

Discernment of Spirits

How do we distinguish the spirits? They speak different languages; they use different ways to reach our hearts. The voice of God never imposes but proposes, whereas the enemy is strident, insistent and even monotonous. The voice of God might correct us, but gently, always encouraging, consoling, giving us hope. The bad spirit on the other hand offers us dazzling illusions and tempting sensations but they are fleeting. It exploits our fears and suspicions, and seduces us with wealth and prestige. If we ignore it, it responds with contempt and accusation telling us you're worthless.

The voice of the enemy distracts us from the present by getting us to focus on fears of the future or the sadness of the past. The voice of God, on the other hand, speaks to the present, helping us to move forward in the here and now. What comes from God asks: 'What is good for me, what is good for us?'

the voice of God opens your horizons , where was the enemy pins you against the wall where the good spirit gives you hope the bad spirits shows suspicion anxiety and finger pointing.

The good spirit appeals to my desire to do good, to help and to serve, and gives me strength to go forward on the right path. The bad spirit, conversely closes me in on myself, and makes me rigid and intolerant. It is the spirit of fear and grievance. It makes me sad, fearful, and irritable. Rather than freeing me, it enslaves me rather than opening me up to the present and the future it encloses me in fear and resignation.

Learning to distinguish these two kinds of 'voice' allows us to choose the right path forward, which is not always the most obvious, and to avoid making decisions while trapped in past hurts or in fears of the future that risk immobilising us.

Pope Francis *Let Us Dream*, pp.61-62