

## St. Ignatius Rules of Discernment

### Concrete Guidance to Become a True, Free Child of God

Below is a summary of the first 14 Rules of St. Ignatius. For more details, obtain: *The Discernment of Spirits: An Ignatian Guide for Everyday Living* (by Fr. Timothy Gallagher, O.M.V.)

### Initial Principles

-The first premise is that God love us and wants a deep friendship with us. He is active in our lives. Since He is our Creator and has a plan for our lives, He cares about our decisions. St. Ignatius gives us rules to help us develop this friendship and to make good decisions. Following God's plan keeps us spiritually healthy.

-God's will is something we can know, but we cannot be sure that we know it perfectly.

-We are capable of doing God's will once we properly discern it. Learning to interpret our feelings/emotions is one of the best ways to discern God's will for our choices in life. St. Ignatius believed that God deals directly with us. He works in our minds and our feelings.

-We can have alternating moods, but they are full of spiritual meaning. The trick is to understand that meaning.

-Discernment refers to the process of making decisions. Decisions lead to more decisions.

-We don't have to have it all together to make sound decisions. We don't have to be perfect. We don't need to be deterred by imperfect knowledge and murky circumstances. If we are earnestly seeking God, we won't get off track too far. Sometimes we will make mistakes. The decision is not the goal. The goal is to grow in relationship with God. We should say: "I want and I choose what better leads to God's deepening life in me."

### Keys Terms

-Spirits: affective stirrings/movements of the heart: joy, sadness, hope, fear, peace, anxiety, etc.

-To discern spirits—process by which we distinguish between different kinds of spiritual stirrings in our hearts, identifying those that are of God and those that are not, in order to accept the good and reject the bad. E.g., when you go into a home, you may sense that something is not right; or, you may feel peace.

-“Evil spirit”/“enemy” = demons, our own weak tendencies which spring from egoism and disordered sensuality, individuals who can lead us away from God to some extent, and bad worldly thinking.

-“Good spirit” = God, angels, theological virtues implanted in us from Baptism, influences for good (saints, family members, good friends, the Bible, *Catechism*, and other good books)

## Steps to Advance Spiritually

1. Become aware of the stirrings in our hearts.
2. Understand—reflect on the stirrings and notice what is from God and what is not. (We must continue to study the Bible and the Catechism in order to know what is truly from God.)
3. Take action—accept and live according to what is of God; reject and remove from our lives what is not of God.

**H.U.A.** Listen to the stirrings of your heart.

Understand—is it of God or not of God? If it is not of God, pray it away and reject it. If it is of God, act on it.

**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.** 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.** Definition of **spiritual consolation**. Consolation is 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, consolation is 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.** Definition of **spiritual desolation**. Desolation is 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.** When in desolation, do not change your goals or your prayer life.

[If you say the Rosary everyday, keep saying it everyday no matter how you feel.]

**Sixth Rule.** When in desolation, be active and work against it by doing more prayer, meditation, examination (of root causes), and penance.

**Seventh Rule.** When in desolation, know that the Lord is really with you and has given you enough grace to resist agitations and temptations from the enemy. This is a test for you. Trust that the Lord is near and has given you enough grace for eternal salvation. Keep calling out to Him.

**Eighth Rule.** When in desolation, be patient and know that the Lord will soon console you. Again, keep working against the desolation as in the sixth rule.

**Ninth Rule.** There are three principal causes for desolation: (1) you are tepid, slothful, or negligent in your spiritual exercises (prayer and study); (2) God is testing you; and/or (3) you need to realize that consolation is a gift and grace from God and that you did not achieve it (protects you from pride).

**Tenth Rule.** When in consolation, strengthen yourself and think about how you will act when desolation comes again.

**Eleventh Rule.** When in consolation, be humble and thank God for this grace. When in desolation, take strength in God and know that, again, He has given you sufficient grace to resist the enemy.

**Twelfth Rule.** The evil spirit is a bully. You must confront him head on and be firm and oppose him. If you do not, he will take advantage of your weaknesses and weaken you further.

