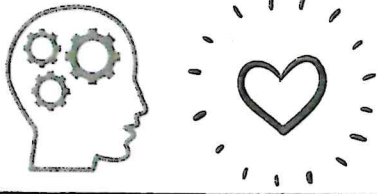


3 Steps to Ignatian Discernment of Spirits/Living a Discerning Life

Be Aware

of the movement of my mind and heart. (What am I thinking, feeling, desiring or saying to myself.)



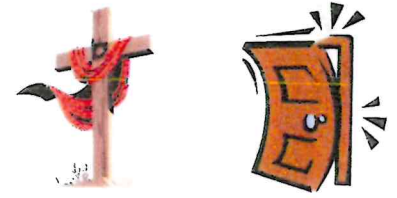
Understand

Am I drawn towards God or away from God?



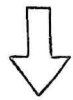
Take Action

Accept what draws me toward God. Reject what draws me away from God.



Discernment of Spirits Toolbox from St. Ignatius of Loyola

1. BAD to



WORSE

The enemy makes sin appear sweet and good.

.....
the good spirit stings our conscience



2. BETTER



GOOD to

The enemy saddens and places obstacles.

.....
The good spirit gives strength, peace, and the courage to move forward.



3.



Consolation:
filled with faith, hope, and love

4.



Desolation:
filled with doubt, discouragement, anxiety, sadness

(a chart describing consolation and desolation is on the back)

In a Time of Desolation →

5.



Never make a change

6.



Pray and sacrifice

7.



Resist the agitations of the enemy-God gives us sufficient grace

8.



Be patient--consolation is coming

9. Why does our loving God permit desolation?

- Desolation can be spiritually fruitful when we resist it.
1. If negligent, God brings healing and conversion.
 2. A trial can bring us closer to God--spiritual growth and maturity through darkness.
 3. Humbly recognizing our need for God and that all is His gift protects us from possible pitfalls.



10.



In a time of consolation, take strength for coming desolation.

11.

In a time of consolation, humbly think how little we can do by ourselves.

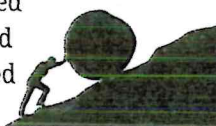


In a time of desolation, think how much we can do with God's grace.

The Enemy:

12.

is weak when faced with strength and strong when faced with weakness.



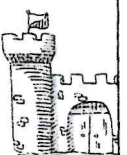
13.

loves secrets--break the silence.



14.

seeks our weakest point.



Ignatian Daily Examen- A prayer for:

G

Gratitude:

I cherish the specific gifts of the past day. Aware of the love with which the Father looks at me, I increase my trust with him.

Become aware of God's presence with you now. When my mind is racing this may be difficult. You might begin by thanking God for the content of your distractions. Do not skip this; before looking at the rest of the day, we must become secure in His love. Otherwise we can easily use the examen as a time of cringing before a demanding God, rather than coming with trust and hope to be with the Father who delights in us as His beloved sons/daughters. You may choose to do only this step.

R

Request for Light:

I ask the Holy Spirit for light and honesty to see my life today from God's perspective as He want me to see it. Let the Spirit lead.

A

Actions/Attitude:

I review the day's events in the light of Christ's truth noting the movements I experienced - which drew my closer or further away from God?

Growth Always Begins From the Existing Reality

which includes all of our experiences today, including the "negative: crosses which may throw us into confusion.

- Is is not simply God's grace nor just our own human effort that enables growth.
- Our feelings are data for discernment, emotional flags which can point us to interior motivations and attitudes (e.g. fear, anxiety, discouragement, anger, superiority, rejection, exaggerated desire for approval, control, entertainment).
- I cannot judge or fully know myself. The Examen allows Christ to reveal me to myself as He desires (which is different from an imbalanced introspection).

Growth in relationship with God occurs through mutual self-revelation.

C

Chart Your Course:

With the Lord, I consider what needs changing? Correcting? Challenging? Contrition? Greater Confidence and Courage?

E

Entreat the Lord:

With trust, I ask God to strengthen my good desires for tomorrow with energy, enthusiasm, and encouragement.

You can find more information by searching DiscerningHearts.com for Fr. Timothy Gallagher's podcasts and books on Ignatian spirituality: *The Discernment of Spirits - Setting the Captives Free* and *The Daily Prayer of Discernment: "The Examen Prayer"*.

