

# Saint Luke the Evangelist Catholic Parish Blackburn South

46 Orchard Grove Blackburn South Vic 3130

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## WEEKLY BULLETIN: SUNDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2019 TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR C

**THE YEAR OF SAINT LUKE – BEING THE GOOD NEWS BY PROMOTING GOD'S HOSPITALITY**

*This week's readings: Wis 9:13-18; Philemon 9-10, 12-17; Gospel Luke 14:25-33*

**GOSPEL REFLECTION BY GREG SUNTER:** 'Hate' is an emotive and extremely harsh word in our society. In its gospel context, the word is not used as an opposite of 'love' but as an indication of deserving of less significance than another thing. So the teaching about hating father, mother, etc can be read as saying that being a disciple of Jesus must take precedence over everything else, even family. In 1st Century culture, family was foremost above everything else; it was the very fibre that held society together. Jesus is saying that discipleship must be put above even that which is most important and most intrinsic to life in this world. That is why he goes on to tell the two stories about the need to count the cost before undertaking an important venture. He makes clear to his listeners that discipleship is more important than anything else and that there are huge costs associated with taking it on. A believer has to literally 'count the cost' of what it will mean to place discipleship above family, friendships, career, politics and even life itself. Jesus makes no apologies for the fact that what he is asking is incredibly demanding.

Our 'possessions' are all those things – material, emotional, and psychological – that we cling to and that we think give us our identity and status. Jesus called for a radical reinterpretation of status and position. He tells his listeners that they cannot truly be disciples if they continue to cling to those things that are considered important in this world. They have to surrender the things that bind them to this world's ideas of status and position before they can fully embrace the kingdom view of the world. As Jesus said, you have to really count the cost!

**Historical Context – Radical poverty:** The earliest Christian communities were characterised by a redistribution of all wealth and possessions to ensure that the needs of every single member were met. This was the first interpretation of Jesus' teaching to give up possessions to embrace discipleship. Modern religious life, grounded in the monastic traditions of the Middle Ages, embraces a radical poverty in order to free religious from societal notions of status and power so that they might more freely and openly serve others. Lack of possessions and wealth brings a humility and openness that is almost impossible when playing the game of 'keeping up with the Joneses'.

**Scriptural context – Honour and Shame:** The first example of counting the cost that Jesus relates is about a man building a house without the means to complete it suffering the fate of his neighbours making fun of him. Whilst the thought of neighbours laughing at our mistake may not be too serious to us, it was a devastating thought in the 1st Century. A social code of honour and shame dominated the world view at the time. To be shamed by your actions or by the actions of others was humiliating and lowered social status. Jesus frequently used the honour-shame code to make his point and challenge social expectations.

**Living the Gospel – Give up my possessions?** We live in an era of extraordinary wealth in some countries contrasted against extraordinary poverty and need in other countries. Accumulation of possessions has become a driving force in our society. Flat screen televisions, iPods, multiple computers, games consoles, portable DVD players, multifunction mobile phones are all 'must-have' items. The thought of surrendering such items may be almost impossible to consider. However, Jesus' message about being a disciple calls to us. How can some people in the world surround themselves with such luxuries while others don't have enough to eat? Does the love of 'possessions' blind us to the needs of others?

### **Raise your voices ...**

**Entrance Antiphon:** You are just, O Lord, and your judgement is right; treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.

**Response to the Psalm:** In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.

**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia, alleluia! Let your face shine on your servant, and teach me your laws. Alleluia!

