

# A year of

## Creating space for exploring *discernment* justice issues as a parish community

*The five step process below is often known as the **Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm**—a method of discernment derived from St. Ignatius of Loyola. It's based on the assumption that God wants to be known and has made us for this knowledge. In Ignatian discernment, we undergo a reasoned search for the movement of God's spirit within our heart and our community, leading to just action.*

**Context:** We begin by exploring external factors, attempting to see the world as it actually is. This involves learning about the issue, especially in light of our own particular history, culture, and environment at St. Ignatius parish. As a Catholic parish in the Jesuit tradition, an essential aspect of our context is informed by Catholic social teaching and Ignatian spirituality.

**Experience:** We consider our own personal encounters that shape our understanding and feelings about the particular issue. This involves being aware of our values and the unique identity each one of us brings to the discernment process. Experiences, honestly engaged, tell us what we don't know and where we need more information or dialogue.

**Reflection:** We bring the general context and our own experience to prayer, opening ourselves up to God's movement in ourselves and the community. Through individual prayer, we notice consolation (movements toward God) and desolation (movements away from God). When reflecting as a group, we share the movements we noticed and listen to others without cross-talk or debate. By making this reflection a habit (through a prayer like the Examen) we can foster freedom and attentiveness — both necessary preconditions for Ignatian discernment.

**Action:** As individuals and as a community, we decide how God is calling us to respond to the issue. While we cannot know the full context of the issue or the implications of our actions, we act in humility with as much freedom and knowledge as we can muster, trusting that God is with us.

**Evaluation:** After a choice is made and an action taken, we assess what happened as a result. As a community we consider what was life-giving and where we might have missed the mark. This evaluation further informs our context and experience. As we bring one process of discernment to completion, we lay the ground for future discernment.

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