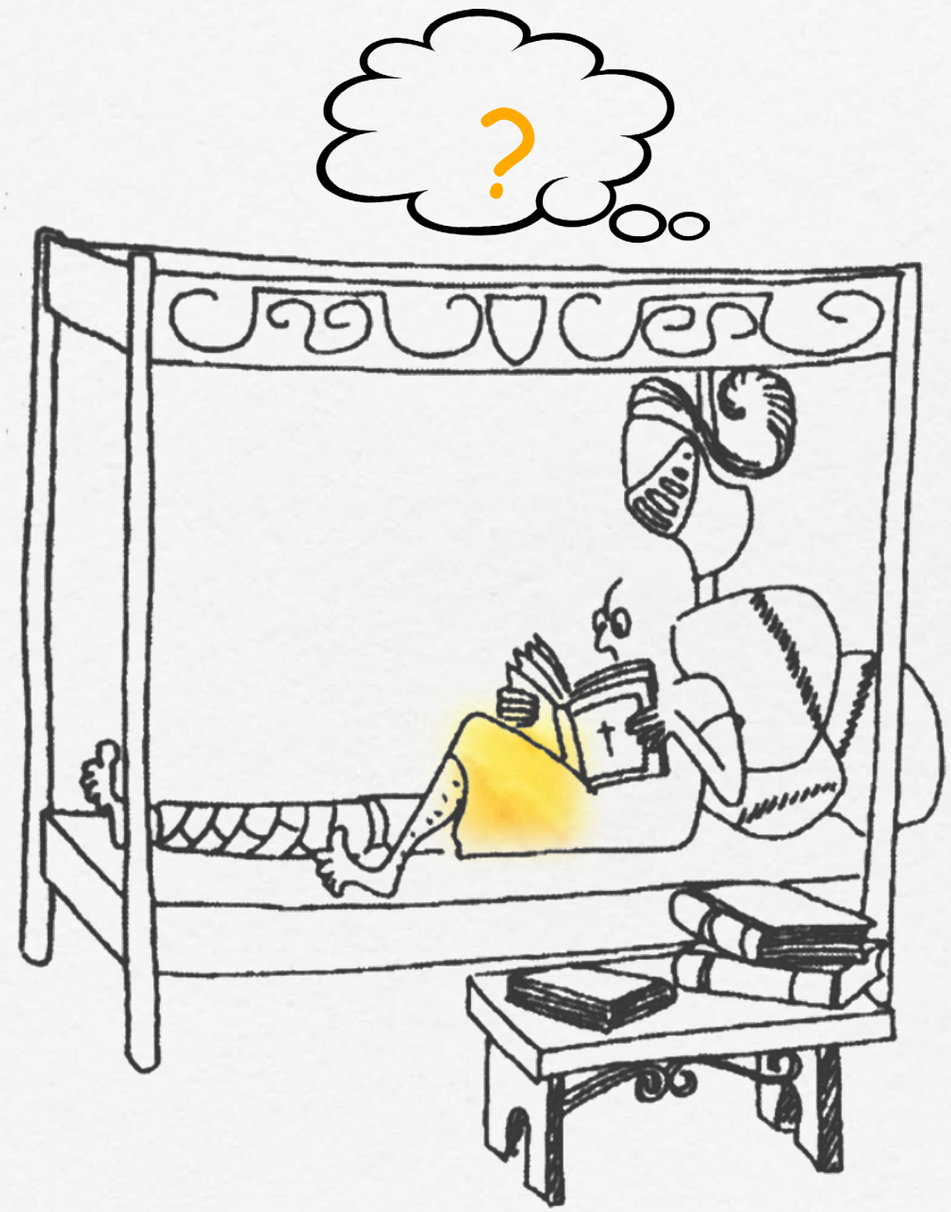
Spiritual discernment