**Eucharistic Acclamation:** We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

**Communion Antiphon:** I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.



## Saint Luke the Evangelist Catholic Parish Blackburn South

*Being the Good News ...*

[www.cam.org.au/blackburnsouth](http://www.cam.org.au/blackburnsouth)

Whitehorse Deanery  
Eastern Region  
Archdiocese of Melbourne

Rev Father Gerard Johnson  
Parish Priest

Sonya O'Farrell  
**Part-time Parish Secretary**  
Wednesdays, Thursdays &  
Fridays  
10.00am - 2.00pm

Email: [blackburnsouth@cam.org.au](mailto:blackburnsouth@cam.org.au)

Website:

[www.cam.org.au/blackburnsouth](http://www.cam.org.au/blackburnsouth)

### SUNDAY MASS

Saturday Vigil - 6:00pm  
Sunday - 8:30am & 10:30am

### WEEKDAY MASS & ROSARY:

**Tues. @ 11.00am &  
Weds. - Sat. @ 9:00am**

Rosary prayed after Weekday Mass  
times as listed above. All welcome.

### RECONCILIATION

Saturday 9.30am & 5.30pm

### EXPOSITION & BENEDICTION

The Blessed Sacrament is exposed  
for Adoration Wednesday  
Start: 7:00pm | End: 8:00pm

### WEDDINGS & BAPTISMS

By appointment and  
six months (6) notice, please.  
*(This helps with the planning of both  
celebrations and Parents usually know  
nine months in advance when their  
baby is to be born).*

St Luke the Evangelist  
Catholic Parish Primary School  
46 Orchard Grove,  
Blackburn South Vic 3130  
Tel: (03) 9877 4023

Mr Ed Weekes: Acting Principal

Email:

[principal@slblackburnsth.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@slblackburnsth.catholic.edu.au)

Website:

[stlukes@slblackburnsth.catholic.edu.au](http://stlukes@slblackburnsth.catholic.edu.au)

## Prayer to Saint Luke the Evangelist

Lord God, who chose Saint Luke to  
reveal by his preaching and writings the  
mystery of your love for the poor, grant  
that those who already glory in your  
name may persevere as one heart and  
one soul and that all nations may merit  
to see your salvation. Through our Lord  
Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and  
reigns with you in the unity of the Holy  
Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen!

*Patron Saint of artists, physicians,  
surgeons, students and butchers.*

**WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER** this weekend all who are sick, especially Gerald Chia, Bernardine O'Meara, Peter Murphy, Kathryn Holmes, Tony Grieve, Vicki Bowes, Jim Maguire and Nadia Tarquino and those Parishioners unable to be among us this weekend. For Father James (Jim) Feenan who died recently and for all those whose anniversaries occur about this time, may they rest in peace.

**LITURGICAL CALENDAR THIS WEEK:** Ordinary Time. **Monday:** St Peter Claver, priest; **Thursday:** The most Holy Name of Mary; **Friday:** St John Chrysostom, bishop, doctor; **Saturday:** The Exaltation of the Holy Cross; **Sunday Masses:** Eucharistic Prayer for use in Masses for Various Needs I. Eucharistic Acclamation No. I.

**THIS WEEKEND, THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA MARKS CHILD PROTECTION SUNDAY,** on which we pray for those who have been abused, their families and supporters. We recognise the harm done by priests, religious and lay people in Church settings. We recommit to practices that support survivors and make the Catholic Church and its ministries the safest possible place for children and vulnerable adults. You can find out more about the Church's work in this area at: [www.catholic.org.au/responseandprevention](http://www.catholic.org.au/responseandprevention)

**REGIS INALA SECOND TUESDAY (OF THE MONTH) MASS** occurs this Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> September at 11.00am @ 220 Middleborough Road, Blackburn South Victoria 3130. Parishioners are invited to join the Residents for Refreshments afterwards. All Parishioners are welcome.

**CHILDREN'S CHOIR** next week during the Sunday morning 10.30am Mass.

**A VOCATION VIEW:** You have one precious life to give. How do you choose to offer it to God? Be willing to accept the challenges of discipleship. (Luke 14:25-33)

**STEWARDSHIP CORNER:** "Everyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:33) When we first hear this statement, it seems that Jesus is making an unrealistic demand upon us. How can we renounce all of our possessions? We need them to live. However, what we must renounce is the belief that they belong to us. Everything that we have belongs to God alone. All of our resources are entrusted to us not only for our own use, but also so that we can help others. Once we renounce the idea that we possess or are entitled to anything, it is much easier to share the many gifts that God has given us. Then we truly are His Disciples.

