

# Ignatian Discernment

*The root of the word "discernment" is the Latin word discerno, meaning to sever or separate. It's essentially the ability to separate what's important from what's irrelevant or misleading. One of the complaints sometimes heard about it is that the word "discernment" doesn't have much real content, that it amounts to little more than common sense enlightened by faith. St. Ignatius Loyola, whose ideas about discernment we will follow closely in this book, thought otherwise. He used the word to mean both keenness of insight and skill in discriminating. It's first seeing, then interpreting what is perceived. He thought that the ability to discern the spirits was one of the most important skills that a Christian can have.*

*Manny, Jim. What Do You Really Want? St. Ignatius Loyola and the Art of Discernment (ep. 10-11). Our Sunday Visitor. Kindle Edition.*

## **Ignatius identified 3 ways or modes in decision making.**

- Mode 1: "No Doubt" Decision based on a revelation from God either visitation or vision.
- Mode 2: Classic Discernment of the states of consolation or desolation and the Second Time view seeking direction of the Holy Spirit.
- Mode 3: Use of Intellectual Faculties: reason and imagination.

## **11 Steps for making a decision following the Ignatian Way [From: Ignatianspirituality.com]**

1. Identify the decision to be made or the issue to be resolved.
2. Formulate the issue in a proposal.
3. Pray for openness to God's will, and for freedom from pre-judgement and addictions.
4. Gather all necessary information.
5. Repeat the 3rd step: Pray for openness to God's Will (second time).
6. State all the reasons for and all the reasons against each alternative in the proposal.
7. Do a formal evaluation of all the advantages and disadvantages.
8. Observe the direction of your will while reflecting on the advantages and disadvantages.
9. Ask God to give you feelings of consolation or desolation about the preferred option.
10. Trust in God and make your decision, even if you are not certain about it.
11. Confirm the decision.