

Discernment Process

- 1) Present Disposition (Matthew 16:1-4)
 - a. Silence and remembering how God works in my life . . . How Jesus is present to me . . . How God's promises are fulfilled in my life.
 - b. Solitude and considering . . . How Jesus may be calling me; what Jesus is saying to me. (Luke 9:28-36)
 - c. Surrender and expectation . . . What do I expect and anticipate from God?
 - d. What do I hope for? (Matthew 5:1-16)

- 2) My Reflective Experience (Matthew 8:18-27)
 - a. As I review my life story, what have been the most important decisions in my life so far?
 - b. What were my feelings, my hopes or my fears in the process of those decisions?
 - c. What were the consequences or outcomes of those decisions?

- 3) My Prayer (Matthew 6:5-22)
 - a. What are the "gospel values" in relation to my present discernment, i.e., discipleship, God's kingdom, perseverance, truth, poverty, single-heartedness, fidelity, justice, mercy, hope, love, humility?
 - b. What does the life of Jesus say in the context of my discernment, i.e., healing-wholeness, trust, courage, forgiveness, change-of-heart, faith, suffering-persecution, fullness of life etc.
 - c. Do I recognize the power and enlightenment of God's grace within me in common, ordinary ways? In confusion or doubt? In my weakness as God's strength and in my folly as God's wisdom? In my vulnerability?

- 4) Consult Significant Others (Matthew 7:7-12)
 - a. Friends and loved ones
 - b. Family
 - c. Spiritual director
 - d. Vocation counselor/director/promoter

- 5) Listening to Self—Being in Touch with Me (Matthew 6:24-34)
 - a. Name my honest feelings: can I trust them?
 - b. What do I say to others? (my messages to myself)
 - c. What is my sense of "the inner voice," the Lord within me? What is my gut-level intuition?
 - d. The ultimate question: Does this decision, direction, or choice give me life? Is it life-giving for me and others (a quality and depth of life)?
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- 6) Confirmation By . . . Affirmation By . . . (Matthew 12:33-35)
 - a. My prayer
 - b. Holy Scripture
 - c. My feelings

- d. Loving others
- e. A spiritual director
- f. A vocation counselor/promoter/director

Ultimately, through discernment, we discover that God wants only whatever is good for us whatever brings wholeness and leads to holiness. For "I have come that you may have life, life in abundance."

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Further reference: Brochure, "Make a Difference: A Guide to Life Choice" by Clare Wagner, OP. See Resource section