personal and communal

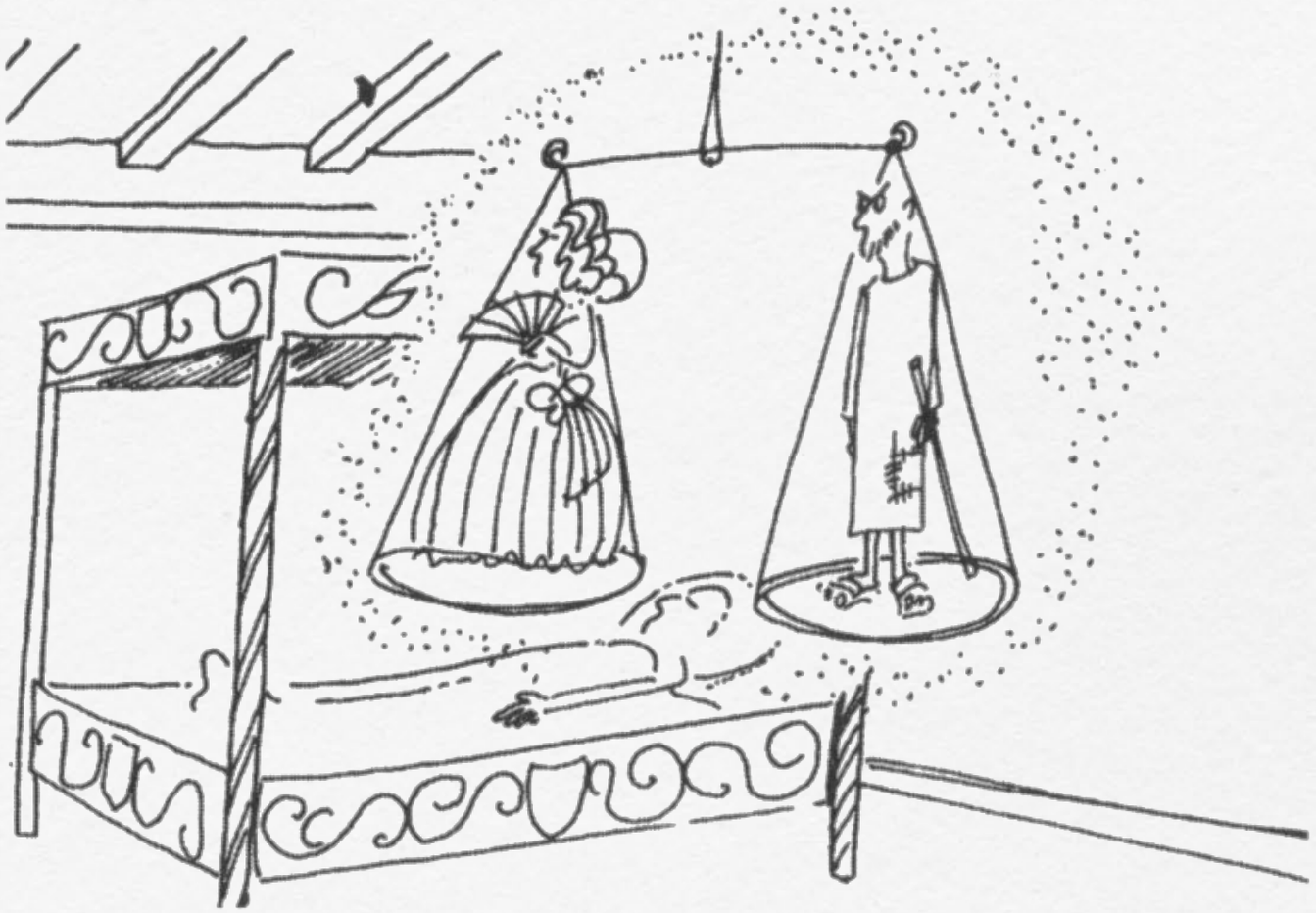
Purpose:

To listen to
the Holy Spirit

… The experience of Ignatius of Loyola



Some thoughts give him **lasting joy**



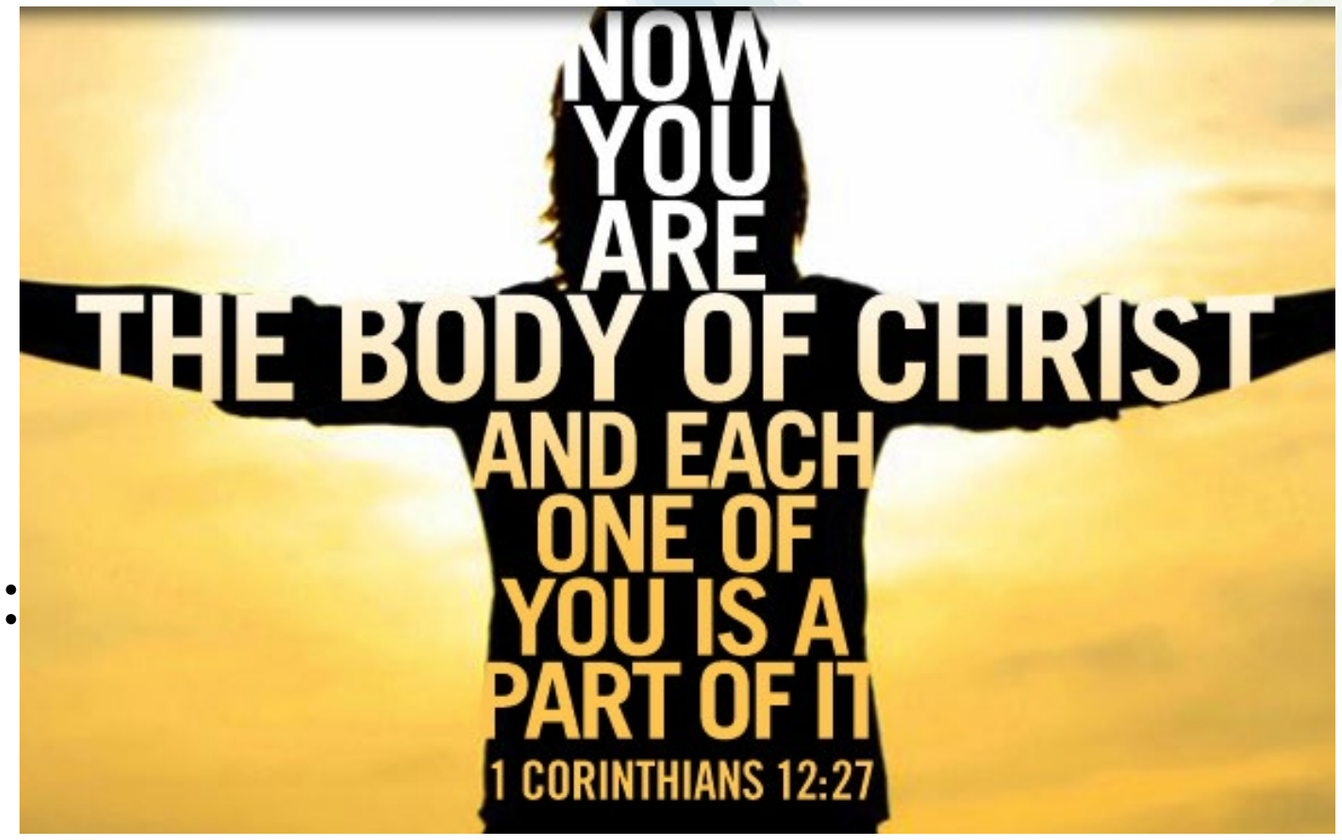
... Others give him **short-lived joy**

From his experience
Saint Ignatius developed

Rules for discernment

The rules of discernment apply

to an individual and to a group



Saint Paul comparison (1 Cor 12):

- The human body is made up of different members
- The body of Christ is made up of different members