Consolation

I know I am a beloved son or daughter of my heavenly Father.

Drawn to what is truly good

Hopeful,

all things are passing except God

Charity-love for God, others and self;

selflessly desires good for others

without harming oneself

Inner joy

Gratitude

Patience

Trust in God's strengthening grace

Real sorrow for sin and acceptance of forgiveness,

Deep peace within

Aware God is with me and

He sends me many people to make the journey with me.

Full of energy and zeal to do good

Love of truth

Experiences abundant life; life-giving

Free in spirit

Desolation

I doubt that God could love me just as

I am.

Drawn to what is evil

(which may appear to be "good")

Lack of confidence and hope

Little love for God, others nor self; self-focused, unforgiving, compares,

counts the cost, judges harshly.

Sad even about good things

Inability to recognize God's blessings

Impatience with oneself or others

Feel discouraged and powerless

Can't admit sin; won't accept forgiveness

Easily agitated, angry, blaming, bitter
Alone-no one can understand me; they wouldn't like me if they really

knew me

Slothful, lazy, bored, uninterested,

apathetic

Deceitful or manipulative if

convenient; gullible or cynical

Harms and destroys life

Bound, enslaved (with an appearance

of freedom-I do what I want, but I

want what is harmful to me)

DISCERNMENT OF SPIRIT RETREAT
POINT OF PRAYER AND SCRIPTURE VERSES

- A) How have I experienced this spiritual rule in my life?
- B) Lord, make me aware of the working of this spiritual rule in my life and guide my reactions in order that I may draw closer to you.

1) Rule I Scripture

Romans 7:15-25/ Romans 13:2-5/ Psalm 119:36

2) Rule II Scripture

Mathew 19:26/ Mathew 11:28-30/ John 14:27/ Jeremiah 1:4-10/ Hosea 2:16-17

3) Rule III Scripture

Luke 7:36-50/ Luke 11:3/ Exodus 13:21-22/ Luke 4:16-22

4) Rule IV Scripture

Luke 4:1-13/ Romans 8:28

5) Rule V Scripture

I Corinthians 14:33/ Luke 24:13-46

6) Rule VI Scripture

Revelations 2:1-7/ John 15:5/ Philippians 4:13/ Mark 1:9-11

7) Rule VII Scripture

I Corinthians 10:13/ Philippians 1:6/ I Corinthians 9:24-27/ I Corinthians 3:15/ John 16:32

8) Rule VIII Scripture

Romans 8:25/ Romans 8:37-39/ Hebrews 10:35-36/ Philippians 4:6-9/ Deuteronomy 7:7-

9) Rule IX Scripture

John 14:4-13/ Ephesians 2:8-10

10) Rule X Scripture

Mathew 7:7-11/ Deuteronomy 4:29-31/ Isaiah 44:21-24

11) Rule XI Scripture

II Corinthians 12:7-9

12) Rule XII Scripture

James 4:7-8/ I Peter 5:8-9

13) Rule XIII Scripture

John 12:35-36/ Isaiah 42:16/ I John 1:5-7/ John 3:19-21

14) Rule XIV Scripture

II Samuel 11:1-5/ Ephesians 4:26-27/ Mathew 26:36-46

Rules for becoming aware and understanding to some extent the different movements which are caused in the soul, the good, to receive them, and the bad to reject them. And these rules are more proper for the first week.

(Translation from Timothy M. Gallagher, OMV *The Discernment of Spirits- An Ignatian Guide for Everyday Living*, pp. 7-10.)

First Rule. The first rule: in persons who are going from mortal sin to mortal sin, the enemy is ordinarily accustomed to propose apparent pleasures to them, leading them to imagine sensual delights and pleasures in order to hold them more and make them grow in their vices and sins. In these persons the good spirit uses a contrary method, stinging and biting their consciences through their rational power of moral judgment.

Second Rule. The second: in persons who are going on intensely purifying their sins and rising from good to better in the service of God our Lord, the method is contrary to that in the first rule. For then it is proper to the evil spirit to bite, sadden, and place obstacles, disquieting with false reasons, so that the person may not go forward. And it is proper to the good spirit to give courage and strength, consolations, tears, inspirations and quiet, easing and taking away all obstacles, so that the person may go forward in doing good.

