

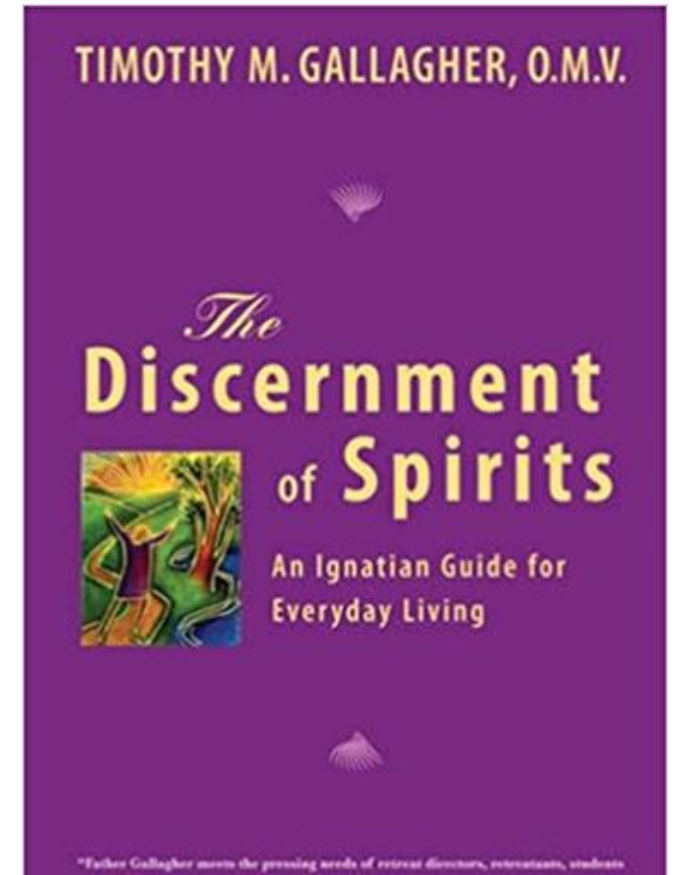


# Discernment of Spirits

*RULES 5-9: HOW TO FIGHT DESOLATION*

# Resources

- ▶ [spiritualdirection.com](http://spiritualdirection.com)
- ▶ Discerning Hearts app



# Review of Discernment of Spirits

Created by Ignatius of Loyola as part of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises

Along with Exercises and the Examen, it is used to grow in Holiness and grow closer to God through prayer and self examination

Primarily DOS helps us to become aware of the battlefield that is our souls, and of the movements in our souls

We are either moving towards God or away from God

Be Aware, Understand, Take Action (accept or reject)

# Rules 1-4

Two fundamental directions in life:

