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As you will notice the *Rediscovering the Sabbath* is an individualized process, like all our programming. Your starting date, duration of program, and concluding date are determined primarily by your schedule and your program preferences.

As you review the accompanying material I think that you will recognize that our *Rediscovering the Sabbath* program is exceptional in both depth of content and enduring value. We offer individualized attention to our guests. *Formation Consultation Services* is a warm, gentle, nurturing, and helpful group of highly trained professionals. With years of experience of working with clergy and religious, we are keenly aware of the many obstacles and challenges that you may be encountering in today's world of ministry and living out your way of life. We look forward to working along with you.

If we can be of assistance in anyway whatsoever please contact us.



George J Bilotta, PhD & Vincent M Bilotta, PhD, President



Reflective Living: the heart of ongoing formation

Our mission at Formation Consultation Services is to provide ongoing human formation to clergy and religious. We assist individuals and communities to take personal responsibility for their formation and ongoing human growth by cultivating the art of *Reflective Living*. We integrate *Reflective Living* through our *Rediscovering the Sabbath* sabbatical program, our *Foundational Formation for Formators* process, and our *Reflective Leadership* process.

Reflective Living fosters an increased awakening and awareness of everyday experiences with the various people, events and things that we encounter throughout the day. By attending to self, others and the world, we do not take daily life for granted. This permits us to soak in the awe and wonder around us. We appreciate who we are. We value and honor others, even though we all have our own self-doubts and idiosyncrasies. We increase our tolerance and patience concerning our individual limitations and inconsistencies as well as those of others. We learn to surrender to our reality and to let go of our worries and insecurities by living in an appreciative manner. This helps us to place daily life into perspective. In so doing, we foster balance, fulfillment and peace.

Reflective Living prevents us from becoming overwhelmed, burnt-out, disillusioned, and out of control. *Reflective Living* reduces the unhelpful influences that our insecurities foist upon our daily lives. We often react to our insecurities by indulging in various compensations like over-working and over-eating, being codependent and people pleasing, abusing alcohol and sex, being domineering and controlling, etc. In turn we pray and meditate less. We become excessive and rigid in some areas. We become unaware and insensitive to others, the world, and ourselves. Consequently, we seek to satisfy our *self-interest-ego strivings* in an effort to cover-over our insecurities and inadequacies.

Reflective Living opens our eyes, ears and heart to *how* people, events and things in our daily lives impact us, affect us, push and pull us, and bump us off course. The essence of maturing in and being self-aware is to notice *how* others and situations of the day impact us in helpful and unhelpful ways, as well as *how* we impact others in helpful and unhelpful ways. The ebb and flow of daily life has a way of knocking us constantly off balance. *Reflective Living* is an ongoing corrective, a rebalancing, a way of maintaining harmony and personal integrity. We reduce stress and maintain peace of mind when we focus on living in a reflective manner.

Reflective Living is about deliberately, specifically and intentionally deciding and choosing *how* to go about being a human being today. *How* we undertake our daily tasks of ministry, of living and working with others, of relating to ourselves, others and God is the substance of *Reflective Living*. *Reflective Living* cultivates ordinary intimacy with self, others and our God. We accomplish this by incrementally increasing our awareness of both our particular obstacles to ordinary intimacy and our unique facilitating conditions that welcomes ordinary intimacy. *Formation Consultation Services* seeks to enhance the quality of life, ordinary intimacy, and spirituality of clergy and religious by cultivating the art of *Reflective Living*.



Rediscovering the Sabbath

Introduction

Through the *Rediscovering the Sabbath* process we assist you in cultivating the art of *Reflective Living*. Spirituality is growing into an intimate relationship with God through people, events and things in your everyday life. Our experiential process grounds you in your story of how your spirit has unfolded. Through storytelling, you are invited to develop the ability to reflect upon your everyday life experience as your sacred text, in the service of growing in a deeper relationship with God and fostering the art of *Reflective Living*.

A central focus of this process is to name, claim, and work with that which blocks your eyes to see, your ears to hear, and your heart to feel. Through self-understanding and conversion of the heart, you are invited to:

- recover your vision and passion
- increase your sensibility of the sacred
- rediscover your inner wisdom
- revitalize your ministry
- rebalance body, mind, heart, and spirit.

