

“Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way.

What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.

Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.”

Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ



The Lord has given you a heart open to the great horizons; do not be afraid to commit your life completely to the service of Christ and His Gospel! Listen to Him as He says again today:

“The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few”

Pope John Paul II

The Vocation Office of the Archdiocese of Detroit offers help to individual men and women in the process of “sorting out” God’s call in their life as described in this brochure.



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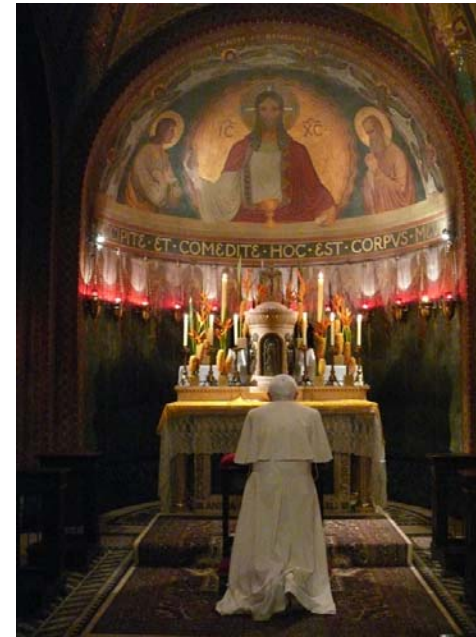
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Discernment... *sorting out God's will for me*



**...it is something
very near to you,
already in your mouth
and in your hearts;
you only have
to carry it out.**

Deut 30:14

The process of making a decision about your life with the help of the Holy Spirit is called “discernment.” It is the process of discovering God’s will for you.

In this process you deal with two persons: you and God. During the process, you will get to know both better.



As you begin, remember that both you and God ultimately desire the same thing - your happiness. You want to make a decision about your life that will bring you happiness.

Therefore, you and God are not working at cross purposes, but for the same goal.

The process of discernment, though often a struggle, is not complicated. It consists of four steps.

1 Step One **Know who you are.**

Know your likes and dislikes, your fears and dreams, your hopes and interests, your abilities and limitations. Get to know how you work under stress, what kind of leadership you respond to, how much structure you need in your life.

See how others view you in work situations, under stress, and at leisure. Reflect how you view others. Are you able to accept others, to work with them?

One way to look at a call from the Lord is to see Him acting all through your life. He created you with a unique personality and allowed you to experience a personal history. Your personality and personal history are part of your call.

As you might get to know yourself, accept what you find. You might want to change some aspects of yourself in the future, but begin by accepting yourself as you are.

You might keep a journal to record your feelings over a period of time. Going back over this journal and reflecting on changes in your feelings and ideas give a picture of the person you are.

Another road to self discovery is to develop a relationship with a spiritual director or someone whom you trust and who can be objective with you. If you are open and honest with this person, self-knowledge will increase.

2 Step Two **Be in touch with the Lord.**

Develop a life of prayer, not just in times of crisis, but regularly. No relationship develops between persons unless they listen to each other. You must learn to listen to the Lord in prayer and not merely ask Him to listen to you. You have to spend time with Him, listen to Him, be honest with Him, and occasionally be willing to wait on Him.

Prayer is a highly personal response to a personal love that God has for you individually. Because you are unique, your prayer response is going to be unique. Don't hesitate to experiment with various forms of prayer until you find those which best express your own relationship with the Lord.

Many good books are available written by the Early Church Fathers, Lives of the Saints or writings from past and present popes.

Look for traces of the Lord in nature, in circumstances in your life, in other people. God is active in all. The better you get to know Him, the more you will be able to perceive His activity.

Spend time before the Blessed Sacrament as a way of learning to listen to God speaking to your innermost being.

3 Step Three **The decision making process.**

As you become more in touch with yourself and with the Lord, prayerfully gather the facts about your decision. Consider alternatives. Write out the pros and cons of each alternative. Try to project what effect each alternative will have on you five and ten years from now.

In considering the priesthood, search out information about the life of a priest. Consider other careers which might suit you. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? Talk to priests, sisters, brothers and to people in other careers. Visit the seminary, or religious houses as well as the work situation of other careers, if possible. Try to see yourself as a priest, brother, or sister ten years from now, and as a married person with a family ten years from now. Which seems to fit you?

As you gather the facts about the alternative life choices open for you, be particularly attentive to your feelings. If you have been open and honest with yourself in Step One and with the Lord in Step Two, you can trust your feelings. Choose what appears to be the best for you and what appears to be God's will.

4 Step Four **Confirm your decision.**

After you have made your decision, spend time in prayer for an extended period to see if the decision still seems right. If it does, there should be a continuation of inner peace and satisfaction. This period of confirmation should go on for an extended interval, several weeks or more, to be sure that the peace you feel is true tranquility and not simply the relief that follows a difficult decision.

You can also be confirmed in your decision by sharing it with your spiritual director or someone else with whom you have worked through the process, such as a Vocation Director.

*Scriptures relating to
"call, vocation, choices"*

Old Testament

Abraham	Gen 12:1-4a
Moses	Ex 3:10-12, 4:1, 10-12
Amos	Am 7:14-15
Isaiah	Is 6:8
Jeremiah	Jer 1:4-8
Ezekiel	Ez 3:1-4
Kings	1 Kings 10

New Testament

Night in Prayer	Lk 6:12-15
The Twelve	Mk 3:13-15
Rich Young Man	Lk 18:15-30
Requirements	Lk 9:57-62
The Cross	Mt 16:24-28
Few Chosen	Mt 22:1-14
Temptations	Lk 4:1-13
Martha Mary	Lk 10:38-42
Seek First	Lk 12:22-31
What Matters	Phil 1:9-10
All Things	Rom 8:26-31