**ANNUAL FATHER'S DAY APPEAL:** We dispatched \$1164.90 to the Priest's Retirement Foundation last week as our contribution towards this annual appeal for retired Priests. Frs Jim Staunton, Tony Spierings and all retired priests say THANKYOU!

**THE 6PM CHOIR** will serve again on Saturday 28th September.

**DISCERNING WHO THE SEVEN MEMBERS OF OUR NEXT PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL WILL BE + FIVE EX OFFICIO (by virtue of one's position or status) =**

**12 PARISHIONERS IN TOTAL:** We now move into the formal **DISCERNMENT** phase and we are all invited to PRAY to determine 'is God calling you to share your gifts and talents as a member of the next Parish Pastoral Council to build the faith community of St Luke the Evangelist?' **All Parishioners are invited to gather with the Steering Committee on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October from 1.30pm - 3.30pm in our Parish Hall for the Parish Discernment Gathering.** Please refer to the supplement this weekend for more details. (A few booklets of the history of the Parish are available on the notice table in the Church foyer; to complement our process of recommissioning our Parish Pastoral Council and for more recent Parishioners who may like to take a copy to learn how the original Families were involved in establishing a successful Parish from the start).

**THE ALIGHT FAMILY FIESTA** is on Saturday 21 September. We are all part of a family so everyone is welcome. If the faith of your family could benefit from some encouragement right now, come and join us! **Registrations close on Wednesday 11 September.** Fr Leo Patalinghug, chef and priest, will cook up a storm to feed us body, mind and soul. There will be rides, games, live music - don't miss out! Look for the Alight flyers in your parish. Register today at [www.cam.org.au/alight19](http://www.cam.org.au/alight19). If the cost is a problem, we can help. See the "Subsidy" tab on the Alight website. Fliers are available on the notice-table in our Church foyer.

**LIVING LAUDATO SI'** - our Parish is invited to this forum on Saturday 14 September. For more details please visit: [https://www.css.org.au/article-view/article/23054/living-laudato-si-forum-for-parishes-saturday-14-september-2019#.xw809hts\\_b1](https://www.css.org.au/article-view/article/23054/living-laudato-si-forum-for-parishes-saturday-14-september-2019#.xw809hts_b1)

**HOMELESSNESS: PREPARING FOR 2020, PARISH FORUM, TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER, 6PM FOR 6.30-8.30PM** During 2019 churches and groups across the Melbourne metropolitan area co-operated to provide winter shelter to several hundred rough sleepers on the coldest nights of the year. One Parish Priest says "Not only are there homeless people in our area, our Parish needs homeless guests to minister to them. We need to give our parishioners an opportunity to participate in providing shelter" This forum will begin to prepare for next winter and help make connections between parishes, churches and groups that will make next year's winter shelter a success. Cathedral Room, Cardinal Knox Centre 383 Albert Street, East Melbourne (Entry via car park off Lansdowne Street) RSVP: 20 September 2019 Cost: \$20.00 - concessions available, please contact Lucia Brick. Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/BEOEB> Enquiries: Lucia Brick tel: 9287 5566 or e: [lucia.brick@css.org.au](mailto:lucia.brick@css.org.au)

**WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS** who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.



## PARISH MINISTRY ROSTER

### EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

		7 AND 8 SEPT 2019
SATURDAY	6:00 PM	Olive Hammill
SUNDAY	8:30 AM	Godfrey Thong
	10:30 AM	Lynda Kilroe-Smith

### 14 AND 15 SEPT 2019

Terry Wells  
Melina Barcellona  
Jenny Dixon

### MINISTERS OF THE WORD

		7 AND 8 SEPT 2019
SATURDAY	6:00 PM	Mia Perang
SUNDAY	8:30 AM	Melina Barcellona
	10:30 AM	Margaret Gearon

### 14 AND 15 SEPT 2019

Bernie Brennan  
Godfrey Thong  
Teresa Rhynehart

### WELCOMER'S ROSTER

		7 AND 8 SEPT 2019
SATURDAY	6:00 PM	Rita Gibb
SUNDAY	8:30 AM	Joe Brogno
	10:30 AM	Margaret Gearon

### 14 AND 15 SEPT 2019

Terry Wells  
Marie Pekish  
John LoGiusto

### SLIDE OPERATORS

		7 AND 8 SEPT 2019
SATURDAY	6:00 PM	David Prabha
SUNDAY	8:30 AM	Liliana Poropat
	10:30 AM	Manny Gonzalez

### 14 AND 15 SEPT 2019

Terry Wells  
Rosemary Donaldson  
Manny Gonzalez

### CHURCH FLOWERS

7 SEPT 2019  
Reshika Weerasinghe  
14 SEPT 2019  
Joan McHugh

### CHURCH CLEANING

14 SEPT 2019  
Team 4 (Maree's Team)  
Maree Moss, Lynda Kilroe-Smith,  
Rita Gibb & Peng-Sim Eng

### MAINTENANCE

5 OCTOBER 2019  
Team 1  
Bob Dimmittina &  
Steve Kilroe-Smith

**LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE:** Chris Lowney Breakfast Briefing, 6 September  
Chris Lowney is an engaging author and presenter on leadership, and is vice chair of CommonSpirit Health, the largest nonprofit health system in the US. On Friday 6 September 2019, we're hosting a breakfast briefing with Lowney to discuss 'Shared Leadership: Insights and Challenges for Catholic Social Services', 7.15 for 7.30am start at the Cardinal Knox Centre, East Melbourne. [Download flyer...](#)

**BREAKFAST FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONAL WITH CHRIS LOWNEY,** 9 September  
Chris Lowney will address a breakfast gathering on Monday 9 September for young professionals and emerging leaders working within Catholic organisations, social services, missions and ministries who are interested in growing as a leader in this fast-paced, rapidly changing and complex 21st century. Location: Cardinal Knox Centre, 383 Albert Street, East Melbourne, 7.15am - 8.45am. [Download flyer...](#)

**CATHY JENKINS DIRECTOR** from the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation has sent us a letter outlining what is the next stage of preparation for the **2020 Plenary Council:** the Listening and Discernment phase. Please read it on our Parish notice board in our Church foyer. The Plenary Council 2020 is a gathering of the Church in Australia to make decisions for the future. Six National Themes for Discernment have been drawn from the 220,000 people that were engaged in the Listening and Dialogue sessions. How is God calling us to be a Christ-centred Church in Australia that is: •missionary and evangelising? •inclusive, participatory and synodal? •prayerful and eucharistic? •humble, healing and merciful? •a joyful, hope-filled servant community? •open to conversion, renewal and reform? Each of the themes has a 'snapshot' report which provides a sample of the voices and answers that inspired the theme. Snapshot reports are available at <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/resources/reports/>

**CATHOLIC MAN BREAKFAST:** The next *Catholic Man Breakfast Series* takes place on Friday the 20th September 2019 and features Fr Leo Patalinhu. Fr Leo is being hosted to Australia by several Archdioceses, including The Archdiocese of Melbourne. He has a high profile as a chef, TV host and martial arts exponent which are tools in his real trade of 'evangelizing'. Cost is \$50 with group discounts available. The time is strictly 0700 - 0900 hours. There is a new venue being the Athenaeum Club, 87 Collins St Melbourne (not the Athenaeum Theatre) His talk will be "be a man and feed your family". **This event is cosponsored by the Office of Life Marriage and Family Office of the Archdiocese of Melbourne.** Enquiries: [michael.bohan@menalive.org.au](mailto:michael.bohan@menalive.org.au) The *Catholic Man Breakfast Series* is an opportunity for men to gather and be encouraged and inspired in their faith.