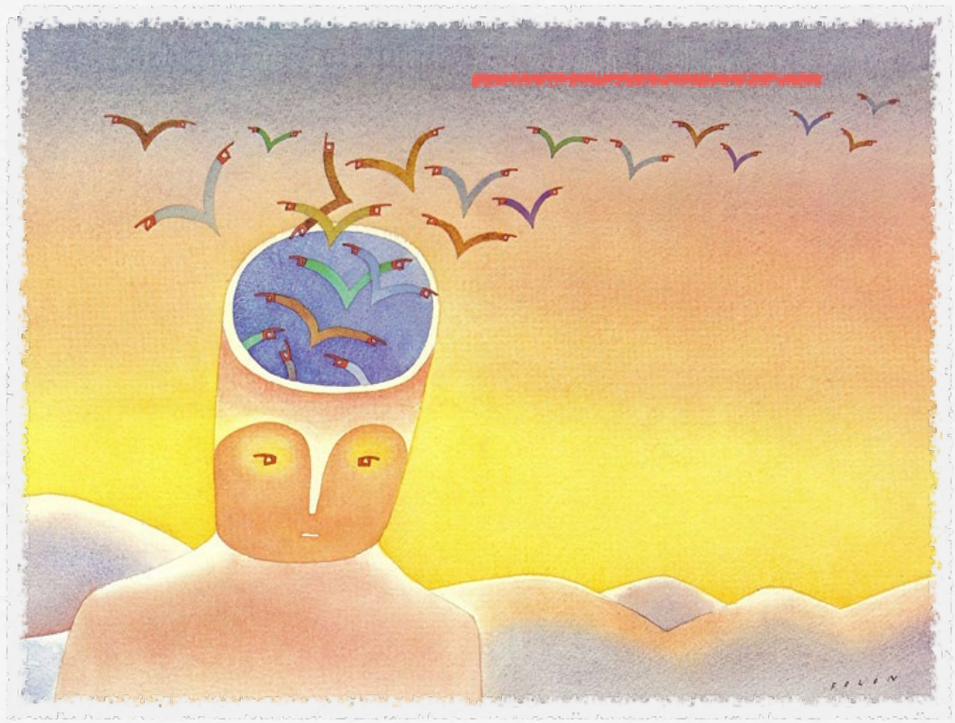
We (individuals and groups) are filled with a wide variety of thoughts and feelings

All feelings and thoughts, even unpleasant ones, have something to tell us.

Be attentive to thoughts

Be attentive to feelings

We are not at the origin of all our thoughts

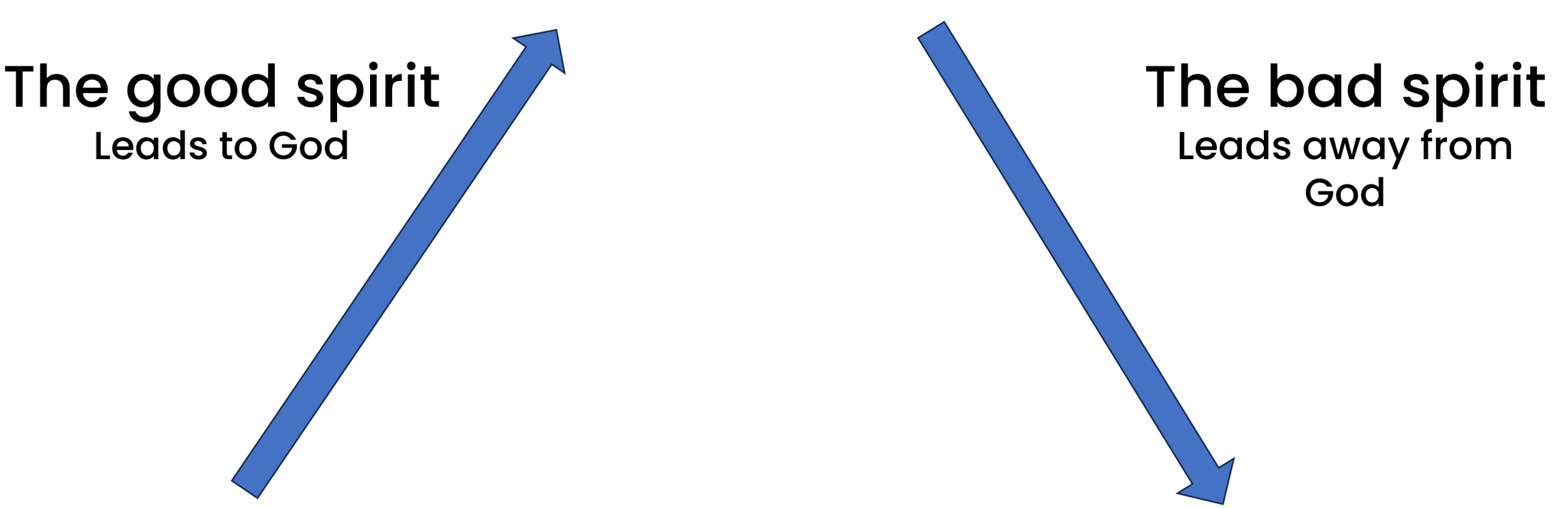


One kind is my own which arises strictly
from our own freedom and desire,
And two others come from outside myself,
the one from the good spirit
and the other from the bad spirit.

