Descriptions of Discernment

The following descriptions are taken from a variety of sources. Public discernment requires the formation of a discernment team to help listen and see with a variety of perspectives. It will prove helpful if the team take some time during their orientation to dialogue about these statements. The team should be able to articulate their definition of discernment.

- Discernment is the process of making choices through the eyes of faith so that we are brought closer to the person of the Christ.

- Discernment is a process that looks to the objective facts of the situation and to the inner yearnings of the individual for clues as to where one is called.

- During discernment our sense of call is tested with others and against Scripture and tradition.

- Discernment is always provisional and must be tested by its fruits.

- Discernment is not a once-in-a-lifetime process. There is a need to continually assess whether our choices are in alignment with our faith.

- Freedom is a prerequisite to discernment. When we close our hearts and minds and think we have all the answers, we are not ready for discerning the Spirit's urging.

- In classical spirituality discernment focuses on distinguishing God's spirit from other spirits that are present in a given time and place.

- Discernment is a journey rather than a destination.

- Discernment is a prayerful, informed and intentional attempt to sort through all the voices to get in touch with God's spirit at work.