**Beginning Personal Discernment**

Discernment is a beautiful, prayerful, and Holy Spirit-led method of making decisions. It takes time to discern well – for some, weeks; for others, months; so take your time in consideration. As you use discernment to guide your decisions about serving in a leadership role in [Type here] <insert name of organization>, we ask that you do the following:

1. **Pray,** spend time with the Holy Spirit and ask what is to be revealed to you. It is especially fruitful if you are able to spend time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.
2. Ponder **St Ignatius’ Ten Guiding Principles** of Discernment (see below).
3. Complete the Sharing Your Gifts Questionnaire (see below).
4. **Talk with your chaplain** and get to know him. Ask him how your women’s ministry can best serve your chapel. Ask for his written endorsement.
5. Fill out theServant Leader Information Formand return to our chapel women’s ministry president.

**Sharing your Gifts**

Every person has personal gifts and abilities, some of which are already known and others which may be cultivated. The following brief self-questionnaire is to help you ponder those gifts and how you can use them as servant leader within your chapel. Give yourself plenty of time to prayerfully ponder these questions. You will find that many insights will be revealed to you. Ask yourself these questions and write down your thoughts – this will deepen your discernment.

1. How do I bring out the best in others? (Letting others shine)
2. Can I seek the most common good for the matter at hand? (Cohesive)
3. Am I self motivated to reach a goal? (Initiative)
4. Do I have a heart to serve unselfishly? (Humility)
5. Do I try to live out the virtues I proclaim to others (Integrity)
6. What are the desires that the Lord has placed on my heart? (Introspection)
7. How does God want me to serve within Chapel? (Assurance)

If you are being prompted by the Holy Spirit to be a servant leader, submit with humility and trust God. Write down some of your gifts or attributes that come to mind.

**St Ignatius’s 10 Guiding Principles of Discernment**

**(Adapted for the Military Council of Catholic Women)**

*Jeremiah 29:11-13*

*For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for the woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope. When you call me, when you go to pray to me, I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart, you will find me with you, says the Lord.*

When you begin discerning, it very important to start in prayer and open your life completely to the Holy Spirit, for it is in the Spirit where the revealing process of clarity and truth begins.

1. Look deeply into all areas of your life. Ask, (what is my vocation: a mother, wife, armed forces personnel, etc.) Would serving in your chapel ministry enhance or distract from your **vocation**?
2. When discerning, be honest in evaluating your **time**. Being a servant leader for your chapel does involve time. (Some positions more than others). Prayerfully evaluate your life in essence of time to ponder if you have the ability to serve.
3. To discern properly it is important to **confide** in people who know you well and in whom you trust. A friend, spouse, or priest can help reveal to you, out of love, your strengths, weakness and natural abilities.
4. **Listen** to your whole person; your heart, mind, intellect and intuition. All “facets” should play a role. One should not dominate another. For example, our emotions can be so strong that we don’t consider things practically.
5. Fear complicates and distorts discernments. Instead **trust** and courage will move you forward in the discerning process.
6. The discernment process should be a calm process where internal **peace** lies. To become a servant leader takes a bit a time and self-evaluation, don’t make a decision in haste, rather, your choices will be well guided when it yields peace, justice, faith, love, and bears fruit!
7. At the center of servant leadership is **humility.** It is saying yes to be a vessel for our Lord in which HE can do HIS great work. Being humble is a process not a destination.
8. Ask yourself, “What are the areas in my life that I may have difficulty letting go? How would **letting go** of those areas enhance my being a servant leader?” Ask yourself,
“Is this the time in my life that God has chosen me to become a servant leader for my chapel?” Honest discernment will reveal this.
9. **Jesus** is THE example of true servant leadership. His teachings show us how to treat people with, mercy, truth, faith, fairness, justice and love. Ask yourself, “How do I emulate the teachings of Jesus to people I encounter each day. Have I put on the garment of love?”
10. Call upon the Holy Spirit to inspire you to make a decision. An answer “Yes” or an answer “No” are both holy decisions. When answered yes, you have full peace that the Spirit is moving you forward to servant leadership. If the answer is no, it is because it may not be your time yet, and the Holy Spirit has other plans for you. Either way, when the Holy Spirit is involved, the decision itself is **holy**!

*Mark 10:42-45*

*Jesus summoned them and said to them, “You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among your will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

*Amen!*