

A Short Guide to the Ignatian Discernment Process

Ignatian discernment is a way of noticing how God is moving in your heart so you can choose what leads you closer to Him. It is simple, practical, and deeply aligned with Scripture.

1. God speaks through interior movements

Ignatius teaches that God often guides us through *consolation* and *desolation*:

- **Consolation:** movements that draw you toward God — peace, clarity, joy, faith, hope, love, desire for prayer, desire for holiness.
- **Desolation:** movements that pull you away from God — confusion, heaviness, discouragement, fear, isolation, spiritual laziness.

These movements are not random; they reveal the direction of your spiritual life.

2. Consolation helps you recognise God's direction

When a choice leads to deeper faith, hope, love, peace, or generosity, it is usually aligned with God's will.

Consolation is not always "pleasant," but it always draws you toward God.

3. Desolation warns you to pause and resist

When a choice leads to fear, confusion, isolation, or spiritual paralysis, it is usually *not* from God.

In desolation, Ignatius says:

- **Do not make major decisions**
- **Stay faithful to prayer and commitments**
- **Resist the discouragement**

Desolation is a time to stand firm, not to change direction.

4. God confirms His will through peace and fruit

When you move toward God's will, you will eventually experience:

- Peace
- Clarity
- A sense of rightness
- Spiritual fruit

This confirmation is one of the most reliable signs of God's direction.

5. Discernment happens in community

Ignatius emphasises seeking wise counsel.

God often confirms His direction through:

- Spiritual leaders
- Mature Christians
- The wider community

Discernment is never meant to be done alone.

6. Discernment leads to action

Once clarity comes, Ignatius encourages:

- **Decision**
- **Commitment**
- **Trust**
- **Movement**

God's will becomes clear *as you walk in it*.