Third Rule. The third is of spiritual consolation. I call it consolation when some interior movement is caused in the soul, through which the soul comes to be inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord, and, consequently when it can love no created thing on the face of the earth in itself, but only in the Creator of them all. Likewise when it sheds tears that move to love of its Lord, whether out of sorrow for one's sins, or for the passion of Christ our Lord, or because of other things directly ordered to his service and praise. Finally, I call consolation every increase of hope, faith, and charity, and all interior joy that calls and attracts to heavenly things and to the salvation of one's soul, quieting it and giving it peace in its Creator and Lord.

Fourth Rule. The fourth is of spiritual desolation. I call desolation all the contrary of the third rule, such as darkness of soul, disturbance in it, movement to low and earthly things, disquiet from various agitations and temptations, moving to lack of confidence, without hope, without love, finding oneself totally slothful, tepid, sad and, as if separated from one's Creator and Lord. For just as consolation is contrary to desolation, in the same way the thoughts that come from consolation are contrary to the thoughts that come from desolation.

Fifth Rule. The fifth: in the time of desolation never make a change, but be firm and constant in the proposals and determination in which one was the day preceding such desolation, or in the determination in which one was in the preceding consolation. Because, as in consolation the good spirit guides and counsels us more, so in desolation the bad spirit, with whose counsels we cannot find the way to a right decision.

Sixth Rule. The sixth: although in desolation we should not change our first proposals, it is very advantageous to change ourselves intensely against the desolation itself, as by insisting more upon prayer, meditation, upon much examination and upon extending ourselves in some suitable way of doing penance.

Seventh Rule. The seventh: let one who is in desolation consider how the Lord has left him in trial in his natural powers, so that he may resist the various agitations and temptations of the enemy; since he can resist with the divine help, which always remains with him, though he does not clearly feel it; for the Lord has taken away from him his great fervor, abundant love, and intense grace, leaving him, however, sufficient grace for eternal salvation.

Eighth Rule. The eighth: let one who is in desolation work to be in patience, which is contrary to the vexations which come to him, and let him think that he will soon be consoled, diligently using the means against such desolation, as is said in the sixth rule.

Ninth Rule. The ninth: there are three principal causes for which we find ourselves desolate. The first is because we are tepid, slothful or negligent in our spiritual exercises, and so through our faults spiritual consolation withdraws from us. The second, to try us and see how much we are and how much we extend ourselves in his service and praise without so much payment of consolations and increased graces. The third, to give us true recognition and understanding so that we may interiorly feel that it is not ours to attain or maintain increased devotion, intense love, tears or any other spiritual consolation, but that all is the gift and grace of God our Lord, and so that we may not build a nest in something belonging to another, raising our mind in some pride or vainglory, attributing to ourselves the devotion or the other parts of the spiritual consolation.

Tenth Rule. The tenth: let the one who is in consolation think how he will conduct himself in the desolation which will come after, taking new strength for that time.

Eleventh Rule. The eleventh: let one who is consoled seek to humble himself and lower himself as much as he can, thinking of how little he is capable in the time of desolation without such grace or consolation. On the contrary, let one who is in desolation think that he can do much with God's sufficient grace to resist all his enemies, taking strength in his Creator and Lord.

Twelfth Rule. the twelfth: the enemy acts like a woman in being weak when faced with strength and strong when faced with weakness. For, as it is proper to a woman, when she is fighting with some man, to lose heart and to flee when the man confronts her firmly, and, on the contrary, of the man begins to flee, losing heart, the anger, vengeance and ferocity of the woman grow greatly and know no bounds, in the same way, it is proper to the enemy to weaken and lose heart, fleeing and ceasing his temptations when the person who is exercising himself in spiritual things confronts the temptations of the enemy firmly, doing what is diametrically opposed to them; and, on the contrary, if the person who is exercising himself begins to be afraid and lose heart in suffering the temptations, there is no beast so fierce on the face of the earth as the enemy of human nature in following out his damnable intention with such growing malice.

