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PIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

Discernment is a spiritual process seeking to identify, in our lived reality, the presence of God which may be requiring from us a free decision.

The discernment process takes place within each person, who looks inside himself or herself to differentiate the God’s movement from what might be only illusory.

Spiritual discernment is essential for Christians, as it tries to recognize God’s will in our life in order to follow it truly and faithfully. And it is the more necessary in view of the fact that we have no immediate perception of the will of God. Normally, God does not reveal Godself to us directly, and we must use a set of criteria to discover God’s presence in our lived experience. This is the meaning of discernment.



The context of discernment must be necessarily religious. It is a spiritual exercise, as Ignatius would say, which depends on the understanding one has of God. Some religious contexts enable discernment and others prevent it.

The discernment of God’s will is necessarily situated within the horizon of faith, and faith can only be understood as a dialogue between human freedom and God’s revelation. Without faith in the possibility and reality of God as able and willing to enter into a personal relationship with each of us, discernment is incomprehensible. Faith – though shrouded in mystery and not in the certainty of verifiable evidence – sheds light on the Christian journey. The goal of discernment is to discover this light, and this is meant to be a Christian attitude throughout life.

Discernment is part of our Marist tradition, and an important condition to discover the particular path of discipleship which Christ calls each of us to follow. It presupposes three moments: being aware of one’s own history by the light of God, separating the incidental from the essential in life, and choosing decisively[[1]](#footnote-1).

1. Gathered Around the Same Table: The Vocation of Champagnat’s Marist Laity # 154. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)