

TWO DIFFERENT WAYS OF CHRISTIAN LIVING **

Style A: "The Way of Rules and Regulations"

+ Life almost entirely controlled by rules and laws

10 commandments and universal "natural law";
precepts of the church and canon law;
rules and regulations covering almost everything
(e.g., number of ounces of food in a fast-day meal)

Morality: told what to do; find the right rule & apply it.
Prohibitions: not just meat on Friday, but going into Protestant church, going to non-Catholic schools, mixed marriages.
The perfectionist approach and inevitable failure, guilt, with confession needed to "get out of 'mortal' sin"

Liturgy a matter of the priest (who represents Christ) carrying out the ceremonial rules correctly, reverently

Prayer: "devotions"; saying prayers to gain indulgences

Religious Life: the higher way with double merit & double sin; big houses, institutional living, daily order and rules & customs

** Probably no one lives only one of these styles to the total exclusion of the other, but people do tend to see and live their lives with more attention to one or the other.

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Style B: "The Way of Discernment"

+ Life led by the Spirit with the freedom (and risk!) of the daughters and sons of God, the sisters and brothers of Jesus

Most of life not covered by rules;
personal commitment and responsibility;
the following of Jesus on a journey of faith to the "Father"/"Mother"; a new Christology of the human Jesus, taking the incarnation seriously

Morality: a growing scope for choice, initiative, trial and error, creativity

An acceptance of human limitation, fallibility, sinfulness in a context of God's unconditional love

Liturgy the people's celebration of the great acts of God and a response of thanksgiving together with Jesus; the people are the Body of Christ

New (actually old) form of prayer, spontaneous and "real"; Scripture

Marriage an equally high and challenging way of Christian life

+ A sound practice of "discernment" is urgent in this style. Ignatius the great teacher of this way because he learned early on how to read his own experience—his feelings, hopes, desires, dreams, inspirations.
The early 16th century and the later 20th/early 21st century.