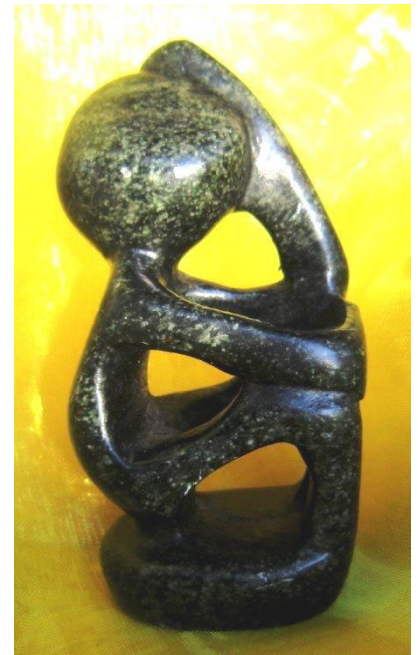




## Discernment in decision making

*As Jesuit Provincial and later as Archbishop of Buenos Aires during the military dictatorship the present Pope had to take some difficult decisions. Not all were good decisions, as he frankly admits. In a remarkable interview with the editor of a Jesuit magazine Pope Francis speaks about his experience and explains how the Ignatian „discernment of spirits“ can give us an inner peace even when we cannot have a absolute certainty.*

- ✿ Discernment is always done **in the presence of the Lord, looking at the signs**, listening to the things that happen, the feeling of the people, especially the poor. My choices, including those related to the day-to-day aspects of life, like the use of a modest car, are related to a spiritual discernment that responds to a need that arises from looking at things, at people and from reading the signs of the times. Discernment in the Lord guides me in my way of governing.
- ✿ This **discernment takes time**. For example, many think that changes and reforms can take place in a short time. I believe that we always need time to lay the foundations for real, effective change... I have to wait and assess, looking deep into myself, taking the necessary time... **God manifests himself in time** and is present in the processes of history. This gives priority to actions that give birth to new historical dynamics. And it requires patience, waiting.
- ✿ We can always look at the horizon from the position where we are. That means being able to do the little things of every day with a big heart open to God and to others. That means being able **to appreciate the small things inside large horizons**, those of the kingdom of God... You can have large projects and implement them by means of a few of the smallest things. Or you can use weak means that are more effective than strong ones.
- ✿ In this quest to seek and find God in all things there is still **an area of uncertainty**. There must be. If a person says that he met God with total certainty and is not touched by a margin of uncertainty, then this is not good. For me, this is an important key. If one has the answers to all the questions—that is the proof that God is not with him. It means that he is a false prophet using religion for himself. The great leaders of the people of God, like Moses, have always left room for doubt. You must leave room for the Lord, not for our certainties; we must be humble. Uncertainty is in every true discernment that is open to finding confirmation in spiritual consolation.
- ✿ **A contemplative attitude** is necessary: it is the feeling that you are moving along the good path of understanding and affection toward things and situations. Profound peace, spiritual consolation, love of God and love of all things in God—this is the sign that you are on this right path.



Source: Antonio Spadaro S.J. Interview with Pope Francis

- How do we take important decisions in our communities and in our leadership teams?
- How do I deal with / do we deal with the 'area of uncertainty' that is part of all decisions?