



Holy Anger Discernment Guide

For Catholic women seeking to say a holy “no”
to better say a deeper “yes” to God and love.

HOLY UNION



Colin and Jean MacKenzie are a Catholic couple passionate about helping others build strong, faith-filled marriages. Jean, a registered psychologist, and Colin, a veteran with 32 years in the Canadian military, combine their expertise to offer couples practical, spiritual, and psychological tools to navigate the joys and challenges of marriage. Through Holy Union Connect, they provide courses, podcast episodes, and daily reflections that empower couples to deepen their connection, grow in virtue, and place Christ at the center of their sacramental union.

Welcome!

If you are reading this guide, chances are you have felt angry — and then quickly questioned yourself for it. Maybe you wondered:

- Was that sinful?
- Was I being uncharitable?
- Should I have been more patient?
- Why can't I just let this go like a "good Catholic woman" should?

This guide is here to reassure you of something important:

Anger is not a failure of holiness.

Avoiding discernment is.

Holy anger is not about lashing out, demanding control, or proving a point. It is about paying attention to what matters — so love does not quietly erode under the weight of resentment, exhaustion, or silence.

WHAT HOLY ANGER IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

Anger is often treated as something dangerous or embarrassing, especially for women. But the Christian tradition does not teach us to eliminate anger — it teaches us to **form it**.

St. John Chrysostom reminds us:

“He who is not angry, whereas he has cause to be, sins. For unreasonable patience is the hotbed of many vices; it fosters negligence, and incites not only the wicked but even the good to do wrong.”

HOLY ANGER:

- arises in response to injustice, violation, or disorder
- protects what is good, true, and sacred
- invites discernment rather than impulsive reaction

HOLY ANGER IS NOT:

- cruelty
- contempt
- revenge
- uncontrolled emotional discharge
- silence at all costs.

ANGER AS A BOUNDARY SIGNAL

For many people-pleasing women, anger does not show up as rage. It often appears as:

- resentment
- fatigue
- tension in the body
- emotional withdrawal
- a quiet but persistent sense that something is wrong

These are not character flaws.

They are **signals**.

ANGER AS A BOUNDARY SIGNAL

Anger often signals that:

- a value has been violated
- a responsibility is uneven
- a limit has been crossed
- a “yes” is being demanded that cannot be freely given

Ignoring these cues does not make us holier. It often makes us smaller.

Awareness is the beginning of *freedom*.

REFLECTION

- Where do I notice anger or tension most often?
- What situations reliably leave me drained or resentful?
- What might this emotion be protecting?



TURNING THE OTHER CHEEK PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD

“Turn the other cheek” is one of the most misunderstood teachings in Scripture.

It does **not** mean:

- enduring abuse
- erasing dignity
- allowing injustice to continue

It means refusing to become what wounds us.

Bishop Robert Barron recounts a story about Archbishop Desmond Tutu. When confronted by a man who said, “Step aside. I don’t make way for gorillas,” Tutu calmly stepped aside and replied, “I do.” This was not weakness.

It was dignity reclaimed.

Turning the other cheek is not passive submission — it is **active moral clarity**.

Discerning when to turn the other cheek — and *when* a firmer boundary is required — is not simple. This discernment becomes clearer when it is practiced within real relationships and guided conversation, which is something we explore more fully in the course.

The MAP Discernment Framework

M

M — Mission

To get to heaven — and bring others with us if we can.

A

A — Align

What virtue is being called forth in this moment?
(courage, prudence, justice, humility, patience, fortitude)

P

P — Pray

Prayer is not an afterthought. It runs continuously beneath discernment. (Ex. *Lord, show me how to love here.*)

A Simple Discernment Reflection

1

What Happened?

Briefly describe the situation without interpretation.

2

What Did I Feel?

Name the emotions that showed up and where you noticed them in your body.

3

What Might This Anger Be Protecting?

Consider what good may be at stake (truth, rest, dignity, relationship, vocation).

4

Apply MAP

FROM HOLY ANGER TOWARD HOLY PEACE

Peace is not the absence of tension.

It is the fruit of rightly ordered love.

When anger is acknowledged and discerned — rather than denied — it begins to soften and clarify.

This guide is meant to begin that process, not complete it.



Prayer

Lord Jesus,

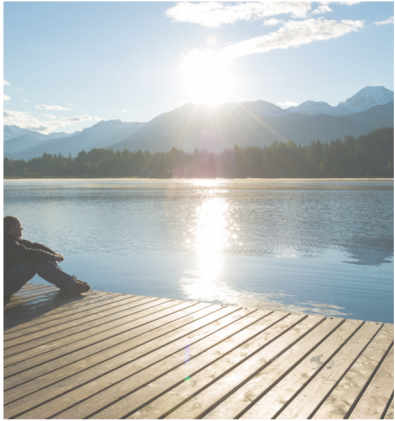
*You who overturned tables and also endured the
Cross,
teach me how to love without losing myself.*

*Give me eyes to see when something sacred needs
protection,
wisdom to discern my response,
and courage to act in truth and charity.*

*May my anger be purified into love,
and my boundaries become places where grace can
grow.*

Amen.

FREE RESOURCES



DAILY MARRIAGE REFLECTIONS

Start your day with spiritual inspiration to strengthen your marriage with bite-sized reflections rooted in Catholic teaching, designed to help you and your spouse grow in love, faith, and connection.

[MORE INFORMATION](#)



KINDNESS CHALLENGE

Add more love and joy to your marriage with small, daily acts of kindness. With text templates, simple ideas, and thoughtful prompts, this challenge is designed to help you reconnect and grow closer through intentional kindness.

[MORE INFORMATION](#)



CONNECTED CONVERSATIONS PODCAST

Join us for a dive deep into the joys, struggles, and spiritual journey of Catholic marriage. Featuring real stories, expert advice, and faith-based insights, each episode will inspire and equip you with practical tools to strengthen your relationship.

[MORE INFORMATION](#)



The Holy UNION Battleplan is a comprehensive course designed to help Catholic couples build strong, faith-filled marriages in the midst of today's spiritual battles. Recognizing that marriage and family are at the heart of a profound spiritual struggle—as emphasized by Our Lady of Fatima—we provide couples with the tools to defend and strengthen their sacred union. Combining Catholic teachings, psychology, neurobiology, and insights from military experience, this course equips you to navigate challenges, grow in virtue, and stand united against forces that threaten the sanctity of marriage.

Whether you're seeking to deepen your connection or overcome specific struggles, the Holy UNION Battleplan empowers you to place Christ at the center of your relationship and fight together for the lasting strength of your marriage.

**Join Holy UNION
Battleplan!**

*MAY THE PEACE
OF
CHRIST
BE WITH YOU.*

Cofin & Jean

MacKenzie

**HOLY
UNION**