**Thirteenth Rule.** The evil spirit conducts himself as a false lover in wishing to remain secret and not be revealed. Reveal secret evil thoughts, temptations, and problems to a good confessor or to another holy confidant—those who know how the enemy works.

**Fourteenth Rule.** The evil spirit will attack you in your weaknesses. Know your weak points and strengthen them quickly with the Lord. Again, apply the sixth rule.

[Acronym for capital sins: PALE GAS = pride, anger, lust, envy, gluttony, avarice, sloth.]

-Caution: If you are suffering from mental illness, you could misinterpret these simple rules and end up “beating yourself up” and making your spiritual life worse. Therefore, please bring these rules to your therapist and discuss if you should be using them at this point of your treatment.

### **The Meaning of Lent and Fasting/Abstinence Rules**

The 40-day season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, Mar 1, and continues through Holy Thursday, Apr 13.

Lent is a time to develop a deep friendship with our Lord. God has called us to be in communion with Him, not just to be good. So many people think they are good, but they are not really united to God. Choosing to be in union with God will help us love Him more and our neighbor more. Many times we block God's love toward us (we don't have real union with Him) because we have resentment, un-forgiveness, anger, fear, shame, guilt, negative thought patterns, etc. in our hearts. (Feel free to contact Fr. Joseph or Fr. Michael to pray with you to have God remove these from your hearts.) When you feel God's love, it is easier to walk with Him and love your neighbor. Your energy and zeal increase. Do positive things; increase your prayer time, read the Bible daily, visit the sick, etc. Eliminate or minimize T.V., entertainment, and over-socializing so that you have more time to commune with God. The bottom line: **We need to do things that will make us dynamic Catholic Christians**—people of prayer, study, generosity, and evangelization. (Study this bulletin!) If you are a dynamic Catholic, you understand why the Church promotes extra prayer, fasting, and almsgiving during Lent. [We choose to pray the **Divine Mercy Chaplet** every day during Lent as one extra prayer.]

The highest prayer we have as Christians is the Mass. Holy Communion puts us in direct union with God. If you can fit it into your schedule, please come to daily Mass. It would great to see families come on Fridays, since the kids don't have school.

Reconcile with God. Jesus asks us, through His Church, to go to Confession at least once a year. Set the example for your kids (and the youth) and come as a family several times a year. Once a month would be great.

Since Jesus suffered and died on a Friday, we are called to do extra penance on Fridays. Jesus teaches us, through the Church, that we are to abstain from meat every Friday during the year. This is mandatory during Lent and on Good Friday. If we do eat meat on Friday outside of Lent, we are to make an extra sacrifice (pray for others, visit the sick, etc.) that day as a substitute.

Fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Take only one full meal on these days. Two smaller meals are permitted if necessary to maintain strength according to

one’s needs. Even though this is a requirement for those between 18 and 59, probably most people under 18 and over 59 could do it. Get tough. It is important to fast more than two days a year. Holy Saturday is a good day to fast also.

**Gems of Wisdom from the *Diary* of Saint Faustina**

**929.** When I had rested near His sweetest Heart, I told Him, “Jesus, I have so much to tell You.” And the Lord said to me with great love, **Speak, My daughter.** And I started to enumerate the pains of my heart; that is, how greatly concerned I am for all mankind, that “they all do not know You, and those who do know You do not love You as You deserve to be loved. I also see how terribly sinners offend You; and then again, I see how severely the faithful, especially Your servants, are oppressed and persecuted. And then, too, I see many souls rushing headlong into the terrible abyss of hell. You see, Jesus, this is the pain that gnaws at my heart and bones. And, although You show me special love and inundate my heart with streams of Your joys, nevertheless, this does not appease the sufferings I have just mentioned, but rather they penetrate my poor heart all the more acutely. Oh, how ardently I desire that all mankind turn with trust to Your mercy. Then, seeing the glory of Your name, my heart will be comforted.” Jesus listened to these outpourings of my heart with gravity and interest, as if He had known nothing about them, and this seemed to make it easier for me to talk. And the Lord said to me, **My daughter, those words of your heart are pleasing to Me, and by saying the Chaplet you are bringing humankind closer to Me.** After these words, I found myself alone, but the presence of God is always in my soul.