Sabbath's Meaning

In the Biblical story of Creation, God's creative action is culminated with a day of rest, a day which God blesses and makes holy. Such a day continued to be revered throughout the history of the Chosen People as they lived out their covenant with the Lord. The history of the Sabbath in law and tradition suggests the notion of a pause from the routine of daily living in order to direct body, mind and heart to the dimension of the Holy. It is a time for dwelling with God, praising the Creator, detaching oneself from things and practical affairs, attaching oneself to the Spirit, and attuning to the Homeland which is both our source and destination.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus invites his friends to take a break from ministry and board fishing boats to get away from the crowd. This was often their sacred time to be in the presence

of one another, to learn, and to be more present to the Lord. At Sabbath, we invite you to take a much needed break, to get away from that which crowds your life, and to be with the Lord.

Rediscovering the Sabbath is a unique opportunity for you. It involves retreating from the world of work, from community life, from the life of the parish, the world of mission, the world of ministry, the local community, the diocese.

*The Sabbath is a time for resurrecting your dormant spirit.
It is an opportunity to sanctify God's gift of time and
to realize that creation is not complete but ongoing in you.*

Our *Rediscovering the Sabbath* program encourages you to take up and focus upon your human formation as revealed in the telling and witnessing of your story. This Sabbath time is in the service of you returning to your ministry with greater reflection, balance, integrity and vitality. It is an occasion for renewing your covenant with God in a spirit of partnership and surrender. It is a time to be refreshed, revitalized, and renewed.

Sabbath and Your Story

We all have a story to tell. Story means storehouse, where things are stored — a storehouse of experiences, images, joys, sorrows, pain, redemption, of family and friends. A storehouse longs to be opened. As a way of life, Sabbath people are sacred listeners. Perhaps you hear and see yourself in the stories of other community people. A powerful sense of relief comes when others reveal the truth that basically “We’re all in the same boat. I am not alone.”

Our method is grounded in promoting safety, security, gentleness, and helpfulness. You will not venture into, nor will you be invited to go into areas that you are not interested in pursuing. We do not confront or push. We are ready to meet you where you are. We trust that in a safe, sacred space you will feel comfortable to speak and share your story, your sacred truth.

How We Can Be Helpful to You?

It is our hope that the Sabbath experience will help you to:

- become grounded in your true self
- awoken to a deeper level of conscious living
- grow in a more intimate relationship with God
- foster the art of Reflective Living
- cultivate an awareness that all of life is sacred

It is an opportunity for deeper growth, healing, and integration. It is a continuation of the original creation which the Creator *looked upon and saw that it was good*. Resting from that labor, God entered into a Sabbath.

Let Our Time Fit Your Time...

One week, one month, several months and beyond, our individualized *Rediscovering the Sabbath* programs are designed to meet your specific needs. Whatever your timeframe we can provide a tailor-made program and process to meet your ongoing formation needs.

There are no particular dates to begin or conclude your *Rediscovering the Sabbath* program. You schedule your beginning and conclusion at your convenience. Though the time frame is flexible and depending upon the unique needs of each individual, our experience suggests that an average stay is 10-12 weeks.

Our individualized programs are based upon a process of helping you experience and articulate your foundational stories, providing you with an experiential focus for your process of ongoing conversion of the heart. We will work within whatever your time and funds allow. Our method is grounded in promoting safety, security, gentleness and helpfulness.

You will be invited to slow down, pause and reclaim the unique truths of your sacred text.

You will not venture into, nor will you be invited to go into areas that you are not interested in pursuing. We do not confront or push. We are ready to meet you where you are; and trust that in the safe, sacred space you will feel comfortable to speak and share your story.

