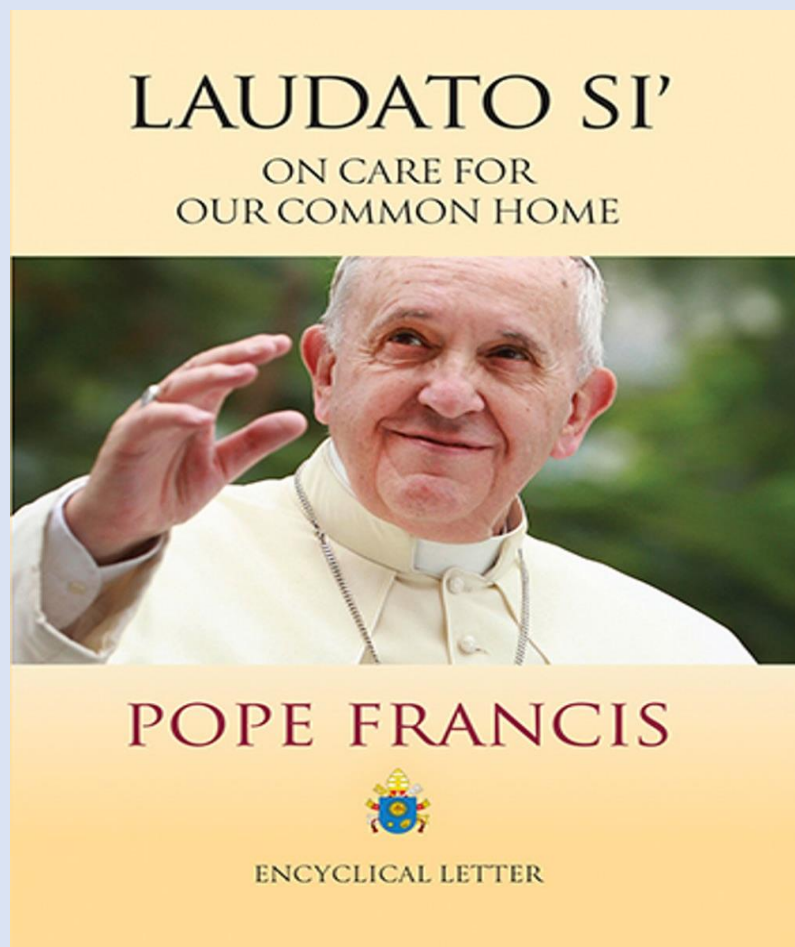
Companions from the Spiritual Traditions

- The Christian spiritual tradition is filled with women and men of great wisdom such as St. Alphonsus, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day.
- Who is a great friend on your journey?
- Other spiritual traditions also have many mentors and spiritual guides such as Rumi (Islam) and the Dalai Lama (Buddhism).
- In what ways have you been enriched by other spiritual traditions?

Black Spirituality



Ecological Spirituality



Feminist Spirituality



Reflection Questions

- Has your personal spirituality been enriched by Black Spirituality? If so, in what ways?
- Have you read *Laudato Si'*? If so, how has it enriched your personal spirituality?
- What dimensions of feminist spirituality continue to enrich your personal spirituality?

Margaret Brennan: “Not Two Are Exactly Like”



“It is my growing conviction that the diversity of spiritualities operative in a congregation where ‘not two are exactly alike’ does not take away from the spirit that bonds us so closely to one another in the common history and heritage we share.”



- What are some of the distinctive themes of IHM Spirituality?
- Which live deeply within you?
- Which are growing within you?

Companions on the Way

- Spirituality is also a shared journey because, as human beings, we are social to our core.
- People can help us on our spiritual journey and provide opportunities for growth toward “our ultimate value.”
- Remember “companions on the way” who have been especially helpful to you in your spiritual journey. Give thanks.
- How have you assisted others in their journeys? Give thanks for your listening heart.



Spirituality and Creativity



- We create our own personal spirituality from the diverse strands of humanity's search for meaning, for the sacred, adding new textures to the ever-expanding interpretation of what we have received.
- We are not content with repetition.
- Newness and freshness are distinctive signs of the Spirit of God.



William Farlow, unsplash.com

Reflection Questions



- How do you respond to the statement “I am spiritual but not religious?” To what extent have you experienced the tension in this statement?
- Reflect on three themes of your personal spirituality. How did they develop? Who assisted you? How do you live them in practical ways?
- In what ways is your experience of IHM Spirituality linked with other traditions of spirituality?
- What is the “growing edge” of your spirituality? Of the spirituality of the IHM Community?

References

Sandra M Schneiders, IHM, “The Study of Christian Spirituality: Contours and Dynamics of a Discipline,” in *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*, edited by Elizabeth A Dreyer and Mark S Burrows (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 5-6.

Margaret Brennan, IHM, “Not Two Exactly Alike”, in *Building Sisterhood: A Feminist History of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 109.