

In the movie Mrs. Doubfire, Daniel Hillard played by Robin Williams Court goes through a divorce and wants to see his kids again. The judge gives him a court liaison whose job is to make sure his apartment is clean and to help him find a job.

During the interview, she asks about his skills. "Do you have any special skills?" Daniel replies, "I do voices." "What do you mean you do voices?" she asks. "Well, I do voices," he says. And then he begins doing imitations of various people – Sean Connery, Ronald Reagan, etc. When he's done, she asks, "Do you consider yourself humorous?" He replies, "I used to. There was a time, when I found myself funny. But today, you have proven me wrong. Thank you."

St. Ignatius of Loyola gave the Church a great gift in terms of discerning the voices we hear in our spiritual life. There is the voice of God, what he calls the "good spirit." Additionally, we have our own voice. And finally, we have the voice of the evil one, what he calls the "bad spirit." St. Ignatius' rules help us with a few things:

- **Become Aware:** Who is speaking to me (God, the evil one, my fallen human nature, the world, etc.)?
- **Understand:** How is it affecting me? Where is it leading me?
- **Take Action:** How do I respond to this movement in my heart? Do I accept or reject it?

In short, St. Ignatius looks at who is speaking to me, how is it affecting me, and third, what action do I take in responding to this voice? Do I accept it or reject it? In short, St. Ignatius' 14 Rules are akin to a modern GPS helping navigate us through the spiritual life.

Here is an example. **Rule 1:** Those moving away from God – moving from mortal sin to mortal sin. In this situation, the evil one wills to keep the person moving in this direction. Therefore, he continues to present apparent pleasures to hold them in their vices and sins. Therefore, his voice will be encouraging and consoling to keep them on the same path. The Lord's voice, however, will sting and bite the persons' conscience to bring about conversion. The Lord's goal is to get the person to "turn around" and move toward Him.

St. Augustine is a great example. He lived an immoral life as a young man and spoke about the emptiness and discontent from empty pleasure. God stung and bit his conscience, while the evil one consoled him. Ultimately, he had that great conversion upon hearing that boy singing – "Take and read, take and read." Years later, he reflected on that moment and the voice of God calling him to greatness. St. Ignatius 14 Rules of Discernment are certainly a treasure for the Church!