

CONTEXT FOR DISCERNMENT

1. ***Prayer***
 - Discernment is rooted in the religious experience (often recognize in prayer)
 - Requires an element of stillness and attentiveness to the stirrings from within
 - The answer will “*come from within*” through our subjective experience of grace

2. ***Desire to seek God’s Will (God’s hope and desire for us)***
 - Recovery of our imagination in prayer (desire, will, memories, affectivity, etc.)
 - Our deepest desire as humans is *our deep yearning for God and to live in God*
 - The invitation to *Christian discipleship* is rooted in *love and freedom* which must embrace Christ’s world-view and mission into the world

3. ***Listen with an open heart***
 - A particular listening stance that is sensitive to the beckoning of the Spirit/Grace
 - Attentive to the affective experience: feelings and emotions act as gateways to God’s presence and the spiritual movements (consolation and desolation)
 - *A way of being* that is attentive and attune to God

4. ***An attitude of spiritual freedom: spiritual detachment***
 - *A freedom from* disordered attachments toward a *freedom for* God’s love and Grace
 - A continual conversion of heart toward spiritual freedom
 - A radical *re-orientation* that allows God to be the central reality of our lives

5. ***Gather sufficient data***
 - Authentic discernment takes into account all relevant information and issues
 - Examine the advantages and disadvantages as needed
 - Remember the data is only one component of the discernment process

6. ***Attention to the relational reality***
 - Life evolves around meaningful relationships and commitments
 - The larger picture: Our relationship with God is the foundation for our relationship with others
 - Authentic discernment must bring about a deeper relationship with God and others

7. ***The experience of Grace***
 - Recognize the spiritual movements of consolation and desolation
 - Sift through the experiences to distinguish, clarify and confirm
 - Decide only in the experience of grace not out of grace

8. ***Perseverance and patience***
 - The discernment process can be challenging and long at times – *be patient*
 - Remember moments of consolation especially in times of desolation
 - *No decision* when experiencing desolation