

TABLE TALK—August 5, 2018

Here are some questions to continue reflection on today's sermon. Share with your family, small group, or personal quiet time with God.

This week, Pastor Susan shared the four criteria of Agape for discernment. When we are making decisions, we might ask ourselves these questions:

Incarnate

- Which solution will give me the opportunity to be incarnate...to authentically live out the image of God in which I have been created?

To Give, To Be Given Up

- Which solution will give me the possibility of giving and being given up? To give what I have and who I am...but also to be given up to God and others...so that Christ may more fully live in me and through me?

Universality

- Which solution will open me more fully to universality...to the point that I dare to be open to all the areas of my being and life...as well as to all of the people around me—even and especially those who don't look, act or believe the way I do?

Communion

- Which solution will best permit me to be reconciled with myself as well as to be in communion with others, respecting differences...but always seeking to restore relationship in the midst of them?

The Fifth Criterion (Criteria 1+2+3+4, together)

- In my most recent decisions, which criterion have I usually neglected or rejected? How am I going to take this fact into consideration in my current discernment?

Listening to the Heart

- Do I remember experiencing different levels of emotions in my life? What were the physical signs and symptoms that told me I was affected at a very deep level? How did this change my usual behavior? Was I able to listen to these feelings? Could I call them by name? When have I experienced “enlivening” feelings? “stifling” feelings? Why?
- In my current discernment, am I taking the time to let both alternatives sink in? Do I retreat to allow myself to listen to the echoes of my heart? What do I hear? How do I interpret these echoes? Which alternative suggested by my intellect gives me “enlivening” feelings and which one gives me “stifling” feelings?

Refining the Discernment

- Do I remember which decision I made that was difficult, in terms of feelings, but eventually turned out well for me? Can I pinpoint now just why it was difficult, and why eventually it was beneficial?
- Do I remember any decision I made where I felt good at the beginning, but the whole thing turned out to be a catastrophe? In what way did I contribute to the catastrophe?

Can I trace the deviations of trajectory that took place? Can I remember the steps of the deterioration of my feelings?

- Do I know now the sectors of my life where such deviations usually take place and can I recognize the pattern of such deviations?

What signals given by my head and my heart must I take into account in order to avoid the same mistakes in those sectors?

Resource: Pierre Wolfe, *Discernment: The Art of Choosing Well*