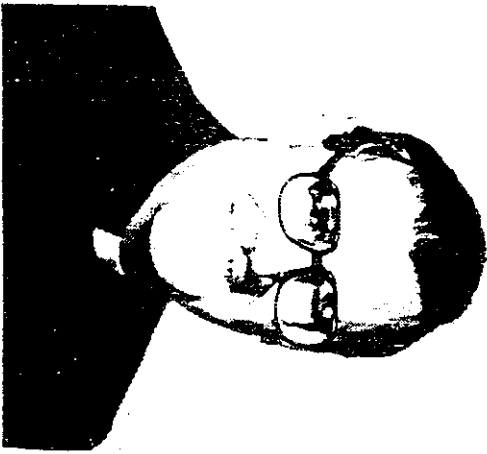




# DISCERNMENT

## How do I know if this is of God?

by Father Bill McCarthy, MSSM



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In these apocalyptic times the question arises over and again, "How can I tell if something is coming from the Spirit of God?"

First of all there are certain realities over against which all discernment is placed:

- that God, our Father, has a wonderful plan that He reveals step by step and moment by moment both individually and collectively to His people.
- that this loving Father is covenanted to watch over, guide, nurture and protect His people.
- that this loving covenanted plan is realized most fully in the person of Jesus, His Son, whom the Father sent as the Way, the Truth and the Life.
- that Jesus has left His Spirit to guide His Body, the Church, down through the ages.
- that the Spirit speaks externally (through the Church, the bible, signs, sacraments, apparitions, events, persons, symbols, experiences, etc.) but also internally through our thoughts, our deepest feelings, through dreams, visions and intuitions to each member of the Church personally and to the Church as a whole.

that the final certainty of individuals, apparitions, dreams, etc. lies with the whole Church, whom the Spirit protects from substantial error.

Therefore, in discernment there are certain principles for individual discernment. (I shall write about collective discernment next time.)

- 1) When I seek God with all my heart I will find Him (cf. Jeremiah 31:34). When one is ready to die to self and seek only God, nine-tenths of the problems are overcome.

- 2) I seek the will of God as revealed by the Church and by the Spirit. The inspiration, the teachings of the Church, and the Scriptures must be in line. What is of God will always be consistent with the Church and the Scriptures.
- 3) Next take into account providential circumstances that will often point in one direction.

- 4) I seek wise counsel from a Spiritual Director or wise friend in the Lord.
- 5) Be willing to fast.

- 6) Look to the fruit. *"By their fruits you shall know them."*
- 7) Expect harassments and difficulties for Satan will not stand by idle.

- 9) Expect deep inner peace and joy despite the struggle.
- 9) Be willing to wait for doors to open.

When the idea/event is not of God,  
God says NO

When you are not right,

God says GROW

When the time is not right,

God says SLOW

When everything is right,

God says GO!

"If you really want to know what God wants you to do, simply ask Him. Make sure you really expect a solid answer for a double-minded person will be unsettled as a wave in the sea."

(James 1: 5-6)



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