1. Away from God

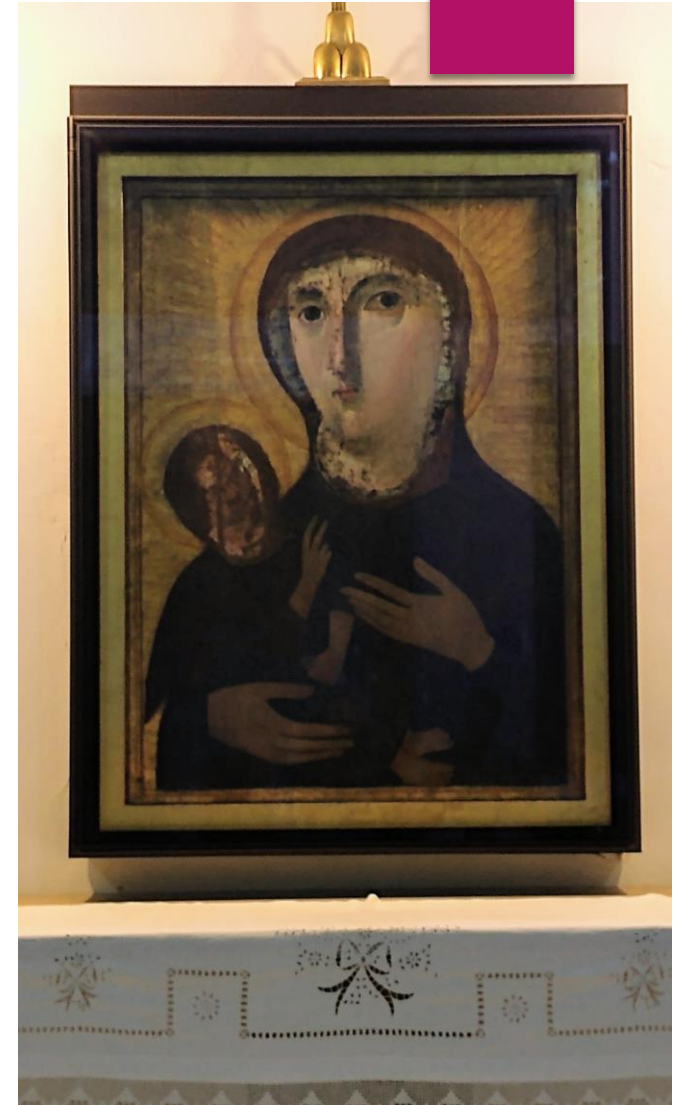
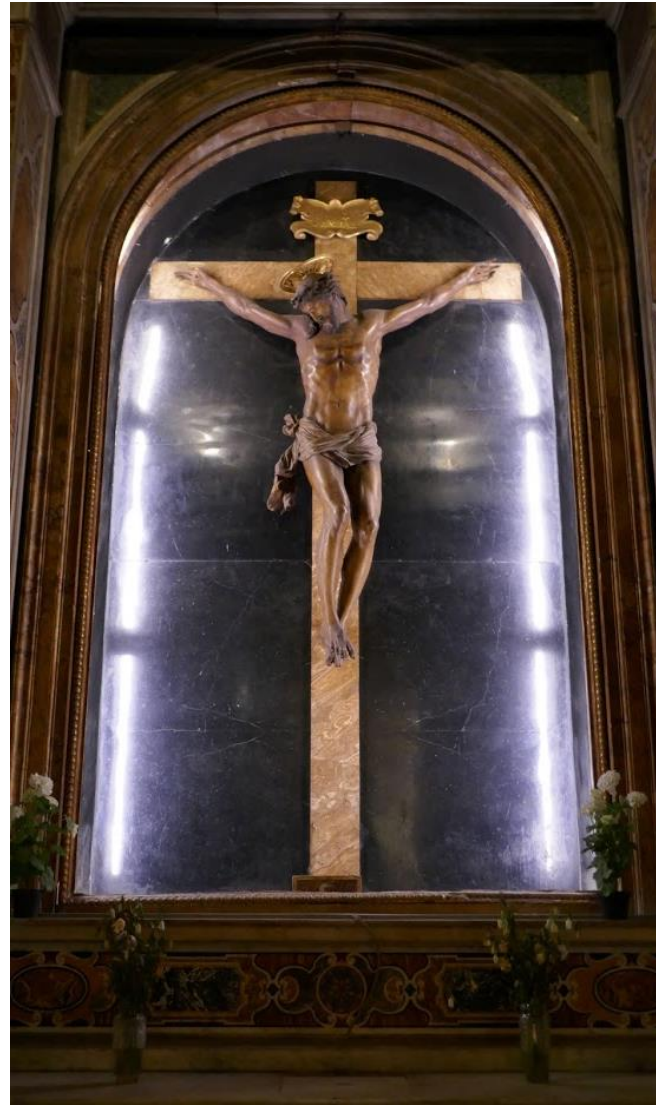
2. Towards God