**JOURNEY CATHOLIC RADIO:** This week on the Journey, we hear the words of Luke's Gospel 14: 25-33. Do we know our True Identity? The Catholic Guy, Bruce Downes asks these questions, and Mother Hilda from the Abbey encourages us to look for the patterns. We are blessed to have such truly talented Christian music artists on our show. Go to [www.jcr.org.au](http://www.jcr.org.au) or [www.itunes.jcr.org.au](http://www.itunes.jcr.org.au) and to ensure that you never miss a show it can be sent to you each week as a podcast via email.

**ARE YOU A SPIRITUAL LEADER?** - The Spiritual Leaders Program is a one-year, part-time program held on Friday mornings (and some afternoons) in Box Hill, Vic. It is suitable for people in various positions of leadership, spiritual formation and outreach ministries such as community leaders, nurses, school principals, ministers, lay ecclesial ministers, and chaplains. The program, which commences in Feb 2020, focuses on personal integration of the theory and practice of a contemplative, discerning approach to pastoral ministry. Fee-Help may be available. Apply to Heart of Life Centre for Spiritual & Pastoral Formation. Brochure and application form at [www.heartoflife.melbourne](http://www.heartoflife.melbourne) or tel 03 9890 1101

**SAFETY STATEMENT:** We are committed to a safe and nurturing culture for all children and vulnerable adults in our Church. Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish Blackburn South holds the care, safety, wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults as central and fundamental responsibilities of the Church. This commitment is drawn from and inherent to the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the Gospel. <http://mel.org.au/blackburnsouth/Policies.aspx>

## Parish Groups & Contacts

by ... Promoting God's Hospitality

Lectors, Welcomers Collectors  
Extraordinary Ministers of the  
Eucharist, & Rosters