Structure of the *Rediscovering the Sabbath*

We provide in-depth experiences through individual modalities and usually small community living to address wholeness in body, mind, and heart. St. Bonaventure wrote: *The tracings of the Lord are perceived through the senses.*

The *Rediscovering the Sabbath* may include **all or some** of the following program segments:

- **Formative Process of Awareness (FPA)**
- **Reflective Living**
- **Individual Consultation**
- **Muscular Therapy**
- **Spirituality of the Body**
- **Family of Origin Story**
- **Sexuality Story**
- **Spirituality Story**
- **Ordinary Intimacy Story**
- **Work Story**
- **Spirit Story**
- **Celibacy Story**

- **Trauma Story**
- **Reflective Leadership Process**
- **Hospitality Story**

Formative Process of Awareness (FPA)

Rediscovering the Sabbath participants begin the program with our ***Formative Process of Awareness***. Usually during the initial weeks you will focus on reviewing your story as outlined through our ***Structured Autobiography***. Throughout life, you were shaped by formative and deformative experiences. These defining people and situations tinted and etched your life and heart. These colors and engravings are your distinctive strengths and particular vulnerabilities. They add to the glow and vibrancy of your life as well as to the feelings of insecurity and inadequacy.

Self-awareness through *Reflective Living* is the heart of our formative process, not as a secular humanistic means of self-fulfillment, but as an essential foundation for an authentic life of the spirit. As you continue your ministry, it is helpful to become aware of your style of relating to yourself, others and God, so that you will not experience disillusionment, burnout, or spiritual bankruptcy.

As aware and growing people, we remain in an ongoing process of discovering, uncovering, owning and befriending ourselves.

The *Formative Process of Awareness* (FPA) is distinguished by our posture of respect and reverence. We meet you where you are, as you are, with the necessary freedom to let down in whatever way you may need. In order to do this, we provide a safe, accepting and confidential environment.

At the heart of our approach is a Christian anthropology of the human person. This means our journey is a lifelong process in becoming human in the fullest sense.

For additional and in-depth information concerning the *Formative Process of Awareness*, please refer to the material on pages 13-16.

Developmental Spirituality

You will narrate and share your personal stories in two segments, your childhood story and your adult story. The focus will be the unfolding of your life in terms of spirituality, human development and the spirit. As the story unfolds, your spirit — one's most essential self, becomes evident. Through sharing your story, your relationship to and understanding of your unique self improves.

It is not a time to amass a wealth of academic information, but rather a time to face sacred moments, which can lend significance to other moments, experiences, persons and things.

Individual Consultation

This is time for you to explore aspects of your human, Christian, and vocational formation. It is an opportunity to further your health, foster growth, and attend to your evolving story.

Spiritual Story

You take time to gather in the name of the religious and faith dimensions of your life. Using Scripture, traditional storytelling, ritual you are invited to reflect on the story of your spiritual unfolding, identifying significant persons, places, events and things that have drawn you to the Sacred.

Muscular Therapy

Through therapeutic massage, you become more grounded in, respectful of, and comfortable in your body. This healing art provides insight, restores vitality, and deepens your connection to your body.

Spirituality of the Body

Through a variety of exercises we help you become familiar with the text of your body and tune in to the inner stirrings of your feelings, desires, longings, hopes, dreams, and inspirations. You will become grounded in your human reality as the place where God meets you through the persons, events, situations and things in your daily life.

Family of Origin Story

All of life is formative. From the moment of your birth, you are inserted into a particular family with its unique values, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, etc. You become part of the unfolding story of your family with its distinctive ethnic heritage and religious traditions. From the time you are born, you breathe in the air that surrounds you – the life-giving air of love, support and care; the toxic fumes of co-dependency, abuse, and control.

You will explore the helpful and unhelpful dimensions of your family's system. You will look at the cast of characters in your family. You will address issues in your family story such as myth, communication, vulnerability, discipline, relationships, and styles of relating to your body.

The triumphs and tragedies that occurred in previous generations powerfully influenced the drama that you were born into as an infant. We are not interested in blaming anyone for what happened to you in your family of origin. We are interested in inviting you to take up your family of origin story in a gentle and compassionate manner. It is our hope that you will be able to grow in acceptance of this story as part of the mystery of your life and place it in the perspective of the mystery of all of human formation.

Sexuality Story

This is your story of being a boy and becoming a man, or being a girl and becoming a woman. For most in our culture, this story has not been a joyous one. It has been filled with

unacknowledged hurt, pain, and injury. Many mothers and fathers were ashamed of their sexuality. As a result, they conveyed a shaming atmosphere concerning sexuality to their child.

You will become familiar with milestones, dynamics, and various developmental periods that a boy or girl goes through in the formative and deformative story of becoming a man or woman. You will reflect upon how your heart, spirit, and body have been affected by your culture and by significant men and women in your everyday life growing up.