**931.** February 10, [1937]. Today is Ash Wednesday. During Holy Mass, I felt for a short time the Passion of Jesus in my members. Lent is a very special time for the work of priests. We should assist them in rescuing souls.

**Ash Wednesday Masses, March 1 (Lent Begins!)**

- StB, 8:30 a.m., Confession at 9:10 a.m. [Phil McGinn]
- StA, 5:00 p.m., Confess. at 4:30 p.m. [M. and J. Noll]
- OLS, 6:45 p.m., Conf. after Mass. [Ed and Kathleen]
- StI, 4:30 p.m., Confess. at 4 p.m. [Against “apathy”]
- StP, 7:30 p.m., Confess. at 7 p.m. [Kent/Cindy Hester]

**Friday Meatless Suppers and Stations of the Cross**

-**St. Peter:** Stations, 6:30 p.m.; soup/bread supper, 7:35 March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31; April 7  
(Stations are bilingual at St. Peter)

-**St. Anne:** Soup/bread supper, 5:30 p.m. Stations, 6:45 March 3 and 24

-**St. Bernard:** Soup supper, 5:30 p.m. Stations, 6:45 March 17, April 7

-**Our Lady:** Soup/bread supper, 5:30 p.m. Stations, 6:45 March 10 and 31

**No First Tuesday Confession at St. Bernard in March**

**Join the Divine Mercy Team; Become a Warrior!**

Say the Divine Mercy Chaplet during Lent for 40 days. We will pray three Masses for you. (Sign up so that we can read your names to the Lord and pray deeper from our hearts. There will be filler paper at the exits.) You will receive Divine Mercy postcards and images this weekend.

**Parish Council/Church Meeting for St. Bernard**

There will be a meeting open to the people of St. Bernard on Saturday evening, March 25 from 6:45 to 7:15 p.m. to discuss the possibility of moving the seasonal Saturday evening Mass from 7:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Several parishioners brought this idea to the priests. You have a chance to weigh in. If the time changes, St. Bernard Church will get the opportunity for Confessions during these evenings before Mass.

**Calendar of Events**

**-Apr 14.** Good Friday. Begin Divine Mercy Novena

**Mass Collections, February 18 – 19**

St. Anne	\$ 1085
St. Bernard	2555
Our Lady of the Snow	2439
St. Peter	414
St. Ignatius	<u>1020</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 7513</b>

**Vocations Prayer Calendar**

*Please pray for our seminarians every day.*

**Sat--**Thomas Scherer & Julio Amezcua

**Sun--**Deacon Angel Brown & Deacon Darrick Leier

**Mon--**Juan Hernandez & Witold Kaczmarzyk

**Tue--**Juan Madrid & Josh Meier

**Wed--**Mateusz Ratajczak & Dcn. Roberto Rodriguez

**Thu--**Shannon Thurman & Tomislav Tomic

**Fri--**Increase in vocations to priesthood/religious life

**Mass Intentions and Schedule for StA, StB, and OLS**

**KEY:** StA = St. Anne; StB = St. Bernard;

OLS = Our Lady of the Snow

-Sat, Feb 25, StA, 5 p.m., Parishioners and visitors

-Sat, Feb 25, StB, 7:30 p.m., Mark and Debbie Goulette

-Sun, Feb 26, StB, 7 a.m., Tom and Judy Reichert

-Sun, Feb 26, OLS, 9:30 a.m., Joseph Biller

**Weekday Masses**

-Mon, Feb 27, StA, 8:30 a.m., Steve and Jan Robar

-Tue, Feb 28, OLS, 7:30 a.m., Mark and Debbie Goulette

**-Ash Wednesday, Mar 1, See the schedule to the left.**

**-Thu, Mar 2, OLS, 11:15 a.m.,** God’s Little Instruments

**-Fri, Mar 3, OLS, 8:30 a.m.,** Special intention

**Mass Intentions and Schedule for StP and StI**

**KEY:** StI = St. Ignatius (Walden); StP = St. Peter

-Sat, Feb 25, StI, 4 p.m., Parishioners and visitors

-Sun, Feb 26, StP, 10 a.m., Maurice and Joanne Noll