

## **Self-Awareness**

(a brief summary of Ignatian discernment guidance)

**Where am I?**

**What is my orientation?**

**Which images and descriptions apply?**

**The bee, the carrot, the open hand – all speak of consolation**

**The spider, the stick, the fist, the pushing hand – speak of desolation**

**Seek to make choices that co-operate with the movement to consolation and move against desolation.**

This is a companion resource for  
Grove Book S130 Ignatius of Loyola by Nick Helm  
Download from [www.ignatius.soulspark.org.uk](http://www.ignatius.soulspark.org.uk)

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## **Discerning my orientation and attitude**

Here are some images and descriptions of feelings that might help sift your inner state of being, enable recognition and choose an appropriate response.

As you recognise yourself, where you are at present, notice how you feel about this.

Reflect on what your feelings are telling you about any deeper desire that you have?

## Carrots and Sticks



**Carrot** like: attraction, draw, desire...

**Stick** like: driven, beaten, compelled, undesired...

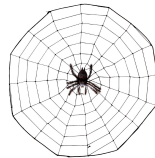


## Bees and Spiders



**Bee** like: Seeking life (nectar) and in so doing giving life (pollinating) – mutuality

**Spider** like: Seeking life (catching prey in web) and giving nothing back – simply self-indulgent



## Open handed, Gripping fist, Pushing hands



**Open handed:** easy, generous, permitting alternatives, encouraging...

**Gripping fist:** tense, grabbing, holding, no alternatives accepted, controlling...



**Pushing hands:** rejecting, distancing, controlling...

## Consolation

- ❖ Deep love for God, at ease with who you are, hopeful without denying challenges, profound inner joy and peace, deep sorrow for sins, compassion for suffering...
- ❖ Inner courage and strength, clarity and truth, tranquillity and peace, tears...
- ❖ Movements of growth in seeking God, or finding greater faith, hope and love, peace, joy...
- ❖ There is a generosity towards God, self, others, life...
- ❖ These are likely to linger after the event... enabling a sense of being able to cope better with challenges and desolations.
- ❖ Whose kingdom? The kingdom of God in me.

## Painful Consolation

- ❖ Painful consolation - deep sorrow for sins, compassion for suffering, enduring pain for the sake of a greater cause (the way of the cross)
- ❖ Often challenging to endure, but has a deep sense of 'rightness'.
- ❖ Somehow the kingdom of God can be felt.

## Desolation

- ❖ Opposite of consolation: Sense of dis-ease with life, separation from God, self, others, gloominess, turmoil, listless, anxiety...
- ❖ Darkness and turmoil, confusion, despair; lack of faith, hope and love; dislike of facing guilt, uncompassionate, avoidance of suffering
- ❖ Responding easily to temptations, slow to act positively...
- ❖ Hard to seek the kingdom of God

## False Consolation

- ❖ Consolation that comes from some unreality. Everything in the garden is rosy, I cannot see any problem, I am overconfident...
- ❖ Can come about by getting one's own way, enjoying power, control, success, glory...
- ❖ Whose kingdom? The kingdom of me.
- ❖ The likelihood is that very quickly dark clouds appear and desolation overwhelms.