You will reflect upon the impact that others have had on your unfolding story. You will look at injuries, obstacles, deformative qualities that have influenced your story. Your interactions and the fear of being close to others of the same sex will be addressed. The result will be that you will feel more comfortable and at home with your sexual story.

Spirituality Story

Your spiritual story is the story of how you have grown in an intimate relationship with God through people, events, and things in your everyday life experience. In processing your story, you will explore your spiritual journey as a human being, as a Christian, and as a servant in ministry. It is a way to become more sensitive to and understand your personal spiritual story. You will also look at how to come home to your heart, to be grounded in the core of your being, and to befriend the unique mystery of your formative process.

You will review what has been your spiritual experience from childhood to the present. Look at the strength and cohesiveness of your family faith story in relationship to the larger cultural story. How you have been shaped by the culture affects what you see, what you hear and how you think. Even for a Christian in your culture, there is a question of how experientially in-touch you are with the core of your being. You will enter a sanctuary where dialogue and reflection can refresh your awareness of your spiritual roots and renew the hunger for the sacred within you.

Ordinary Intimacy Story

Your everyday life is filled with moments of ordinary intimacy. To grow into ordinary intimacy, you need to slow down, be at home with yourself, to gently let down the drawbridge to what is around you. From this relaxed, humble posture, you are no longer self-conscious. You are able to be receptive to the depth of those who are before you. We will help you to look at ways in which this style of being present in the world has been covered over in your life. You will be invited to reconnect with moments in which ordinary intimacy has been a part of your life. The more you are able to do this, the less self-conscious you will be, and the more open you will be. In this way you can release the veil, uncover ordinary intimacy, and live a more contemplative life.

Work Story

Work occupies your time and energy. We infuse work with many different meanings. **The meaning of work varies and is shaded by the past. Life stages also nuance work's meaning.**

Work is a posture towards life, towards society. It is a way of defining yourself. The choices you make imply a philosophy of life. Much of your time has had to do with the "functional" – an aspect of life that has defined you in terms of your skills, your competencies, your successes. Your choice of work through ministry is rooted in the reality of everyday life as you learned it from your family of origin, in the culture and time into which you were born, and perhaps even from the dream in your heart.

This story is a meditation on work, a gathering of memories of your public self. Your work through ministry is a profound and significant dimension of your life, its triumphs and failures, its sanity and confusion. As a result of telling your work story, you will receive a bounty of insight into your journey through work and ministry in terms of what you bring with you into your work and ministry, the hidden attitudes that shape your work style, the way in which you are busy, and understanding the dynamics of your *busy-ness*. All this is in the service of understanding how your style of work affects your spiritual unfolding.

Spirit Story

Your Spirit is the core of who you are. It is one of the most foundational dimensions of your existence. After 35 years of research, Dr. Vincent Bilotta has created a way of understanding the formative and deformative dimensions of the human spirit. Starting with childhood up to the present, this process assists you in tracing the flow of the unfolding of your human spirit.

We begin this process with the last year of your life in terms of where you have discovered or uncovered your human spirit. Having grounded you in the experience of the past year, we go back to the beginning of your spirit story as a child and trace that unfolding up to the present. We also help you to look at the explicit obstacles and the historical facilitating conditions that have been part of your spirit story and influence you today. Our goal is to help you reconnect, nourish, and dwell with the core of who you are.

Celibacy Story

In accordance with Church teaching, any approach to sexuality and celibacy must be placed within a spiritual context. The foundational premise of this program embraces the most fundamental spiritual principle: *Word becomes flesh*. This is the most radical proposition of Christianity. This incarnational uniqueness of Christianity is what encourages an individual to make a wholehearted commitment to experience the full humanity of one's enfleshed alive-ness that has been touched by the Divine.

Having worked with clergy and religious since 1968, it has been our experience that an integrated body-mind-spirit approach to sexuality is essential for embracing a life-long commitment to celibacy. We incorporate various somatic techniques and therapies that assist you in your exploration of the psychology, physiology, and spirituality of the body. By guiding you systematically through a body awareness process, we effectively reverse any disintegrating patterns of repression or alienation, and help to restore a more integral unity of body, mind,

heart, and spirit. This process opens the way to the experience of vital aliveness, sexual maturity, and a joyful and passionate expression of celibacy.

