

-Week 18-

Interpret: Understanding Where the Spirit is Calling Me

**"INTERPRETING DESIRES
& INNER MOVEMENTS**

requires an honest confrontation,
in the light of God's Word...
to seek a way to make the most
of one's gifts and possibilities...
fully engaging a person's abilities."

The Synod of Bishops'
"Young People, the Faith & Vocational Discernment"
Preparatory Document

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Interpret: Understanding Where the Spirit is Calling Me

Last week, we explored “Recognize: Becoming an Observer of Life’s Happenings,” which invited us to consider the verb “to recognize” in *Evangelii Gaudium*, 51 as a first step in an intentional discernment process. We were also invited to reflect on how Jesus practiced ‘recognizing’ the events and people around him at the wedding in Cana. Continuing into this eighteenth 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 “Interpret: Understanding Where the Spirit is Calling Me.” Let us further explore John 2:1-12, the Wedding at Cana, and probe more deeply into to second discernment step, to interpret. When we image ourselves as Jesus, what are we able to interpret through his heart and mind?

After we have identified what is happening both inside and outside of us, the step of interpreting requires that we discover the meaning behind these happenings. Having recognized the reality of the situation (having been baptized and sent forth by God, a shortage of wine at the wedding and, his mother’s desire for him to do something about it) and the range of emotions (perhaps a combination of cautiousness, fear, confusion, and frustration) that causes Jesus to struggle interiorly, Jesus beings to interpret what these all mean. In the step of interpreting, we seek to understand what the Spirit is asking us to do. This step requires both ability and patience in sorting through one’s desires, emotions, and understanding where they are coming from. It also requires openness and honesty in dialoguing with God to know if our desires are similar or different to His desires for us. In the case of Jesus, it is Mary who offers him a moment of pause and reflection when she says to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

If we image ourselves as Jesus or, with Jesus, as he thinks and prays about what the Spirit is asking him to do, we might see a variety of possibilities. Perhaps as Jesus sorts through his feelings of cautiousness, fear, confusion, and frustration, he understands that feeling this way midst an important decision is quite normal. Perhaps through prayer, Jesus also understands that being afraid is ok and that God is with him in this fear. Perhaps through listening to Mary’s words, Jesus recognizes gentleness and encouragement to do what is right and good. Perhaps too, Jesus comes to understand that God has given him special gifts and abilities not to hide, but to share with others.

In our own lives, it is important that we have people and resources to help us through this step of interpreting, which is likely to take time and patience. Like Jesus, who has the help of his mother and also, his disciples, it is helpful to invite others into this step of interpreting. We can recruit the help of a spiritual director, our faith community, and spiritual companions. A spiritual director helps us sort through and identify which interior

voices are voices of the self and which are voices of the Spirit. A faith community offers us support, encouragement, and people to pray with through this process. Spiritual companions walk with us, listen to us, and share in our struggles and learnings on this journey. Each is important in helping us interpret through different viewpoints and perspectives and we seek to know what the Spirit is asking us to do.

Questions for Reflection:

- Recall back to that situation in your life when you had to make an important decision. Given the information you had about the situation and how you listened to the feelings that emerged, what helped you to interpret their meanings?
- Who were the persons and/or what were the resources that helped you sort through all of these? What was that process like for you?
- What did it seem like the Spirit was asking you to do? What did it seem like the Spirit was not asking you to do?