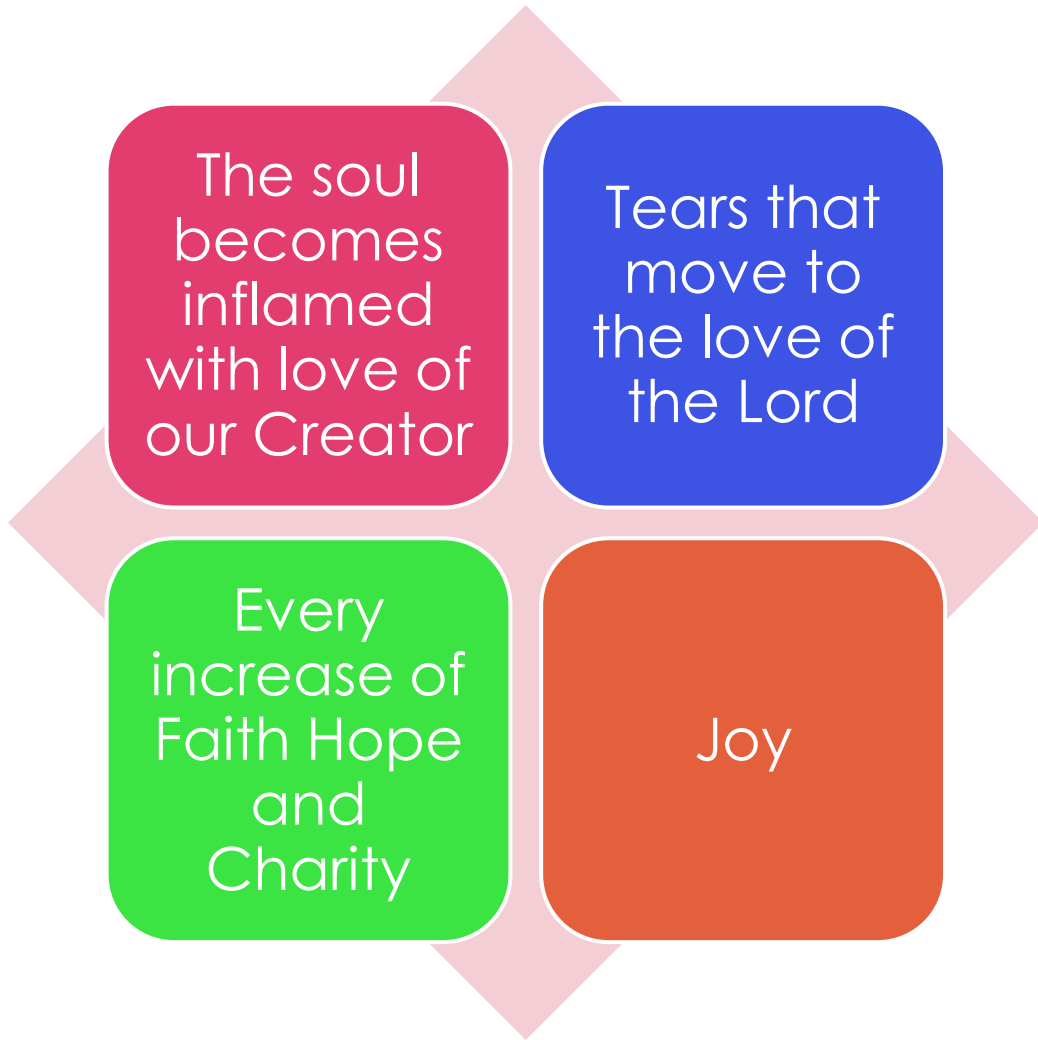
The Holy Spirit and the devil both try to influence us as we move through our day. How they interact with us depends on which direction we are moving.

Consolations

Desolations

# Recent Consolation and Desolation





## Forms of Consolation

# Forms of Desolation

Darkness of soul

Disturbance or  
Disquietude

Movement to  
low and earthly  
things

Agitations and  
temptations

Moving to lack  
of confidence,  
without hope,  
without love

Finding oneself  
totally slothful,  
tepid, sad

Feeling  
separated from  
God

# Rule 5

In time of desolation never to make a change; but to be firm and constant in the resolutions and determination in which one was the day preceding such desolation, or in the determination in which he was in the preceding consolation. Because, as in consolation it is rather the good spirit who guides and counsels us, so in desolation it is the bad, with whose counsels we cannot take a course to decide rightly.

