

DOMINICAN CENTER at MARYWOOD
SPIRITUAL DIRECTION PRACTICUM
YEAR 1, MODULE 2,
FEBRUARY, COMBINED SESSIONS 1 & 2

CASE STUDY: HENRY

Henry has been a loyal member of St. Andrew parish for the last 25 years. Because of his responsible service during these years, the pastor and a number of parishioners have asked Henry to submit his name as a candidate for parish council.

Henry is reluctant, but when he prays about the possibility of serving on the parish council, he experiences both great peace and also a deep sense of mission. A number of those returning to the council have a sense of social concern toward those who are poor in the parish, but they lack leadership and creative imagination. Therefore, in spite of their good will, social action has not been strong in the parish. Henry, a retired social worker, has a sense of what needs to be done and how to do it. When he prays, he feels a call to serve.

On Sunday, names of those on the ballot for the parish council are published in the parish bulletin. Mrs. Amery reads Henry's name and is indignant. Years ago, while working for social services, Henry mistakenly questioned whether the bruises on one of Mrs. Amery's children might have been caused by child abuse. Mrs. Amery has never forgiven Henry for his mistake. She starts a telephone campaign in the parish, telling people her story and accusing Henry of many things.

Henry is in a dilemma. On the one hand, he is receiving many secondhand reports of Mrs. Amery's accusations. He wonders if Mrs. Amery's campaign will render his candidacy useless and he is seriously considering withdrawing his name from the ballot. He has called Mrs. Amery, but she refuses to speak with him. On the other hand, he does feel a strong call to serve on the council. Those on the parish council are hoping for his appointment, and the other candidates do not possess the kind of leadership and vision that the council is looking for. Respecting your Christian perseverance and wisdom, Henry comes to you and wonders what he should do.

Questions for Reflection/Discussion

1. What are Henry's strengths in regard to this incident?
How are the spirits working on these strengths?
2. What are Henry's "hooks" in regard to this incident?
How are the spirits working on these weaknesses?
3. Name the movements of consolation and desolation that you see in this case.
4. Using Rules 1: 5-14, how might Henry move against the desolation he is experiencing?