The Four Steps of Discernment

What is the next right step God is asking me to take?" Ignatian discernment wisdom guides us to answer this question in prayer and invite God to walk with us through a discernment process. This worksheet provides an Ignatian four-step process to boldly taking your next right step.

1. PRAY

- What decision are you facing that you feel God is inviting you to discern?

- What grace(s) are you feeling drawn to ask Jesus for? Spend time in prayer about this decision, trusting that you are not alone in this discernment process.

- Capture the thoughts, feelings, concerns, excitement you feel as you pray about this decision.

- Who needs to join you on your discernment journey? A spiritual director? A trusted friend? A spouse? A parent? A mentor?

2. GATHER DATA

- **Mode 1:** How is God giving you clarity beyond doubting?

- **Mode 2:** Where do you feel consolation about your decision? Where do you feel desolation?

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2. GATHER DATA (CONTINUED)

- **Mode 3:** If there is no clear choice after praying with the movements of consolation and desolation, pick one of the tools below to help you discern now and spend time working with this tool in prayer. Capture what arises in prayer in the process.

  – Make a Pro/Con List
  – Act as if you made the decision and ponder the outcomes.
  – Act as if a friend came to you seeking advice for your similar situation. What advice would you give them?
  – Picture yourself pondering the situation at your death. What would be important to you then? How would you feel about this decision at that time, with that perspective?

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3. COME TO A DECISION

- Do you feel ready to make a decision? Or is God inviting you to spend more time in prayer about this decision?

- If you feel it is time to act, what is God inviting you to do?

- Internally commit to the decision and check the fruits. What feelings or thoughts arise as you think about implementing this decision? Does this decision bring you consolation, or desolation? This will give you more insight about if this decision is the right path forward.

4. ACT

- What action steps is God inviting you to take?

- Live into your decision. Continue to check the fruits! What are the fruits of your decision?

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