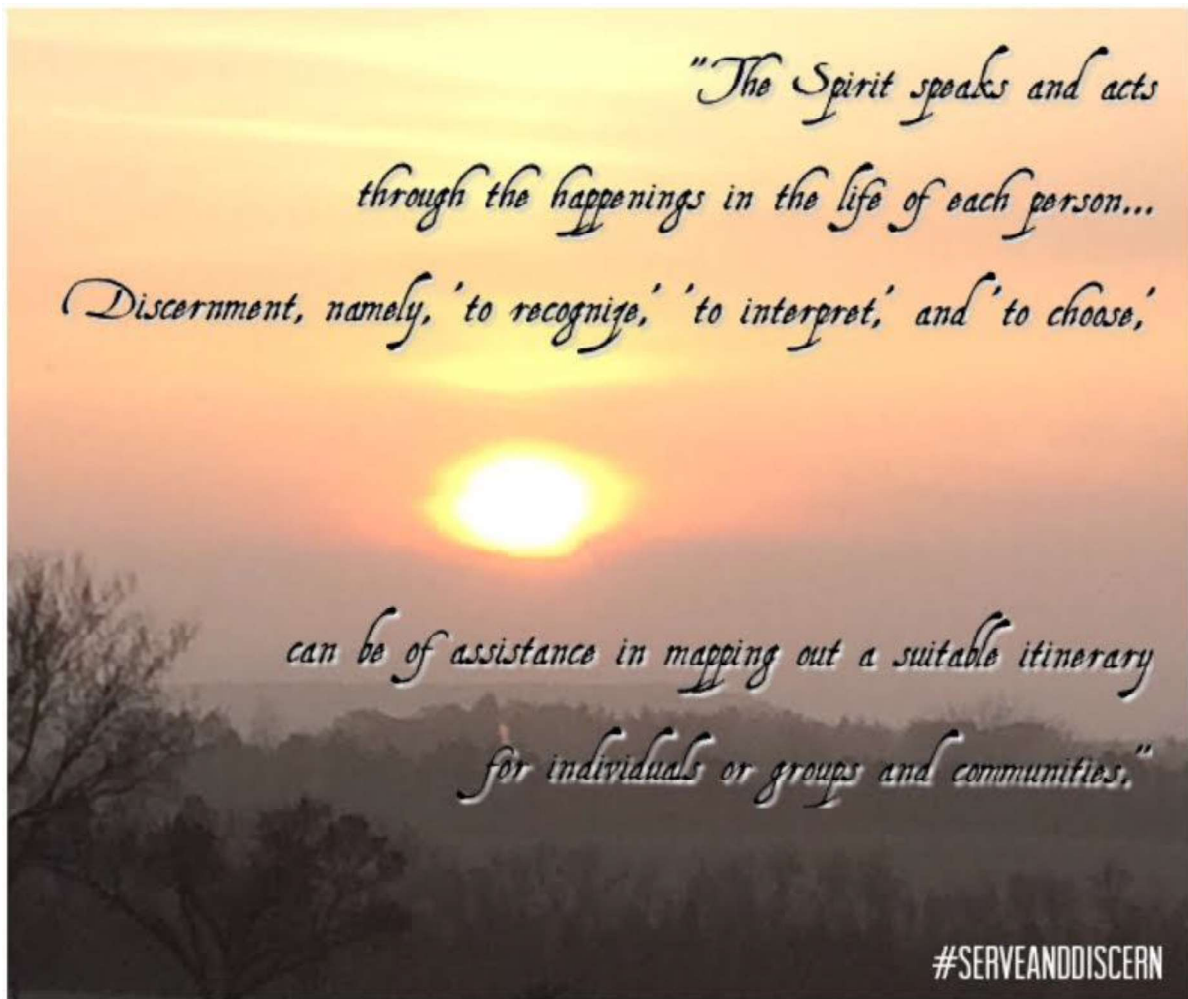


-Week 16-

A Process of Discernment: Recognize, Interpret, Choose



THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS'
"YOUNG PEOPLE, THE FAITH & VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT"
PREPARATORY DOCUMENT

-Week 16-

A Process of Discernment: Recognize, Interpret, Choose

Last week, we explored “Choices: Making Decisions Midst a Variety of Options,” which invited us to reflect on how decisions are made when the world presents us with many different and attractive options. We were also invited to pray with the parable of the prodigal son and reflect on how God responds to the choices we make. Continuing into this sixteenth week of our Benedictine Volunteers 20-weeks Vocational Discernment Series inspired by the Synod of Bishops’ “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment” Preparatory Document, we explore “A Process of Discernment: Recognize, Interpret, Choose.” As we seek to make good decisions, informed and inspired by the Spirit, what model for discernment does the *Preparatory Document* offer us? How can this model help guide our journeying?

The *Preparatory Document* sites three simple verbs in *Evangelii Gaudium*, 51— “to recognize,” “to interpret” and “to choose”—as a suggested model for a discernment process. Firstly, to recognize means to be mindful of the current happenings in our lives. These happenings serve as the information and facts we have to make decisions about. Recognizing also means awareness of the internal feelings that surface for us in relationship to these external happenings. Secondly, to interpret means to seek understanding of these happenings and feelings through conversation with the Word and the Holy Spirit. Thirdly, to choose means exercising our knowledge and understanding through to respond freely and responsibly to what is being asked of us. Choosing translates our knowledge and understanding into action. Together, these three steps offer us a simple, but comprehensive guide for entering into one way of intentionally engaging with discernment.

In the following weeks, we will break down each discernment step—recognize, interpret, and choose—into more detail. As we reflect on these, let us remember that these 3 steps are a guide, not a prescription, for one way of walking intentionally in a process of discernment. For each person, the way each step will look, feel, and manifest itself will be very different. It is also important to keep in mind that a guide may not lead us to concrete answers, but rather, increased clarity and wisdom. Therefore, let us pray for listening hearts that seek wisdom: Spirit of Wisdom, be with us as we seek to know God’s will in our lives. Open our eyes to see what you place in front of us without judgement. Open our hearts to understand the mysteries of your loving intention. Open our hands to receive your gifts and prepare us to act responsibly to that which this journey will reveal. Amen.

Questions for Reflection:

- Spend some time prayerfully with John 2: 1-12, the Wedding at Cana. Image yourself as Jesus. What does Jesus 'recognize' in the happenings around him? What feelings do you imagine Jesus experienced?
- What does Mary say to Jesus? How does Jesus seem to 'interpret' the situation? What understanding does he garner from this?
- What does Jesus choose to do? What are the effects of his actions?