Making a Judgement Before Taking an Action

**CONFORM**: Compare our proposed decision to the authoritative teaching of the Catholic Church

•Three outcomes:

•It does conform, and should be further examined

•It does not conform, and should be rejected

•It partly conforms – further examination is required

•Pope St. John Paul II taught, “…our very being finds freedom in becoming who we are when we obey God’s law.”

•Blessed Mother Teresa said, “The gospel says nothing about success, only faithfulness.”  True success comes from faithfulness.  Faithfulness must be a way of life

**CONVERSION**

•Every decision we make, all the work we do, every relationship we enter into should draw us closer to the Lord

•The test of conformity looks at the goodness or evil of an act; this one concerns the heart

•Especially important when the decision involves questions of more money, more power, more fame or honor, more pleasure

•Will this choice turn my heart to God?

•Does it present any danger to me?

•What are my motives for pursuing it?

•Will the risks outweigh the benefits?

**CONSISTENT**

•God is consistent

•Does it seem to fit the kind of person we are, the way God has worked with us in the past?

•Examine the way you hear the Lord speaking to you.  Has he ever spoken to you this way before?  Do you recognize his voice?

•God’s dealings with us are usually consistent with how he has worked with us in the past.  His grace operates in concrete circumstances rather than abstract conjectures.

•A good fit between our skills and roles is important

•It doesn’t have to be a perfect fit.  Sometimes God will call us to act in a way that we feel uncomfortable

•We can expect God to call us to use our talents and interests, but those talents do not constitute our call

•Five Questions:

•Who? Does the Lord typically act through others in your life?

•What? Is your life with God following a pattern of a certain kind of work?  Have you been acquiring skills and experience that point in a certain direction?

•Where? Do you hear God in certain places, such as church, in the mountains, in your studies?

•When?  Do you feel guidance from God on an annual retreat, in silent prayer, etc.?

•How?  Do you hear the Lord in personal prayer, through others, by reading scripture or other spiritual reading?

•You must test the spirits:

•Is it the God of Scripture?

•Is it the God who has inspired my life in the past?

•Is it fitting and worthy of God?

•Is it the God who has spoken to me through other people in the past?

•Am I being asked to do something sinful or immoral?

•Is the cost of following a particular direction too high for what is being gained?

**CONFIRMS**

•Other people – help counteract our tendency to deceive ourselves, decisions affect our relationships

•Circumstances – doors will open (or not), resources become available (or not)

• “Fruit of the Spirit”

•Are you at peace?  Are you restless, uneasy, worried about the decision

•Fruits of the Spirit (from Confirmation) are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control

•Miraculous signs and wonders:  possible, but do not seek them for fear of delusion, or, worse, encountering evil spirits masquerading themselves.

**CONVICTION**

•A sense and knowledge that the final decision is the right one

•Ask the Lord two questions, LISTEN, then compare the internal responses:

•Lord, is it your will that I do this?

•Lord, is it your will that I not do this?

(from the book “What Does God Want?” by Michael Scanlan, T.O.R., Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1996)