



IGNATIUS' RULES FOR DISCERNMENT

(an Excerpt)

The following Rules for Discernment are three of the guidelines given by St. Ignatius to strengthen us spiritually during times of desolation. Desolation often happens when one prepares himself/herself in making a commitment. In order to help with your discernment of permanent commitment in CLC, review the rules below and consider how Ignatius suggests we work against the evil spirit and deepen our loving collaboration with the Holy Spirit in working towards God's desire for us in mission.

The Fifth: In times of desolation never make a change, but be firm and constant in the proposals and determination in which one was the day preceding such desolation, or in the determination in which one was in the preceding consolation. Because, as in consolation the good spirit guides and counsels us more, so in desolation the bad spirit, with whose counsels we cannot find the way to a right decision.

*Our spiritual call is rather to remain 'firm and constant'
in what we had proposed before the desolation began.*

The Sixth: Although in desolation we should not change our first proposals, it is very advantageous to change ourselves intensely against the desolation itself, as by insisting more upon prayer, meditation, upon much examination, and upon extending ourselves in some suitable way of doing penance.

When in time of spiritual desolation we resist actively—we humbly turn to God and beg for help; we meditate on God's faithful love; we examine the desolation and gain deeper understanding regarding its causes and remedies; when we make small, "suitable" gestures of courage that counter its destructive tendencies—then, Ignatius affirms, we have found the road that leads surely through the darkness of desolation into the light of God's love.

The Seventh: Let one who is in desolation consider how the Lord has left him in trial in his natural powers, so that he may resist the various agitations and temptations of the enemy; since he can resist with the divine help, which always remains with him, though he does not clearly feel it; for the Lord has taken away from him his great fervor, abundant love, and intense grace, leaving him, however, sufficient grace for eternal salvation.

Through striving to resist in time of spiritual desolation we become increasingly able to resist. Simultaneously, our awareness also grows that God is always with us and that his providence is always at work in our lives: palpably in time of spiritual consolation and in an unfelt but very real and sustaining way in time of spiritual desolation.