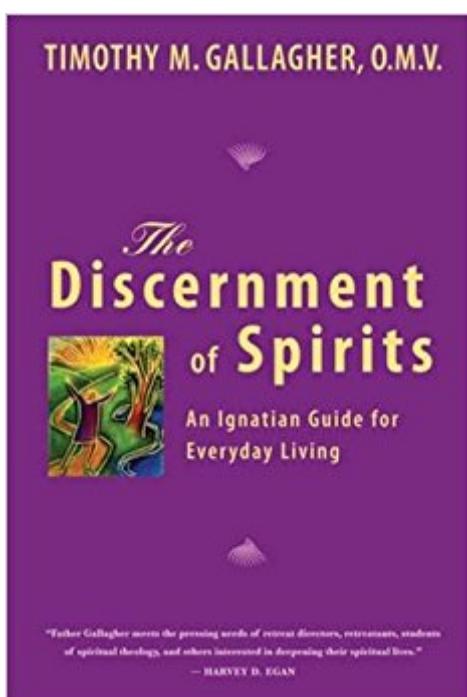


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# The Discernment Of Spirits: An Ignatian Guide For Everyday Living



## Synopsis

St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, is one of the most influential spiritual leaders of all time, yet many readers find his Rules for Discernment hard to understand. What can Ignatius teach us about the discernment of spirits that lies at the very heart of Christian life? In *The Discernment of Spirits*, Fr. Timothy Gallagher, a talented teacher, retreat leader, and scholar, helps us understand the Rules and how their insights are essential for our spiritual growth today. By integrating the Rules and the experience of contemporary people, Gallagher shows the precision, clarity, and insight of Ignatius's Rules, as well as the relevance of his thought for spiritual life today. When we learn to read Ignatius correctly, we discover in his remarkable words our own struggles, joys, and triumphs. This book is for all who desire greater awareness of God's action in their daily spiritual lives, and is essential reading for retreat directors, spiritual directors, priests, and counselors.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Timothy Gallagher holds a doctorate from the Gregorian and has been a retreat leader for over two decades. He lives at St. Clements Shrine, Boston, MA.

I come to this work as a non-Catholic. I've listened to Timothy Gallagher on YouTube. He has a whole series on the work of St Ignatius. I wish that I had exposure to these rules of spiritual discernment of spirits. It would have made my experience with the Spiritual Path more clear and less flying by the seat of my pants and my heart for grace. Gallagher brings these early yet

contemporary teaching on spiritual discernment into contemporary language. But more importantly, he brings to them a clarity of purpose and knowledge of one who is clearly doing his work and staying live to the subject. I especially like the Reader's guide, which I usually dislike in many writings. This has the power to underscore what needs to be underscored and applied as you actually live, not as you want to be seen by the teacher.

Discernment of Spirits is good book for anyone looking to learn about Ignatius' 14 rules on the discernment of spirits. Each chapter is dedicated to discussing each rule. First the rule is stated as it was written by Ignatius and then the rule is discussed in a practical sense. Each rule is further illustrated by an example or two to provide a deeper clarity into how the rule can apply to the discerning's life. The only drawback is that this reading this book is similar to reading a manual, which leaves it a little dry and slow at times. I would recommend this book to anyone who wishes to learn more about the discernment of spirits. It's worth the price, but you probably won't read it more than once. Rather you may end up using it as a reference source after your first reading.

Though I am only a bit over half way through this book it has an incredible wealth of practical and easy to understand applications of the first 14 Ignatian rules of discernment of spirits. The book goes through and analyzes each one thoroughly and unlocks plain things that might pass by our attention in each rule because of the brevity. I only have 1 major issue with the book thus far. I think the author makes the terms 'consolation' and 'desolation' unnecessarily complex by suggesting we ought to distinguish spiritual from psychological desolation/consolation. It seems to me this is a distinction St. Ignatius probably would not make nor does reality itself. Such a distinction seems to be an inroad for desolation since it would seem impossible to distinguish psychological desolations from spiritual ones (probably because there is no difference). This is not to say there are not psychological and even physical causes that make one more susceptible to desolation; simply that once it has reached the plain of 'desolation' I think the distinction becomes useless and perhaps even dangerous. However, I am not very advanced in this spirituality nor the life of the saint himself.

I have been struggling for a few years with evil spirits invading my times of prayer and creating doubt and havoc in my spiritual life in general. The experience was quite disturbing and grew worse over time. This was the first book I have found that describes what can happen and gives suggestions for working your way through this issue. I can say that things are improving for me because I am implementing the suggestions from this book and from the other two in this trilogy on

the examen prayer and spiritual consolations. Fr. Gallagher did not invent these ideas, they are from rules of Ignatius, but he presents these teachings so the contemporary reader can apply it easily. I cannot express enough how grateful I am for this help. I would recommend this book to anyone who is on a path of spiritual growth--especially for contemplatives.

Gallagher carefully and thoroughly guides us through the deep meanings of Ignatius' brief instructions on discernment, ensuring that critical details and insights are fully grasped. Through clear articulation and insightful examples carefully directed, the reader gains understanding and clarity leading to spiritual discernment.

I would recommend this book to EVERYONE!!!! I wish I had read it many years ago. I am on my second read through it. I hope to read it a 3rd time too!!! it has a fairly high level vocabulary level though... I have had to look up a lot of words to find out what they mean...

I like the way this book unfolded. I tried reading Spiritual Exercises directly, and I struggled with the writing. I tried Discernment of Spirits, and this offered a systematic approach to taking apart the Exercises. Opening with an explanation of how language was used in the 16th century versus today, it then explained the precision with which Saint Ignatius chose each word. Equipped with this understanding, it moved the reader through a breakdown of each rule and offered at least one illustrative example of how each rule could be applied.

This is just what I was looking for! I have read many books on Ignatian spirituality and every single one has helped me in some way, But I honestly felt like I was poking around in the dark --- not really seeing the whole picture. This book is more academic in tone than some of the very popular Ignatian books by William Barry, Margaret Silf, etc. but it is so superb. You will feel confident that you have the tools for discernment -- that you at least have a head knowledge about how discernment works. I plan to move on to Gallagher's other books!

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