***Never make a change when in desolation, stay the course.  
Right decisions cannot be made with the enemy as  
counselor***



## Rule 6

Although in desolation we ought not to change our first resolutions, it is very helpful intensely to change ourselves against the same desolation, as by insisting more on prayer, meditation, on much examination, and by giving ourselves more scope in some suitable way of doing penance.

***Resist the desolation by changing oneself intensely.  
Double down, add more prayer, much examination  
and suitable penance***

# Rule 7

Let him who is in desolation consider how the Lord has left him in trial in his natural powers, in order to resist the different agitations and temptations of the enemy; since he can with the Divine help, which always remains to him, though he does not clearly perceive it: because the Lord has taken from him his great fervor, great love and intense grace, leaving him, however, grace enough for eternal salvation.

***Consider what is behind the desolation, what might be the purpose?***

***Divine help is always with you. God always gives sufficient grace for salvation***

## Rule 8

Let him who is in desolation labor to be in patience, which is contrary to the vexations which come to him: and let him think that he will soon be consoled, employing against the desolation the devices, as is said in the sixth Rule.

***Have patience when in desolation, persevere and know that it will be over soon. Resist as in rule 6***

# Rule 9

There are three principal reasons why we find ourselves desolate. The first is, because of our being tepid, lazy or negligent in our spiritual exercises; and so through our faults, spiritual consolation withdraws from us. The second, to try us and see how much we are and how much we let ourselves out in His service and praise without such great pay of consolation and great graces. The third, to give us true acquaintance and knowledge, that we may interiorly feel that it is not ours to get or keep great devotion, intense love, tears, or any other spiritual consolation, but that all is the gift and grace of God our Lord, and that we may not build a nest in a thing not ours, raising our intellect into some pride or vainglory, attributing to us devotion or the other things of the spiritual consolation.

## Rule 9

Why does God remove the consolations and allow the enemy to send desolation?  
3 causes:

1. being tepid, slothful or negligent in our spiritual duties

2. To try to test our motivation

3. To remind us that all is gift, and there is no cause for pride in consolation

## To do this week:

Journal each day in prayer, paying particular attention at the end of each day to notice whether you experienced consolation or desolation.

Make a game plan to fight desolation

Pray the examen prayer at night

# Examen Prayer

- ▶ **PREPARING TO PRAY THE EXAMEN**
- ▶ Sit down.
- ▶ Find a quiet spot for reflecting.
- ▶ Grab a journal if you like to write.
- ▶ Take a few deep breaths and get ready to pray.
- ▶ **HOW TO PRAY THE EXAMEN**
- ▶ Movement 1: Thanksgiving
- ▶ Movement 2: Guidance
- ▶ Movement 3: Review
- ▶ Movement 4: Grace
- ▶ Movement 5: Resolution

# Battle plan for Desolation- an example

Pray

Pray the St Michael prayer

Pray

Pray the Hail Mary, asking Mary to wrap you in her mantle of protection

Call

Call a spiritual friend

Pray

Pray prayer of the Present Moment

Pray

Pray Litany of Trust



# Prayer of the Present Moment

*Most glorious, kind, and blessed God of the present moment, I beg Your grace and Your presence that I might be able to reject the temptations and lies of the enemy and my flesh that drive my mind to obsess on the past or worry about the future. Help me instead to embrace the sufferings and challenges of the present moment knowing that You are with me in them and that if I surrender myself to You and the duties of this present moment, You will give me all I need to endure or overcome any challenge, take care of all matters that are outside of my control, and will reveal Yourself and Your holy will within and through them. By Your grace I reject, in Jesus' name, all regrets, laments, frustrations, or other temptations that draw my thoughts and attention away from the duties of this present moment and more importantly, away from Your presence and provision. I affirm, invoke, and implore the power of Jesus' name against the efforts of the enemy to draw me out of Your presence in this moment, and I, by God's Grace, His Divine Will, and my human will, through the power of the Holy Spirit, choose to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Mary, Mother of the Divine Will, pray for me.*