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Ignatian Spirituality

RULES OF IGNATIAN DISCERNMENT

Drawn from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, these fourteen rules offer practical wisdom for discerning God's will in our daily lives and spiritual journey.

St. John Nepomucene Day of Living on Mission
September 12, 2026

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www.FaithfulPenMinistries.com



AGENDA

- ✦ What is Ignatian Discernment?
- ✦ The Enemy's Strategy
- ✦ God's Strategy
- ✦ The Battle Within

GOAL

- ✦ That you will be better able to discern God's will and direction in your day-to-day life and in big decisions.





Father Timothy M Gallagher



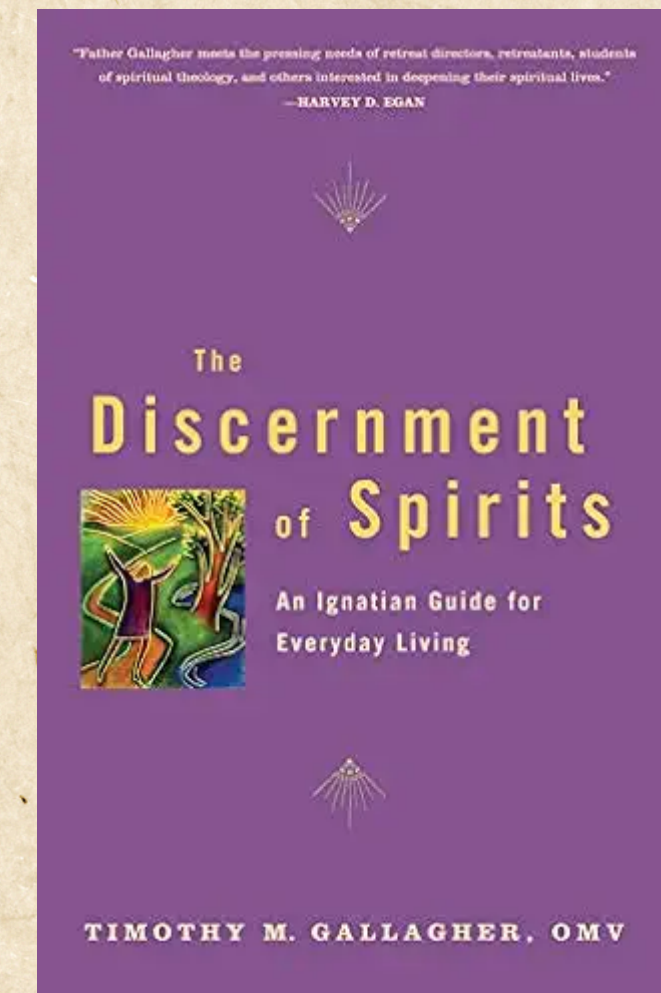
**IGNATIAN
DISCERNMENT
INSTITUTE**
Finding Freedom from Discouragement

