

Ignatian Decision Making

The First Method of Making a Sound and Good Decision

The First Point is to clearly identify the decision I need to make, for example, whether to accept or decline a job, a position, or any other matter that involves a changeable choice.

The Second Point. I need to keep my focus on the ultimate purpose for which I was created: to praise God our Lord and save my soul. Furthermore, I should be indifferent—that is, free from any unhealthy attachment—so that I'm not more inclined or emotionally drawn toward accepting the option rather than declining it, nor more toward declining it rather than accepting it.

Instead, I should find myself balanced in the middle, like the center point of a scale, ready to follow whatever I discern to be more for the glory and praise of God our Lord and the salvation of my soul.

The Third Point. I should ask God our Lord to move my will and to reveal to me what I ought to do regarding this decision, so that it will be more for his praise and glory. I should use both careful reasoning with my mind and choose in alignment with his holy will and good pleasure.

The Fourth Point. I should consider and think through all the advantages and benefits of accepting the position or opportunity proposed, keeping in mind that these should be solely for the praise of God our Lord and the salvation of my soul. On the other hand, I should similarly consider the disadvantages and dangers of accepting it. Then, doing the same thing for the second option, I should consider the advantages and benefits of not accepting it, and likewise the disadvantages and dangers of not accepting it.

The Fifth Point. After I have considered and thought through every aspect of the decision, I should see which side reason most strongly favors. This is how I ought to come to a decision about the matter—by following the stronger pull of reason, not by following an impulse from my emotions or human nature.

The Sixth Point. Once I've made that decision, I should diligently go to prayer before God our Lord to offer him that decision, and to ask his Divine Majesty to receive and confirm it, as long as it leads to his greater service and praise.

The Second Method of Making a Sound and Good Decision

The First Rule. The love that moves me and leads me to choose this option should come from above, from the love of God. The person making the decision should recognize beforehand that whatever love they have for the thing being chosen—whether great or small—exists solely for the sake of our Creator and Lord.

The Second Rule. I will imagine a person I have never seen or known. Wanting the best for them, I will consider what advice I would give to help them act and choose for the greater glory of God our Lord and the greater good of their soul. Then, applying the same standard to myself, I will follow the rule I would set for another person.

The Third Rule. I will imagine myself at the point of death and consider what approach and standard I would wish I had used in making this present decision. Then, guided by that standard, I should make my decision now.

The Fourth Rule. Imagining myself on judgment day, I will think about how I will wish I had decided regarding this present matter. The standard I would wish I had followed then is what I should apply now, so that I may experience complete contentment and joy.

Note. After I have followed the rules presented above for my salvation and eternal contentment, I shall make my decision and offer it to God our Lord, in the manner described in point six of the First Method of Making a Decision.