Margaret Gearon - 0409 807 135

**Children's Liturgy Group**

Nina Grieve - 9877 4023

Jess Kilroe-Smith - 0452 613 863

**Stewardship Counters**

Dale Dixon - 0433 885 087

Steve Kilroe-Smith - 0404 864 232

**Pastoral Council &**

**Child Safety Officer**

Darren McLean - 0417 774 504

**Parish History**

Margaret Gearon - 0409 807 135

**Whitehorse Deanery**

**Finance Committee**

Steve Brennan

Parish Accountant

**Hall Hire**

Sonya O'Farrell @ the  
Parish Office - 9877 2292

**Care Group & Gardens**

Judy Noy - 9894 1506

**Church Sacristan**

Greg Grant 0401 644 474

**Church Linen**

Toni Plevier

**Church Cleaning & Flowers**

Megan McLean 0419 347 693

**Parish Garden Maintenance**

TBA

**Holy Communion**

to the housebound

**Emmaus College**

**Education Board Parish Reps**

Maureen Mac Mahon &

Bernard O'Malley

**Parish & School Choirs**

Maria Pinto, Lina Mafi

0411 136 043

Marg Yore & Kat Bergin

9877 4023

**Parish and School**

**Fete Committee**

T.B.A. - 9877 4023

**Parish School Advisory Board**

Ed Weekes - 9877 4023

**Parish School**

**Parents' Association**

Ed Weekes - 9877 4023

**St Vincent de Paul Conference**

For Assistance: 1800 305 330

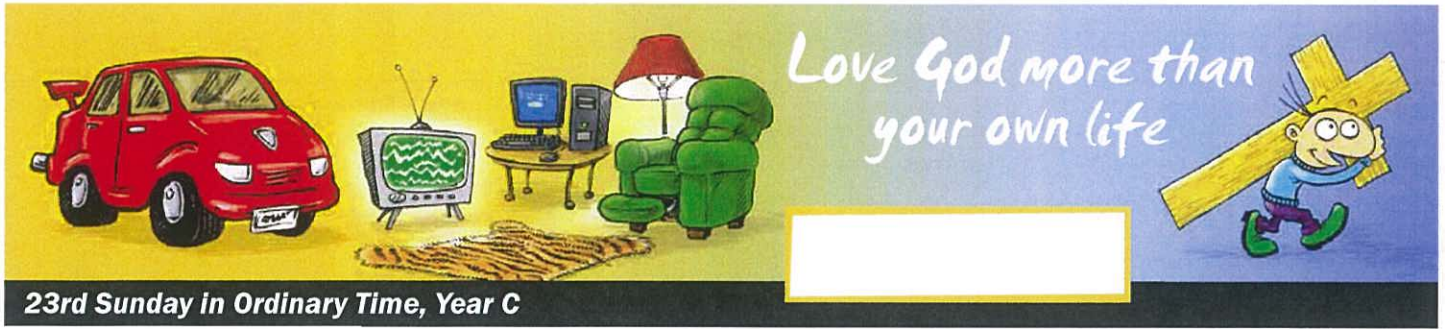
(Monday to Friday 10am-3pm)

**Parish Contact:** Margaret Gearon

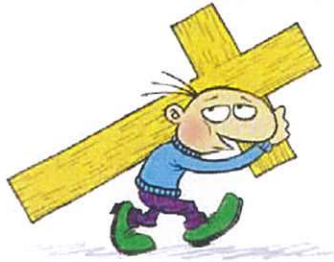
**RECRUITMENT NOTICE:**

These Parish Groups welcome new members who choose to participate in the life of the Parish in these ways - would you like to make contact with one or more of them?





23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C



Jesus tells us that choosing his way is not always easy. When might it be hard to do what Jesus asks us?

What are some good choices you can make this week? Tick the good choices and cross the bad ones.

HELP AROUND THE HOUSE WITHOUT BEING ASKED TO

DON'T WORRY ABOUT SAYING MY EVENING PRAYERS

CONTRIBUTE TO THE OFFERTORY PLATE

MAKE FRIENDS WITH SOMEONE NEW

MAKE FUN OF THE TEACHERS

OWN UP TO MAKING A BAD DECISION

TURN OFF THE T.V. AND READ A BOOK

STOP DOING YOUR HOMEWORK AND GO OUTSIDE TO PLAY

DO SOMETHING NICE FOR YOUR PARENTS



# The Love Maze

Find the path to God





# How Ignatian Spirituality Gives Us a Way to Discern God's Will

By David L. Fleming, SJ

What shall we *do*? We should not do anything wicked and we should not do anything absurd. Between these boundaries lie a vast number of possibilities. We face large decisions: schooling, career, work, state of life, relationships, weighty commitments. Every day we face smaller decisions about our priorities and goals, how to spend our time, what to pay attention to and what to put off for another day. How do we make these choices? How do we weigh competing values? How do we discern the right path?

Ignatian spirituality gives us a way to approach these questions. To follow Jesus we need to know how to make good decisions. Ignatian spirituality helps us approach this challenge in a practical way.

## What Do We Want?

Ignatius would first have us be clear about the ends that we seek. Again we return to the Principle and Foundation for clarity about the values that should govern our choices. Everything in this world is presented to us “so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily.” Thus, “our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want and I choose what better leads to God's deepening life in me.” Our loving relationship with God is the goal and end of our life. All of our choices are means, steps toward reaching our goal. We enter marriage or choose a career or start a business as a way to deepen our relationship with God. All of these important choices are means, not ends in themselves. It is easy to lose sight of this and treat choices as the ends. Our first choice or decision is simply to be a follower of Christ. Everything else—all our choices, big and small—follows from this.