This individualized process is designed in such a manner that specific physical exercises, psychological self-exploration, and spiritual awareness are interwoven as one continuous process in accordance with incarnational spirituality.

Trauma Story

This story explores the effects of trauma in ministry in your life and in the lives of people around you. Those in ministry often are exposed to others who have been traumatized. People in ministry are often traumatized themselves by experiences they have had while in ministry. Sometimes simply working with those who have been traumatized can result in the caregiver becoming traumatized.

You will be encouraged to speak of your own personal experiences with trauma. We will help you realize the effect of trauma and to better assess your need for further help. Participants will also have some insight into how well their own organizations are aware of the effects of trauma upon the members.

Reflective Leadership Process

Please refer to the *Reflective Leadership Process* material for in-depth information found on our web site: <http://www.fcs-bilotta.com/pages/cfHome.cfm> .

Hospitality Story and Process

Please refer to the *Hospitality Process* material for in-depth information found on our web site: <http://www.fcs-bilotta.com/pages/cfHome.cfm> .

Nourish Your Soul ...

Through the process of the *Rediscovering the Sabbath* you may begin to cultivate the art of *Reflective Living*. You will clear the clutter that has covered over your heart and spirit. You will discover or rediscover what you are truly passionate about. You will learn skills to draw from your inner wisdom, honor your thoughts, feelings, intuitions, creativity, hopes, and dreams. You will be empowered to return to the world of ministry more grounded in yourself with a clearer sense of purpose, direction, and meaning. You will continue to live reflectively and peacefully.

***The Sabbath is a call to live life from the depth of your heart
in a community-based atmosphere of support, acceptance, trust, and care.
We welcome you to touch the mystery of God's presence in your life
through our Rediscovering the Sabbath.***

Additional Services Offered by FCS

The *Rediscovering the Sabbath* program is one of many experiences offered by FORMATION CONSULTATION SERVICES. Others include:

Formative Process of Awareness, (FPA) is a focused individual process totaling 30-40 hours usually over two week period when done independently from the Rediscovering the Sabbath program. The FPA is based on the *Structured Autobiography*.

Reflective Leadership Process

Foundational Formation Process – a formation process for formators

Individualized Ongoing Formation Programs, we offer coaching and consultation via the telephone and/or Skype to both the formator and those seeking ongoing formation when a formator is unavailable.

On-site programs at a location of your choice that can be tailored to your needs also are available.



Formative Process of Awareness

Come Grow With Us

Throughout life, you were shaped by formative and deformative experiences that left lasting imprints. These were defining moments which colored your life. These colors are your distinctive strengths and particular vulnerabilities.

Self-awareness is the heart of our formative process, not as a secular humanistic means of self-fulfillment, but as an essential foundation for an authentic life of the spirit. As you continue your ministry, you need to become aware of your style of relating to yourself, others and God, so that you will not experience disillusionment, burnout, or spiritual bankruptcy.

As aware and growing people, we remain in an ongoing process of discovering, uncovering, owning and befriending ourselves.

The *Formative Process of Awareness (FPA)* is distinguished by our posture of respect and reverence. We meet you where you are, as you are, with the necessary freedom to let down in whatever way you may need. In order to do this, we provide a safe, accepting and confidential environment.

At the heart of our approach is a Christian anthropology of the human person. This means our journey is a lifelong process in becoming human in the fullest sense.

Foundational Dispositions

Our Storytelling Approach

We invite you to connect with and name those parts of your story that have remained unnamed; to make clear what has been unclear. You accomplish this by using our *Structured Autobiography* guide. We invite you to be nonjudgmental, compassionate with yourself, and aware of having done your best through the varied circumstances of your life.

Accompaniment

An important dimension of our process is accompaniment, which means being with you as a companion. In journeying together, we respond to the basic human yearning for a safe, supportive, and accepting place to tell your story. In this way, we will understand your story from your perspective. This is our work as a trusted partner.

Sabbath Attitude

Just as we move away from our ordinary pace and activities on the Sabbath, so we invite you to slow down and be present to your story by moving into your sacred space and dwelling with the mystery of your story. We will help you move your focus of awareness from your head to your heart; from a possible over reliance on reason and analysis to compassionate understanding; from judgment, criticism and blame to gentle acceptance and affirmation.

