

June 9
All the Prayers of God's People
Prayers of Discernment

John 14:16-18

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you".

Somehow during the Covid-19 reality, it feels as if every little decision is a challenging and potentially harmful decision. We are constantly being called to discern what is the best and most loving action to take. Should we wear a mask walking down the street? Should we go to the doctor? Should we eat at this restaurant, if so, inside or outside? Should we see our family whom we miss so dearly? Even how we continue to worship and serve through SOPC are moments of discernment during this pivotal time.

Life in itself is a reoccurrence of decisions that we must make. As Christians through prayer, we seek God for the best and correct path, but it is challenging when there is no clear-cut answer waiting from the Divine. This is where prayers of discernment come into play for our lives.

It says in John 14 that the Holy Spirit is the, "counselor of truth". Discernment then, is looking to our counselor, seeking God's truth for events that we are to take. But how exactly do we seek this?

First in relationship. From the Garden of Eden, the Lord sought to have relationship with creation, choosing to show kindness and love even in their disobedience. God knew that work in our hearts and souls would be needed to guide and instruct us. In relationship (in prayer and meditation as well as with others) we are able to more clearly discern and know what God might be calling us to do in this world.

David had this relationship, for instance, and though he was not perfect, he sought God's heart on matters. David also relied on trusted advisors such as the Prophet Samuel, for he knew Samuel knew God. It even says in 1 Samuel 3 that,

“not one of Samuel’s words would fall” which means that Samuel had such heightened discernment and alignment with God that not a single thing he said would prove false. Proper discernment can come in various forms, but prayer, relationship and seeking spiritual advisors is part of that journey of discernment.

Also, testing and discerning through the Scriptures and Word of God is most important. The living and active Word of God is the tangible heart of God. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” We are also instructed to “test the spirits” (1 John) to see if, through testing, our actions line up with the love, relationship and heart of God revealed in the Word.

Last week we remembered and celebrated the Holy Spirit indwelling anew in our hearts. In the process of discernment, we are to call on the Holy Spirit to grant discernment sharper than a sword, for sincere discernment is authentic truth (John 14, the Spirit is the spirit of truth). Through God’s gentle urging in our hearts, we can discern truth, as well as what is rubbish. When discernment is revealed, God grants a peace beyond understanding, even when what is discerned as truth does not always make sense. We are called to trust in the Holy Spirit of the Lord for through God, discernment becomes clear.

A Prayer for Discernment

Holy Three in One, Thank You for this day. You are the same today as You were yesterday, and as You are tomorrow. Since the beginning of humankind, You sought to have a relationship with Your creation, to instruct us in the way that we should go. Lord, today we pray for discernment. We pray that the Holy Spirit indwelling within us will give us a peace beyond understanding to know precisely when something is You, and when something is not. Holy One, we want to be obedient to Your call in our lives. We pray for such discernment to not only make wise choices, but in the course of it all to know we can trust Your guiding hand. In Jesus Name, Amen.