

Dialogue IV

How do we make decisions in the Church?

Let's introduce ourselves

- Each person briefly introduces themselves.
- Activity to put people at ease: each person is asked to describe their favourite food.
- Go around the table briefly to ask each participant how they feel and validate it.

Introduction

In today's meeting, we will reflect on the decision-making process in our Christian community, our movement, our diocese. In a synodal style, we make our decisions by being willing to discern what the Holy Spirit is saying to us in what we are living or not yet living in our community.

Time of Prayer

Let's take the time to arrive with who we are, let's take the time to centre ourselves on our breathing, let's unite our spirit to our body, without judging ourselves; let's dispose ourselves to hear the breath of the Holy Spirit breathing in us and uniting us to each other. Let us be willing to enter into an attitude of listening and discernment.

Let us recite together the prayer to the Holy Spirit for the beginning of a synodal meeting.

Prayer for the Beginning of a Synodal Meeting

Here we are before you, Holy Spirit; in your name we are gathered.

You, our only counselor, come to us, dwell with us, deign to dwell in our hearts.

Teach us where to go, show us how we should walk together.

We who are weak and sinful, do not allow ourselves to cause disorder.

Let us not be led astray by ignorance, nor let partiality influence our actions.

May we find our unity in you, without straying from the path of truth and justice, advancing together towards eternal life.

We ask this of you, who act in all times and places, in the communion of the Father and the Son, for ever and ever. Amen

Word of God

Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7

At that time, as the number of disciples increased, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. The twelve called together the multitude of the disciples, and said, It is not proper that we leave the word of God to serve at tables. Therefore, brethren, choose from among you seven men, of whom we bear good witness, who are full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, and whom we will entrust to this office. And we will continue to apply ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. This proposal pleased the whole assembly. They elected Stephen, man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, Philippe, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parménas, and Nicolas, proselyte of Antioch. They presented them to the apostles, who, after praying, laid their hands on them. The word of God spread more and more, the number of disciples greatly increased in Jerusalem, and a large crowd of priests obeyed the faith.

Chant : Seek ye First The Kingdom Of God (Karen Lafferty)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k3S1wfXmYPw&list=RDk3S1wfXmYPw&index=1>

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God	Al - le - lu - ia
And His righteousness	Al - le - lu - ia
And all these things shall be added unto you	Al - le - lu - ia
Allelu Alleluia	Al - le - lu Al - le - lu - ia
Ask and it shall be given unto you	Al - le - lu - ia
Seek and ye shall find	Al - le - lu - ia
Knock and it shall be opened unto you	Al - le - lu - ia
Allelu Alleluia	Al - le - lu Al - le - lu - ia

First round of dialogue (twenty minutes)

You identify in your parish, movements, committees, your diocese, an experience of participation or not in the discernment and decision-making process. Do you feel part of the decision-making process?

(Time for silence)

Everyone has an equal time to speak to the issues. There is no discussion for this round: each participant listens deeply to what the other is expressing, in an attitude of listening to what the Holy Spirit is trying to tell us in ourselves, through the person who is expressing himself.

Second round of dialogue (twenty minutes)

How are decisions made in your Christian community, your movement, your parish committee?

(Time of silence)

In a second round, the participants express what struck them most in what was shared, in the words expressed as well as in the silences (an attitude of attentive and spiritual listening is kept in view, not confrontation or debate) but a respectful dialogue.

Third round of dialogue (twenty minutes)

Through what has just been shared about our experiences of discernment and decision-making, the Holy Spirit whispers to our hearts a direction, a conversion in our ways of making decisions. What is the spirit saying to our Church?

(Time of silence)

Finally, in the third round, participants reflect on what seemed to emerge, to surface, what resonated during the conversation that touched them, moved them and made sense to them.

Conclusion

Go around the table and ask participants to summarize in a few words what they remember from the workshop on "How do we decide in the Church" and how they found the process. A secretary records these comments and prepares a summary of the meeting's conclusions. (See the last page of this document for tips on writing your report).

Prayer of thanksgiving

Let's recite Psalm 137 together

With all my heart, O Lord, I give you thanks: you have heard the words of my mouth. I sing to you in the presence of angels,

to your holy temple I bow down. I give thanks to your name for your love and your truth, for you raise your name and your word above all else.

The day you answered my call, you made my soul grow strong.

All the kings of the earth give you thanks when they hear the words of your mouth.

They sing of the ways of the Lord: "How great is the glory of the Lord!

However high the Lord is, he sees the lowliest; from afar he recognizes the proud.

If I walk in the midst of anguish, you give me life; your hand falls on my enemies in anger. Your right hand makes me victorious.

The Lord does everything for me! Lord, your love is eternal: do not stop the work of your hands.

A time of gratitude

As you return home and think about what you have heard in these exchanges, in the presence of the Risen One, ask yourself today and in the days to come: What is rising in me? What is the call that the Lord is placing in me? Perhaps you might catch yourself saying, "Lord, what do you want me to do?"

To write the meeting report

This report should not exceed 2 printed pages.

1. Describe the group that met: level of involvement in the church, membership (parishioners, religious, committee, service or movement members), young or old, homogeneous or diverse group, etc.
2. How did the process go: smoothly? with difficulty? Why did it happen? If you adapted it, how?
3. From the notes that were collected at the conclusion (after the third round of dialogue), present the main conclusions reached by the group: findings, sources of joy or sadness, awareness, proposals, hopes, etc.
4. Did the group members leave satisfied with the experience? Why or why not?

Please send your report to Mr. André Inkela.

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