Discernment Basics

**MICRO**
Relational

Spiritual Exercises 313-336

**MACRO**
Directional

Spiritual Exercises 175-177
First Time. The first time is, when God our Lord so moves and attracts the will, that without doubting, or being able to doubt, such devout soul follows what is shown it, as St. Paul and St. Matthew did in following Christ our Lord.

Second Time. The second, when enough light and knowledge is received by experience of consolations and desolations, and by the experience of the discernment of various spirits.

Third Time. The third time is quiet, when one considers, first, for what man is born -- namely, to praise God our Lord and save his soul -- and desiring this chooses as means a life or state within the limits of the Church, in order that he may be helped in the service of his Lord and the salvation of his soul. I said time of quiet, when the soul is not acted on by various spirits, and uses its natural powers freely and tranquilly. If election is not made in the first or the second time, two ways follow as to this third time for making it.
PRINCIPLES OF DISCERNMENT

HEART OF CHRIST
You must discern within

DATA, DATA, DATA
Use the tools you have get as much data and perspectives as possible

REASON
Soft Heart…Hard Mind

IT LINES UP
God does not contradict himself

FRUITS
Are the fruits of the spirit present within him, are they manifest?
Heart of Christ

Principle

Let your heart educate your mind. Let your love of God educate your reason in discerning his will. Jesus teaches this principle in John 7:17 to the Pharisees. "If your will were to do the will of my Father, you would understand my teaching."

Is Prayer most important to me?

Psalm 36:9 For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

Do I start from a place of Trust?

Look at the Saints they know God more clearly than the theologians.
MISSION
I am a priest, a Spiritual Father, especially in the ministry of promotion of vocations, assessment of candidates and formation of seminarians

IDENTITY
I am a beloved son of the Father
Call out to the Lord

• Acknowledge your own personal limits, fears, obstacles and bring them to Jesus

• "Success" and "Failure"------Do not judge/evaluate as the world judges....the Lord is looking for fidelity, not success, for the right men, not just more men.

• 1st Cor 4:15-16 Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me.

• As a spiritual father teach him to pray, to call out to the Lord. He needs someone to point out to him

  1. The place where his heart is in Christ
  2. To what His Heart is attracted when he is in that place
  3. How to say yes and receive
Data, Data, Data

Principle
Always begin with data, with what we know for sure. Judge the unknown by the known, the uncertain by the certain.

Have I listed my Goal?
Personal interactions, touch points of contact with my perspectives and current seminarians

Who is on my team?
Who is helping me gather data? Do we regularly discuss the men? What are we looking for in them?
THE TEAM
INDISPENSABLE

Bishop
Bishop Edward J. Burns
Gives vision for my ministry

Director of Seminarians
Zach Webb
Continues work with current Dallas Seminarians

Executive Director
Mrs. Rosemary Sullivan
FAQ
YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Vocation ministry is a specialized ministry, but it is not just yours. Every priest should be vocation directors. God is calling and perhaps has already provided people to help you!

Personnel Board
Review files

Pastoral Assignments
Great sources of information about the man and ministry

Brother Priest
LEND YOUR VOICE TO CHRIST
I LOVE JESUS CHRIST UNCONDITIONALLY
and I have a thirst to bring Jesus and His teachings to the world.

PRAYER IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF MY DAY
I desire prayer and I’m trying to live a life of prayer rooted in regular reception of the Sacraments.

I AM STRIVING TO LIVE A VIRTUOUS & MORAL LIFE
People who know me would describe me as a Christian gentleman.

I HAVE A DESIRE TO BECOME A PRIEST
and I am truly open to the will of God in my life.
Prospect Commits

1. Entrance into seminary
2. Psychological evaluation
3. Prospect applies to seminary

Transition spiritual direction over to Vocations Director
Vocations Director invites full commitment from prospect, or extends spiritual direction
Check-in #1: Rule of Life follow-up
Check-in #2
Check-in #3

Checkpoint

Partnership with Parish
Ministry Leader
Within 6 weeks, all with Vocations Director
Think Vocations
1-on-1 #1
1-on-1 #2
1-on-1 #3
Do I have a trusted person that asks me if I am following best practices?

Who am I processing with?

Do I have Weird guy goggles?

You may become acclimated to the oddities of individuals.

You must have a soft heart but a hard head. We should be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves," Mt 10:16

PRINCIPLE

Mt 10:16
DOES HE FIT IN? GET HIM AROUND OTHER SEMINARIANS AND PEOPLE
WHAT KIND OF PRIEST WILL HE BE? DO I WANT HIM TO APPLY?
INTERVIEWS: CAN HE ARTICULATE HIS STORY AND DOES HE HAVE AN AWAKENED HEART?
SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION VS. RUNNING AWAY

Discernment Retreats
THESE ARE GOLD, THEY WILL ALLOW YOU TO ANSWER ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS IN A MUCH MORE NATURAL AND NUIANCED WAY
It Lines Up

Principle
All God's signs should line up, God does not contradict himself
1) Prayer
2) Circumstances/timing
3) History
4) Virtue
5) Desires
6) Evaluations

Am I Afraid to Ask?
- Previous Relationships
- Pornography
- Abuse
- Substance Use
- SSA

Do I Trust Your Gut?
At the end of the day, after all the data, and consultation, it falls to you.
You are the man God chose for this work!
Application

IT’S TIME

The Process

• Walk through the application process for Diocese
• Honesty
• Patterns, patterns, patterns
• Trustworthiness of sources
• Make no promises
• Ask clarifying questions
Fruits of the Spirit
Gal 5:22

ANALYSIS
Look for the fruits of the spirit, especially the first three: love, joy, and peace. If we are angry and anxious and worried, loveless and joyless and peaceless, we have no right to say we are sure of being securely in God's will.

Do they experience them?
Can he articulate his own growth, can he express his relationship with God to you?

Are they Manifested?
Do others see these fruits?
There should be a growing ability to want to serve and not be served?
Fruits of the Spirit

- 2nd Theology “Gut Check”
- Good spiritual formation
- IPF
- Silent directed Retreats
- Habit of daily holy hour
- Summer assignments