## The Analytical Approach

When we have our end clearly in sight, then we are able to tackle the complexities of decision making. One way is the analytical approach. In trying to choose between two goods, we might list pros and cons in two columns on a sheet of paper. If we are perplexed, we might also ask some friends what they think. Then we make a decision, offer our decision to God for his blessing, and pray for a consolation of peace as God's gift to us.

Ignatius calls this type of decision making a “third-time” choice. “First-time” and “second-time” choices are decisions guided by our hearts, where confirmation comes not from the reasoning intellect but through a discernment of the meaning of the different movements of the emotions and feelings. This is Ignatius's greatest gift to us about decision making. It may be called the gift of the reasoning heart.

## Sometimes the Choice Is Clear

A first-time choice is a decision that is unmistakably clear. We *know* what is right. Ignatius cites two examples of first-time choice in the New Testament: the conversion of the apostle Paul, and the call of the tax collector Matthew. Neither man had any doubt about what God wanted of him (at least in these situations). First-time choices are not rare. We probably know people who never had any doubt about what they should do at major turning points in their lives. Some people are sure about their marriage spouse at a first meeting in this graced manner.



Others are sure about their religious-life vocation or priestly vocation in a similar way. You may have had this experience yourself, at least in some circumstances.

## **When the Choice Isn't So Clear**

Second-time choices are situations where the preferred choice is not entirely clear. We are presented with alternative courses of action that all seem attractive to some degree, and we are not blessed with the gift of a clear certainty about what to do. In these cases, Ignatius says that we can discern the right choice by attending to the inner movements of our spirit. In particular, feelings of “consolation” and “desolation” will signal the correct course of action. Ignatius always carefully puts the word *spiritual* before consolation and desolation. For him spiritual consolation is our experience “when some interior movement in the soul is caused, through which the soul comes to be inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord.” Ignatius more simply describes consolation as every increase in hope, faith, and charity. Spiritual desolation is just the opposite. The words Ignatius uses to describe it include darkness of soul, disturbance, movement to things low and earthly, disquiet of different agitations and temptations. Ignatius’s understanding of the importance of these feelings dates back to the very beginning of his conversion to a fervent Christian faith when he learned to pay close attention to his feelings.

Second-time choice is not simply a matter of “feeling peaceful” about a proposed decision. The feelings of spiritual consolation and spiritual desolation must be carefully assessed. Complacency and smugness about a decision can masquerade as consolation. At times, desolation can be a timely sense of restlessness pointing us in a new direction. Ignatius discusses how to work with his guidelines for discerning at some length in his “rules for discernment of spirits” at the end of the Spiritual Exercises.

## **Trusting Your Feelings**

It seems surprising (and somewhat risky) to trust our feelings to the degree Ignatius does, but this approach to discernment is entirely consistent with his vision of the Christian life. The Ignatian perspective tells us that we live in a world that is permeated by God, a world God uses to keep in touch with us. We seek to follow Jesus. We carefully observe him in the Gospels and we enter into these Gospel scenes using the methods of Ignatian contemplation through imagination. We come to know who Jesus is and strive to make him the center of our lives. We make our decisions within the context of this relationship of love. It is a relationship of the heart. Our heart will tell us which decisions will bring us closer to Jesus and which will take us away from him.

Ignatian discernment, then, holds that our Christian choices are often beyond the merely rational or reasonable. “The heart has its reasons of which the mind knows nothing,” Pascal said. This is fine—as long as the heart has been schooled by Christ.

It is often said that Ignatian spirituality forms us to be “contemplatives in action.” We can understand this somewhat paradoxical term if we see that the goal is action and discernment is the means. Discernment guides us to decisions that will join us ever more closely with Christ and with our working with Christ in the world. Contemplation of Jesus in the Gospels is the essential discipline that makes discernment possible. The practice of imaginative prayer teaches us who Jesus is and how he acts and how he decides. This kind of contemplation schools our hearts and guides us to the decisions that bring us closer to God.