Listening

Our approach to the *Formative Process of Awareness* is characterized by listening to your heart. It is important in order to thrive. You may have learned to listen to other people while remaining deaf to your own inner voice. Listening to your heart gradually enables you to connect with whatever stirs within. You become reacquainted with and learn to befriend the more estranged aspects of yourself.

Acceptance

Acceptance of your experience is an important part of your entire process of awareness. Without making peace with your humanness, you may unnecessarily judge, blame, and condemn yourself and others. This process of acceptance is not limited to self-fulfilling perceptions of who you are: rather, we invite you to enter the wonder of your human unfolding. Accepting yourself opens your heart and fosters genuine forgiveness and compassion.

The Collaborative Assessment

A Collaborative Effort

Through the journey, we help you illuminate and articulate the *who* and the *how* of the unique human being that you are. Here you begin to see what, why, when, and how you do things and the broader meaning and implications of your style. Here you return to your personal truth.

The depth of this discovery is contingent on
the effort and reflection you exercise in writing your Structured Autobiography,
your readiness to enter the process, and
the amount of time we spend in the process.

Where we go, linger and dwell depends upon your readiness and willingness to enter into your story. You will become grounded in your uniqueness, with all that has made you who you are. In so doing, you recover compassion, human depth, and self-understanding.

The integration of your human narrative is the necessary foundation for a healthy life of the spirit.

The Process for the *Formative Process of Awareness*

The FPA's collaborative assessment process consists of four phases:

- **Writing your story**, using our *Structured Autobiography* to guide you.
- **Interviews with a team member** to review your *Structured Autobiography* for significant themes, patterns, events and circumstances.
- **Collaborative assessment** with team members: You will be asked to complete medical-behavioral questionnaires as an aid to gaining a sense of your story as written in your body. You will fill out an inventory of beliefs, attitudes and values.
- **Processing the collaborative assessment** with a team member.

We emphasize that this process is not psychotherapy, nor is it a quick fix to be applied to your current difficulties and problems. Rather it is a step in an ongoing process of your personal unfolding. With this foundational understanding of your story, you will feel more grounded and connected with yourself and be able to make healthier and more congenial decisions for your life.

Follow-Up Readings

This follow-up phase of the *Formative Process of Awareness* is an integral part of your entire process. The follow-up readings are a concrete means of continuing your process of self-deepening and self-understanding. They serve to nourish you and facilitate the development of a reflective approach to your life. Read in a dwelling reflective manner, they will help you become increasingly grounded in your humanness, and continue the stirring and awakening of your feelings, memories, intuitions, and hunches that have taken shape during the *Formative Process of Awareness*.

We encourage you to listen to what stirs and resonates within you, and to uncover the life potential that is at your core...

Each of the three phases

- foundational dispositions
- the collaborative assessment
- follow-up readings

leads you more deeply into your story, awakening you to the mystery of your formation process. This will allow you to become increasingly grounded in your humanness. You will come to

understand some of the important dynamics of your personality, and touch the depths of your spirit. There you will touch the mystery of your experience of God's presence in the *everydayness* of your life, and come to know your personal truth, which sets you free.

Free Your Spirit ...

Our history testifies that participants come to the *Formative Process of Awareness* with a sense of waiting for an invitation to begin such a process. They have typically wandered and labored much, waiting for some opportunity to tell their story with all its shadows, joys and sorrows.

Our collective years of experience with men and women like yourself, indicates that this is indeed an accelerated depth process unmatched in contemporary spiritual direction or psychotherapy. Its intensive style sets a precedent that surpasses traditional sources of personal assessment and appraisal.

It is a process that rekindles the deepest desires of your heart more effectively and economically than ongoing visits to a guidance professional.

You and your sponsoring community save precious time and resources. You will enrich yourself, your community, and those you touch deeply. It leads to a freeing of your spirit and a more effective flow of core energy in your life.

We are confident that the richness of this process will provide you with a broadened and deepened self-awareness of your personal style, strengths, limits, and formative *growing edges*. This will infuse your everyday life experiences and vision with greater compassion, contemplation, insight and vitality.

Therefore, together with our conviction, experience and expertise, we reverently and respectfully invite you to discover your own Formative Process of Awareness.