Father Timothy M Gallagher

The Discernment of Spirits: An
Ignatian Guide for Everyday Living

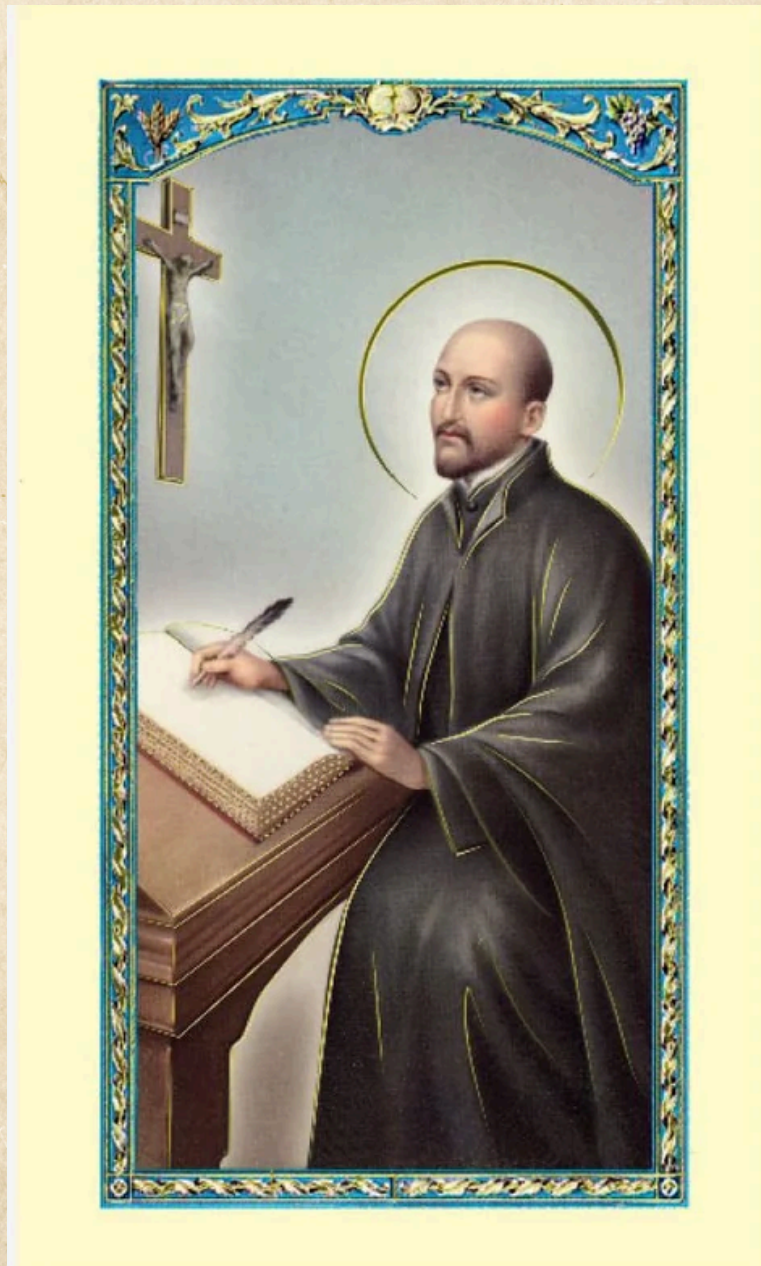
<https://www.Discernment.Institute>

<https://www.amazon.com/stores/Timothy-M.-Gallagher/author/B001JSA714>





St. Ignatius of Loyola



October 13, 1491- July 31, 1556

Minor Spanish Nobility

Wounded in war

Wrote the Spiritual Exercises

Rules of Discernment

Contemplation & Meditation

Examen

Founder of the Society of Jesus,
now known as the Jesuit order



What is Discernment?

Discernment is the awareness and understanding of the spiritual movements in our hearts from either God and His angels or Satan and his demons and then either accepting or rejecting the movement accordingly.

It's about noticing interior movements such as peace, clarity, heaviness, and confusion. It's learning to recognize God's nudges and the enemy's misdirection.



The Enemy's Strategy

The enemy pulls the heart away from God through:

- False comfort
- Discouragement
- Fear
- Secrecy
- Attacking weak spots





From False Comfort to Discouragement

The enemy begins with counterfeit comforts to pull you away from God little by little.

- “Just this once.”
- “You deserve this.”
- “No one will know.”

But false comforts are fleeting, so we quickly become discouraged, always in search of the next thing. Chasing anything contrary to God is sin, and that’s when we feel what Ignatius calls desolation.

- Heaviness.
- Confusion.
- Spiritual fatigue.
- Feeling far from God.





The Attack

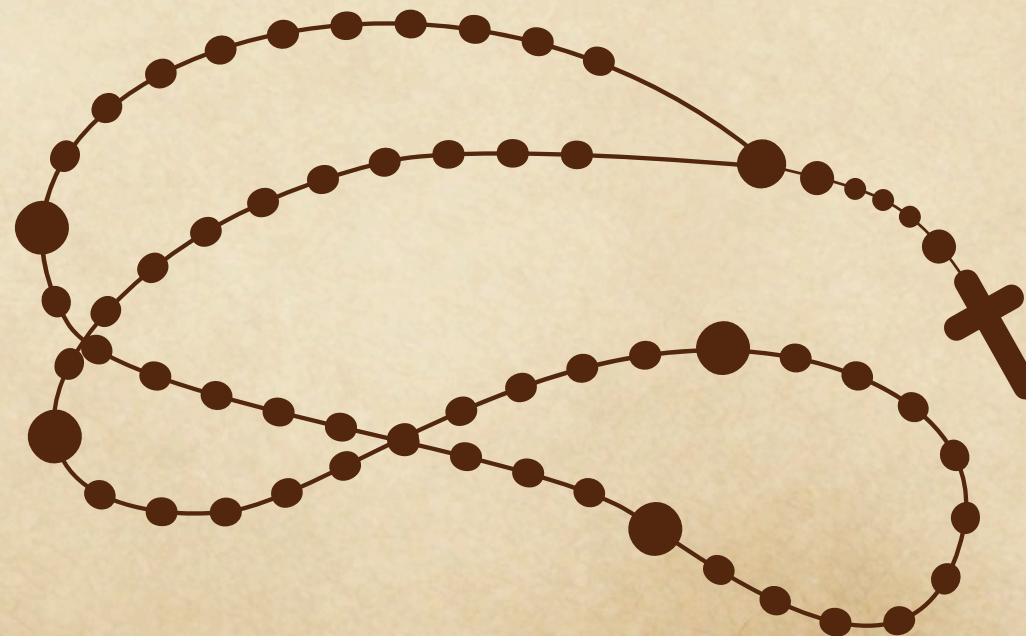
When he has you down, he attacks with lies contrary to who God says you are, thoughts and feelings of shame rather than love. He targets your weak spots.

- Tired
- Wounded
- Insecure
- Ashamed
- Isolated

Fear & Secrecy

Then he holds you with fear and secrecy. If you feel the urge to hide something, that's not God.

- Like a bully, fear strengthens him.
- Like a false lover, secrecy empowers him.



God's Strategy

God draws you in and keeps you close to Him by giving you exactly what you need.

- Peace
- Hope
- Love
- Strength
- Clarity
- Desire for more of Him





Spiritual Consolation

This is what Ignatius calls “spiritual consolation.” It’s God’s presence, His signposts.

Consolation is God’s nudge telling you to continue following Him. It’s peace about hard decisions, clarity in confusion, and strength in weakness.

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.

Galatians 5:22-23





The Daily Battle Within

The Enemy's Lies

If you are following God's promptings of peace, clarity, faith, hope, and love, the enemy then will bite, sadden, place obstacles and disquiet with false reasons. This will feel a lot like anxiety, worry, doubt, or sadness. You can recognize it because it's based on shame, fear, and what-ifs. Reject him.

The Father's Love in Truth

If you are following the enemy's promptings of worry, fear, sadness, and insecurity, God will place obstacles and sting and bite your conscience through your rational power of judgement. This may feel like guilt or conviction, but you will recognize it as truth rooted in reality and God's Word. This is God's loving discipline.





Follow Love...

Follow Consolation

When you feel peace, clarity, hope, or love, follow it.

Consolation is God's direction. Make decisions from that place. Lean into the movement of grace.

Reject Desolation

When you feel discouragement or confusion — reject it. Do not withdraw.

Do not isolate. Desolation is the enemy's misdirection. Don't make decisions in desolation. Lean into prayer, Scripture, community, and light.

Love