

Faith Sharing/Discussion Questions

The Spirituality of Community

By Dr. Adele J. Gonzalez

These faith sharing/discussion questions accompany *The Spirituality of Community* by Dr. Adele J. Gonzalez. Dr. Gonzalez is the founder and president of Get With It (*Ponte en Onda*) <http://get-with-it.com/>, an organization committed to human and spiritual growth through the fostering of healthy relationships with self, others, the world, and with God. She holds a Doctor of Ministry, specializing in Contemporary Spirituality, and a certificate in Spiritual Guidance. She speaks and writes in the areas of spirituality, cultural diversity, and ministry and has been involved in the formation and training of lay ministers within the Catholic Church for over 30 years. In this book, Dr. Gonzalez offers us interesting new ways of thinking about our personal spirituality and how it is lived most fully within the Christian community.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION—AN ORDINARY CATHOLIC

- What help do I need in order to grow spiritually? (Page 13)
- What efforts have I made to grow spiritually? (Page 13)
- How do I feel about my current spiritual status? What, in particular, concerns me? (Page 13)

CHAPTER ONE—CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

- What thoughts do I have about my relationship with God's Spirit? (Page 17)
- How would I describe my spirituality?
- How do each of the following shape my spirituality: my relationship with God, with myself, with others, and with all of creation? (Pages 17–22)
- What do I think about this quote from Dorothy Day: "Your love for God is only as great as the love you have for the person you love the least." (Page 21)
- In which areas of my life do I feel that I am living out my spirituality well? In which areas do I feel separated from my spirituality? (Page 23)
- How has my spirituality been shaped by the views and practices of others? (Page 26)
- What are the fruits of my spirituality? In what ways does my relationship with God make me more tolerant and forgiving, less critical and more accepting? (Page 38)
- How has the Incarnation of Jesus Christ become flesh in my life? In what practical ways have I lived out the Incarnation during this past week? (Page 39)
- How can I use my feelings—love, anger, fear—to accomplish healing and forgiveness? (Page 43)
- What does it mean to find "God in the dark places within me"? How am I encouraged by that thought? (Page 43)

CHAPTER 2—PASSIONATE, COMMUNAL, AND CONTEXTUAL

- What do the Scripture passages on pages 47–48 tell me about God's love for me? How well do they reflect my experience of God's love? (Pages 47–48)
- In what ways have I felt the Holy Spirit in my life? (Page 49)

- How do I experience the presence of God through others: my family, friends, and faith community? (Page 51)
- What are some ways that I might experience and respond to God in everyday things and situations? (Page 52)

CHAPTER 3—“THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY”

- What is my experience of my parish community? How does it help or hinder my spiritual growth? What do I need to do to make it a more spiritually enriching community? (Page 68)
- How does my faith community strengthen or hamper my life of prayer? (Page 72)
- How does the Eucharist strengthen my spirituality? What can I do to make my participation in the Eucharist more meaningful? (Page 74)
- In what ways does my spirituality lead me to serve others? What are some examples of this service? How might I be called to greater service? (Page 78)

CHAPTER 4—THE SPIRITUALITY OF COMMUNITY

- In what ways do people in my parish show respect or disrespect for the parish community? How does this build up or tear down the Body of Christ? How does this affect my personal spirituality? (Page 87)
- How do I feel about Henri Nouwen’s comment: “I am the beloved of God”? What would it take for me to believe this statement completely? (Page 93)
- What companions do I have to walk with me on my spiritual journey? What companions would I like to have? Where might I find these companions? How am I a spiritual companion to others?
- When I look around me, what do I see that could be signs of the presence of God? As I identify God’s presence in each thing or person around me, I will say a brief prayer of thanks. (Page 97)

CHAPTER 5—THE CHALLENGE OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

- What is my relationship with the people in my parish community? What can I do to improve and strengthen those relationships? (Page 102)
- What can I do to affirm the giftedness of each member of my family, my co-workers, and the members of my parish community? (Page 102)
- What do I know about the spirituality and prayer life of other members of my parish? How am I inspired or chastened by their spirituality? What would I like to learn from them? (Page 103)
- How can my spiritual life be strengthened by new ways of prayer? How open am I to considering new ways of prayer and new spiritualities? What prevents me from exploring these things? (Page 110)

EPILOGUE—DREAMING OF A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

- What would my ideal Christian community be like? How would this community support my spiritual growth? (Page 117)
- What would a Christian community look like that mediates between the world and me? How would I expect that community to act? (Page 118)