

## Discernments – Signs of Spiritual Maturity:

### **Prayer:**

Spiritually mature persons' prayer becomes more a personal relationship with God, and less a task to be done. They persevere through the dry spells. There is commonly less interest in external devotional practices and an increasing inclination to "ponder in the heart."

Extraordinary experiences are not a sign one way or the other, and a spiritually mature person doesn't dwell on them.

### **Self-knowledge:**

They stop paying attention to what others are doing right or wrong, and instead reflect on their own behavior and attitudes. They patiently work on their faults without becoming anxious or discouraged. They don't worry about looking perfect, nor are they falsely modest. They are able to take correction with an open mind.

### **Humility and charity:**

They recognize their own littleness, are grateful for God's love, and love others in turn. They are more likely to feel compassion than irritation at other people's shortcomings. They genuinely care about others' wellbeing. They are self-giving without feeling that they are doing anything extraordinary.

### **Detachment:**

Yes, detachment from unnecessary material goods, but more importantly detachment from self-will and their own comfort. They are less "busy" about other people – what they think and what they do, because after all, "all things are passing." They strive to do the will of God regardless of their comfort zone.

### **Patience and peace:**

Charity, humility, and detachment lead to patience and composure in adversity. The spiritually mature do not let themselves get caught up in emotional upsets. St. Teresa wrote about a widow with a great reputation for holiness, living alone and practicing great devotion and penance. The woman became ill and wanted daily Mass in her home, which a priest did for her. One day the priest was not able to come, and the woman became angry and was quite verbal about it. Holy Mother's point being that one can practice all the externals and be highly thought of, but without the habit of self-abnegation all the rest means very little.

### **Emotional maturity:**

Spiritual maturity will show itself in emotional maturity. Prudence, wisdom, forbearance, justice, fair-mindedness, reliability. They can see the other person's point of view in a disagreement, and treat everyone with respect.