



Come and See Any Step

Discernment - notes for catechists to use as appropriate.

Adapted from those on the Plenary Council website:

<https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/introduction-to-discernment/>

Pope Francis – from the chapter on discernment from *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Vatican, 2018

‘166. How can we know if something comes from the Holy Spirit or if it stems from the spirit of the world or the spirit of the devil? The only way is through discernment, which calls for something more than intelligence or common sense. It is a gift which we must implore. If we ask with confidence that the Holy Spirit grant us this gift, and then seek to develop it through prayer, reflection, reading and good counsel, then surely we will grow in this spiritual endowment.’

Discernment: An approach to making decisions: from *Jesuits in Britain*

St Ignatius developed his Spiritual Exercises to help us make good decisions. The process helps us to become more sensitive to the action of God in our lives. God’s desire for each one of us is that we should be at peace and joyful. St Ignatius described this as being in a state of **consolation** – a contentment stemming from the belief that I am in the right place and doing the right thing.

Discernment, the good the bad the Ignatian

The term discernment often gets used to refer to two quite distinct but related things: making big apostolic decisions, life choices, and such – what Ignatius called ‘election’; and the more humble practice of discernment of spirits. Both are practical skills; both are aimed at making choices, either big decisions or the small stuff of moment-by-moment, hour-by-hour, day-by-day practicality – what we might regard as micro-choices.

Key points mentioned on the Discernment video – Plenary Council Website or via youtube: <https://youtu.be/IF5d3X5omF4>

Discernment is a process designed to draw us closer to God.

This we do by listening, to self, listening to others and listening to God, with an open heart. In that way we allow the Spirit ignite us!

Discernment is quite different to decision making, which comes after and is informed by discernment, where we are seeking to find God’s will for us. In any particular situation we open our hearts to find out what God might want me / us to do in that setting.

Jesus did not give us a game plan for life, we need to contextualise the Gospel for our time, and the situation in which we find ourselves.