

July 8, 2023



Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

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BLESSED DISCERNMENT

By Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

An Excerpt From Today's Reading

Fooling Isaac: Jacob Disguised as Esau

GENESIS 27:1-5, 15-29 18-19

Reflection

In an era of identity theft and fraud in ever increasing ways, you and I are most likely cautious about believing what is authentic. Discernment is an art and a way of life that proves beneficial to us.

The reading from Genesis today recounts the successful effort of Jacob and his mother to trick Isaac into giving the blessing reserved for the eldest son, Esau, to Jacob, the younger son. This resulted in a saga of family feud. You can read the whole account in Genesis 27:1-5, 15-29. Blind and cautious, Isaac goes

through many tests to determine which of his sons is standing before him.

Thus, the story stirred in me the reminder that recognizing true identity is a matter for discernment. Recognizing God amid the cacophony of competing voices is no easy task, either.

How does one know God's authentic voice or presence? St. Ignatius of Loyola offers some guiding principles to determine what is of God and what is not of God. Discernment implies the ability to distinguish, perceive, filter, and identify the authenticity of my experience. I must be intentional and deliberate about perceiving God's self-revelation.

Scripture can be an excellent starting place to engage God, or rather for God to engage me. Resting in a place of quiet stillness allows me to settle in, be quiet, and allow all the competing voices to drop away. Reading and then re-reading a short text and noticing what attracts me, stirs in me, or pulls me along, awakens me to what I am invited to ponder.

Discernment helps me determine what is good for me and what pulls me away from who I am and who God is in me. By God's grace, I engage the good that creates space for God, even if it means changing habits or ways of being that are difficult.

Then again, that which distracts or pushes me around or increases negative thinking or attitudes toward myself or others *is not of God*. That which keeps me from God, or what are God's ways, is not welcome in my inner self.



Person reading the Bible
Photo by Eduardo Braga

For Pondering

1. Read a short passage from Scripture.
2. Stay with the word or phrase that attracts you and let it reveal its message.
3. Ponder the message and follow its lead within you.
4. What does it reveal about who God is and who you are in God?
5. Follow it through to know its starting place, how it feels inside, and how it plays out over time.
6. If you sense attraction to God, then stay with the insight or feeling.
7. If it draws you further from God, then step away and let it go.
8. Invite the Holy Spirit to assist by going back to the place of love and presence.

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