Thirteenth Rule. The thirteenth: likewise he conducts himself as a false lover in wishing to remain secret and not be revealed. For a dissolute man who, speaking with evil intention, makes dishonorable advances to a daughter of a good father or to a wife of a good husband, wishes his words and persuasions to be secret, and the contrary displeases him very much, when the daughter reveals to her father or the wife to her husband his false words and depraved intention, because he easily perceives that he will not be able to succeed with the undertaking begun. In the same way, when the enemy of human nature brings his wiles and persuasions to the just soul, he wishes and desires that they be received and kept in secret; but when one reveals them to one's good confessor or to another spiritual person, who knows his deceits and malicious designs, it weighs on him very much, because he perceives that he will not be able to succeed with the malicious undertaking he has begun, since his manifest deceits have been revealed.

Fourteenth Rule. The fourteenth: likewise he conducts himself as a leader, intent upon conquering and robbing what he desires. For, just as a captain and leader of an army in the field, pitching his camp and exploring the fortifications and defenses of a stronghold, attacks it at the weakest point, in the same way the enemy of human nature, roving about, looks in turn at all our theological, cardinal, and moral virtues; and where he finds us weakest and most in need for our eternal salvation, there he attacks us and attempts to take us.

Discernment of Spirits: Welcome the Holy Spirit & Reject the Evil Spirit



A. Overview*

1. Holy Spirit builds me up

He reminds me of God's love for me, His power, mercy, wisdom; I am God's beloved son/daughter
He stirs my conscience when I am in/near sin [so, this sorrow/guilt is from God]

2. Evil Spirit drags me down

He wants to frustrate faith, see it as pointless/too hard...
He makes sin feel look attractive, deadens my conscience

3. Consolation: feeling of closeness to God, love for Him, loved by Him, desire to live faith, tears over sin/Passion...

Cause: God, angels

What should I do?

Be grateful, rejoice, continue living/practicing faith

Remember: this won't last forever; **don't** become 'crazy Catholic' ["I'll pray 4 hours a day all month!"]

4. Desolation: opposite. I feel lazy, sad, agitated, not very loving, separated from God

Cause: 1. Laziness/sin [devil lead me, I chose sin]

2. God wants to strengthen me; 'takes off training wheels' [His grace is still at work, not 'felt']

3. God wants to deepen my trust/reliance on Him [I can't create consolation]

What should I do?

HALT! Don't make any big decisions; 48 hour rule [negative experience usually diminishes]

Remember times of consolation [from God, thank Him; these will return]

Increase prayer by 5-10% [show God and devil that I am serious about faith]

B. The Devil is like...

1. A bully [who is really a lazy coward]

What should I do? Be fearless! Stand up to him! Don't give an inch, & increase prayer 5-10%

2. A sexy married neighbor, with a stone cold heart, inviting me to have a secret affair [hidden/private sin]

What should I do? Bring into His Light! Tell trusted friend, priest in confession ['a near occasion of sin']

-may feel awkward/embarrassing; *NOTE-- I have done nothing wrong [Jesus was tempted]

3. A smart general, who attacks my castle's weak point[s]

What should I do? With God's help, build up weak point! use prayer, study, support group; & grow in humility

-*Note: Devil is 'doing me a favor!' [showing me my weakness; now I bring this to Christ]

-If I sin, **immediately** return to Christ: express sorrow, ask for forgiveness [confess as soon as I can]

-later, watch 'game film:' what lead me to this? what can I learn from this? do better next time?

Bonus 1. Beware of 'totalizing' ["from now on, I'll always be in consolation/desolation"]

Bonus 2. Never, ever dialog with the Evil Spirit: ex. Eve. Always keep eyes & heart on Jesus: in consolation and desolation

Image: woodcut, St Michael calmly slays multi-headed dragon Satan, as the angelic hosts quietly cheer.

*source: *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius Loyola SJ, Rules for 1st Week, #313-327 -Fr Joe Laramie SJ, White House Jesuit Retreat

Father,

**I abandon myself into your hands;
do with me what you will.**

Whatever you may do, I thank you:

I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let only your will be done in me,

and in all your creatures -

I wish no more than this, O Lord.

Into your hands I commend my soul:

I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,

for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself,

to surrender myself into your hands without

reserve,

and with boundless confidence,

for you are my Father.

