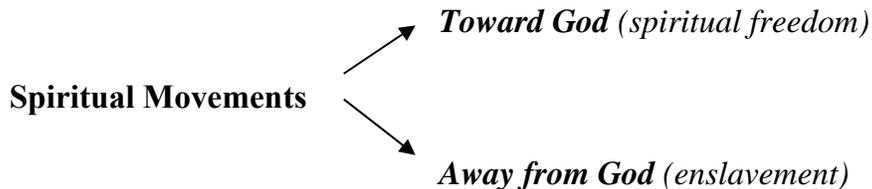


SPIRITUAL MOVEMENTS

In discernment we are primarily dealing with the spiritual movements operative within our lives. In the process, we sift through our interior experiences to recognize God's presence: 1) God's graces that guide us toward God and greater spiritual freedom and 2) what destructive forces that hinder our responses to God's invitation and lead us toward spiritual unfreedom.



Within these basic thematic spiritual movements are 2 types of experience that hold great significance in discernment: **Consolation** and **Desolation**. The experience of consolation and desolation is foundational to any discernment. Without the experience of consolation and desolation there are no inner movements to sift through, distinguish, understand or discern.

1. **Consolation** is any spiritual movement within our experience that draws us toward God (*movements*). The experience of consolation brings us to a greater spiritual freedom through God's grace and leads us toward a more God/Christ-centered orientation. It helps us to get in touch with our deeper yearning for God and what God desires for us, which opens us to a deeper capacity for love and transparency, to creative discipleship and generous service.

Affective experiences (feelings) generally associated with Consolation: a felt-sense of God's love personally and in creation, a deep longing for God, a sense of peace, joy, lightness of heart, an increase of faith, hope, love, quiet inner rest, deep conviction, harmony, patience, self-acceptance, harmony, humbleness, transparency, trust and confidence in God, sacrificial love, self-surrendering.

2. **Desolation** is any spiritual movement that moves us away from God or in opposition to God (*counter-movements*). The experience of desolation brings us to a greater enslavement to disordered attachments and unfreedom. It often focuses on a false and inflated sense of self that leads us toward a self-centered orientation. Desolation is usually a form of resistance to God's purifying grace, where we put up barriers as a result of broken/unfree/sinful tendencies within us that impede our spiritual growth.

Affective experiences generally associated with Desolation: a felt-sense that one's life is meaningless and God is absent, apathy or listlessness, discouraged, despair, hopelessness, a sense of false pride and a wanting of control, power, status, a state of self-disgust, self-hatred, feeling unlovable, judging, critical and harsh, lack of honesty, living in fear and anxiety, attachments and addictions, depression and repression, denial and unwillingness to deal with issues, an unwillingness to follow Jesus toward the cross, self-aggrandizement.