First criteria

The direction of the movement generated by my thoughts and my feelings.

GOD



Second criteria

The duration of the movement

THE GOOD SPIRIT	THE BAD SPIRIT
♦ Invites, respects our freedom	♦ Constrains, obliges, binds
♦ Enlightens, reveals the truth	♦ Confuses, deceives, lies
♦ Encourages, strengthens	♦ Discourages, weakens
♦ Calms, instils confidence	♦ Troubles, instils fear
♦ Helps us live in the present moment	♦ Causes anxiety about the past and future
♦ Strengthens **faith**	♦ Sows doubt
♦ Roots us in **hope**	♦ Drives into despair
♦ Fosters **love** and openness	♦ Promotes selfishness and self-centeredness
♦ Builds unity and brotherhood	♦ Divides, accuses, makes malicious
♦ Inspires humility	♦ Traps in pride
♦ Awakens joy and praise	♦ Makes sad, bitter
♦ Invites conversion and recognition of our sinfulness	♦ Blinds to sin and darkens the conscience
♦ Opens us to mercy	♦ Causes doubt about forgiveness
♦ **CONSOLES**	♦ **DÉSOLATES**

D'après Monique Lorrain:
«Discerner - Que se passe-t-il en nous ?»

Important Remarks

I am not my feelings, my thoughts, wether positive or negative

I am not angry : I am experiencing anger at this moment

I am not guilty of the thoughts that overwhelm me

I am only responsible for what I do with them

The bad spirit…

Is weak when faced by firmness but strong in the face of acquiescence. (SE 325)

Wishes to remain secret and not be discovered (SE 326)

Attacks at the weakest point (SE 327)

An inner struggle

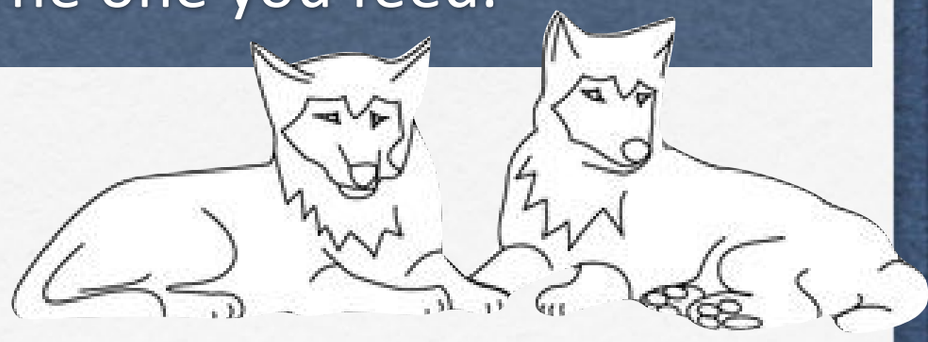
An elderly man wants to teach his grandson about life.

‘Within each of us, there is an inner struggle,’ he tells the young boy.
It is a struggle to the death, and it takes place between two wolves.

The first is dark. It is anger, envy, grief, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, superiority, lies, false pride and ego.

The second is bright. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith.

"The grandson thought about it for a long time. Then he asked his grandfather, ‘Which wolf wins?’ The old man smiled and replied, ‘The one you feed.’



« I have told you this so that my joy may be
in you and that your joy may be complete"

John 15, 11

The discernment of spirits

« The kingdom of heaven is bike a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into baskets but threw away the bad.» (Mt 13: 47-48)

I ask for the grace to recognise the movements of the good spirit (consolation) or the bad spirit (desolation) in my personal life and/or in my group experience.

- I read the biblical passage and remember what was said about discerning spirits.
- In my personal life, when have I experienced the action of the good spirit (consolation) or the bad spirit (desolation)?
- In my group experience, in my parish, in a team, when have I experienced the action of the good spirit (consolation) or the bad spirit (desolation)?

I write down what I wish to share from the fruit of my prayer with my small group.

For the small group
Conversation in the Spirit

Round 1: Everyone speaks in turn without interrupting each other.
Round 2: What struck me in what I heard from others?
Round 3: Give thanks for what has been shared.