St. Charles de Foucauld

Litany of Humility

O Jesus, meek and humble of heart, *Hear me.*

From the desire of being esteemed,

Deliver me, O Jesus.

From the desire of being loved...

From the desire of being extolled...

From the desire of being honored...

From the desire of being praised...

From the desire of being preferred to others...

From the desire of being consulted...

From the desire of being approved...

From the fear of being humiliated...

From the fear of being despised...

From the fear of suffering rebukes...

From the fear of being calumniated...

From the fear of being forgotten...

From the fear of being ridiculed...

From the fear of being wronged...

From the fear of being suspected...

That others may be loved more than I...

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be esteemed more than I...

That, in the opinion of the world,

others may increase and I may decrease....

That others may be chosen and I set aside...

That others may be praised and I go unnoticed...

That others may be preferred to me in

everything...

That others may become holier than I,

provided that I may become

as holy as I should....

The Secret of Sanctity

I am going to reveal to you the secret of sanctity and happiness. Every day for five minutes control your imagination and close your eyes to all the noises of the world in order to enter into yourself. Then, in the sanctuary of your baptized soul, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, speaking to the Holy Spirit,

saying:

O Holy Spirit, soul of my soul,

I adore You.

Enlighten, guide, strengthen and
console me.

Tell me what I ought to do and command
me to do it.

I promise to be submissive in everything that

You ask of me,

and to accept all that You permit to
happen to me.

Only show me what is Your Will.

If you do this, your life will pass happily and serenely. Consolation will abound even in the midst of troubles. Grace will be given in proportion to the trial, as well as strength to bear it, bringing you to the gates of Paradise full of merit. This submission to the Holy Spirit is

The Secret of Sanctity

Cardinal Mercier

Prayer to

The Most Holy Indwelling Trinity

O my Love, my only Good, Most Holy Trinity, I adore You, hidden in the depths of my soul. To You, to Your honor and glory, I dedicate my life. May every thought, word and deed of mine be an act of adoration and praise directed towards Your Divine Majesty enthroned in my heart.

O Father, Infinite Goodness, behold Your child, clothed in the likeness of Your Son. Extend to me Your arms that I may belong to You forever.

O Son, Divine Lord, made man, crucify me with Yourself that I may become, in union with You, a sacrifice of praise for the glory of Your Father.

O Holy Spirit, Fire of Everlasting Love, consume me on the altar of Divine Charity, that at the end of life, nothing may remain but that which bears the likeness of Christ.

O Blessed Trinity, worthy of all adoration, I wish to remain in spirit on my knees, to acknowledge forever Your reign in me and over me, to Your everlasting glory.

Through the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the pure heart of St. Joseph, I consecrate my life to Your adoration and glory.

At the moment of death, receive me, O my Triune Love, that I may continue my adoration of love through all eternity.

Amen. (200 days)

Nihil Obstat
Daniel Pilarczyk, S.T.D.

Imprimatur
†Paul F. Leibold, V.G.
Cincinnati, Jan. 25, 1963

Questions

1. Reflect on an experience when your “eyes were opened a little,” when you “came to your senses.” How did you hear/recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit?
2. What practices do you follow throughout the day to keep you spiritually aware? How can you improve in this essential practice?
3. What are the interior signs that you experience that make you aware that you are spiraling away from God’s love?
4. How do I experience sloth to shrink back from the greatness of God’s call in my daily life? What are some means that I can counter-act this attack?
5. Call to mind someone you are praying for or have prayed for that falls under Rule 1 – going from mortal sin to mortal sin through addiction/cohabitation, sexual sins.... What was your prayer for them? Are you aware of how the Holy Spirit stung or bit their conscience to awaken them to the reality that they are made for more?
6. How does the enemy whisper to you? “Are you going to dismiss us?” “How will you live without us?” “Is this too much to ask?”
7. When do you catch yourself moving into fantasy (me-centered) thoughts? Car rides, computer, down time, prayer. How do you return back to God?
8. In the Rules St. Ignatius often speaks of being moved “to tears.” Why are we so afraid of tears in our modern society? In what way does this make us less human in our development?
9. When has my soul become “inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord?” For God’s glory, is this something I was able to share with another?
10. Have you ever experienced a penitential practice of self-denial that was energizing? Explain.

