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## Food for Thought

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# Food for Thought

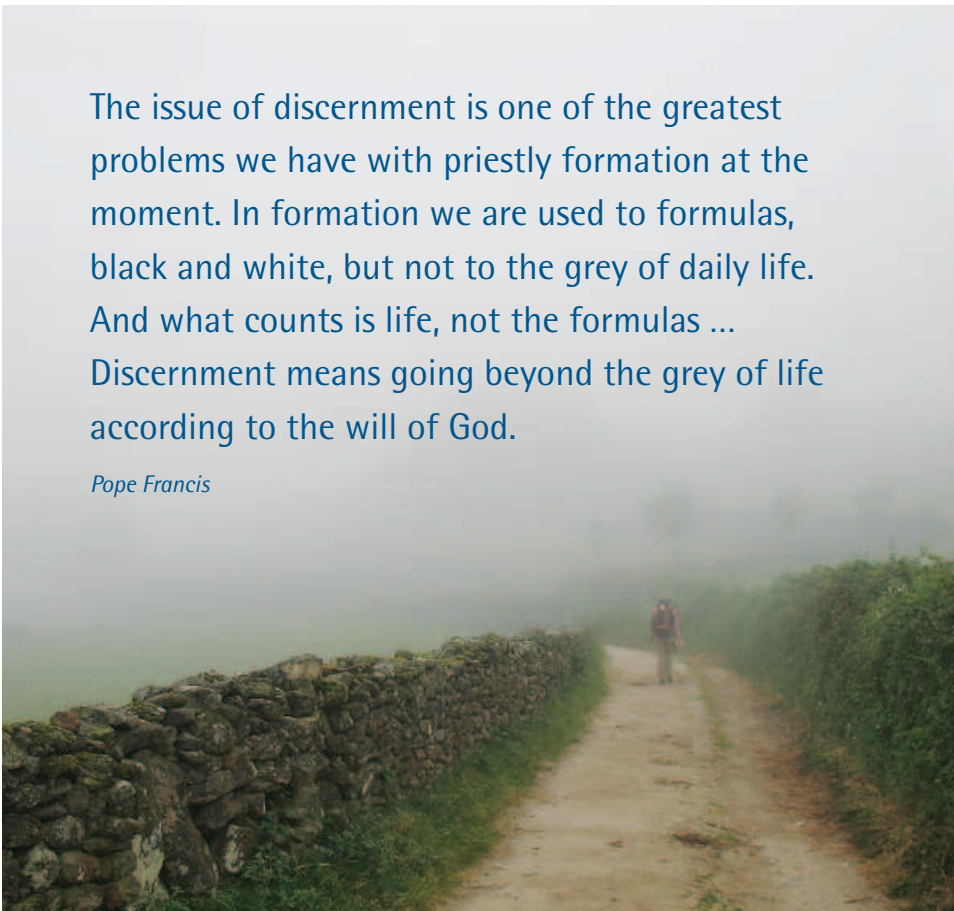
*Joshua J. McElwee, National Catholic Reporter, interviewed Bishop Robert McElroy, San Diego*

- ◆ While people want to be challenged by Gospel teachings, they are looking for a church that has a sense of accepting people where they are and helping them to come farther ... They're called to do the best they can in the circumstances in which they find themselves – which are often very, very challenging in people's lives.
- ◆ What the theology of mercy is saying is ... that God is innately merciful and can do no other than to be merciful, because that's at the core of who God is.
- ◆ Many times, people in their lives cannot embrace the fullness of the Gospel at a given moment. They need to take steps toward it. ... How do you have the mercy which acknowledges that, supports that, and doesn't make people feel terrible that they're not at the fullness of acceptance – or even halfway toward acceptance – of this area of the Gospel that they're finding hard to live out in their life?



The issue of discernment is one of the greatest problems we have with priestly formation at the moment. In formation we are used to formulas, black and white, but not to the grey of daily life. And what counts is life, not the formulas ... Discernment means going beyond the grey of life according to the will of God.

*Pope Francis*



The church should be going forth into the world. The church was born going forth. She was closed in the upper room and then she went out. And she must continue to go out. She shouldn't go back to hiding in the Upper Room. Go on with courage and without fear of erring. Those who never make mistakes are those who never do anything. We have to go forward. We will get things wrong sometimes, yes. But there is always the mercy of God on our side.

Being "church" means that we are to be God's leaven in the midst of humanity: a place of mercy, freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the gospel.

*Pope Francis*



MERCY is the word that summarizes the Gospel. We could say that it was the face of Christ, the face he showed when he went out to everyone, when he healed the sick, when he shared a table with sinners, and especially when, nailed to the cross he forgave: there we find the face of divine mercy. And Christ calls on us to be channels of this love especially towards the least among us, the poorest who are privileged in his eyes.

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*Pope Francis*

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Being shepherds means walking among and behind the flock, being able to listen to the silent account of those who suffer and support the steps of those who fear they will not make it.