

COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT & IGNATIAN DECISION MAKING



Workshop on Ignatian School Leadership
April 17 - 21, 2017
Good Shepherd Spirituality Center
Antipolo, Rizal, Philippines



PRAYERFULNESS SPIRITUAL FREEDOM MUTUAL ACCEPTANCE AND TRUST

conditions for
communal discernment

daily schedule

07:00 am	Breakfast
08:30 am	Session
10.00 am	Break
10.30 am	Session
12.00 pm	Lunch
01.30 pm	Session
03.00 pm	Break
03:30 pm	Session
05:00 pm	Break
05:00 pm	Eucharist
06:00 pm	Outing
07:00 pm	CRESCENT MOON

wisl2017.wordpress.com

BIG IDEAS

Communal discernment involves active listening: listening to the *whole* person (*cura personalis*)--i.e., not only to the person's words, but also the person's actions, feelings, and needs.

The NVC framework for feedback giving (Observation-Feelings-Needs-Request) is also a helpful guide on how to listen to others and to monitor one's self *with empathy and compassion*.

BIG IDEAS

The **seven dispositions** recommended for communal discernment involve precisely listening to God *in one's self* and listening to God *in one another*.

When we are spiritually free (when we are aware of--and not slaves to--our feelings and needs), we are better able to **listen to the Lord** (whether in ourselves or in others), free of our inordinate attachments, as well as our biases and labels for others.



August 2016

CATHOLIC HERALD

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Latest News

Teach future priests that life has grey areas, Pope urges Jesuits



The Pope has advised priests to be more understanding in areas such as divorce (CNS)

In a meeting with 28 Jesuit priests, the Pope encouraged clergy to practice 'spiritual discernment' when advising those seeking help

The Pope has said that some seminaries are providing a style of legalistic education which makes it difficult for priests to respond to the real-life situations of those who come to them seeking guidance.



**INIGO before
IGNATIUS**



*In itinere Maurum de virginitate Dei matris
impure detrahentem dubitat an ferro vleiscatur,
permisissq; equo habenis, ex eo quod iumentum ab
antecedentis Mauri vestigijs auertit, diuinitus in-
terpretatur huiusmodi vltionem Deo cordi non esse.*

**Sometimes
God speaks to us
through an ass.**



LISTENING TO GOD
TOGETHER
IN COMMUNITY
communal discernment

LISTENING TO GOD
IN ONE ANOTHER
active listening

LISTENING TO GOD
IN MYSELF
individual discernment

3 PIECES



**A discerning
community
with open horizons**

In our individualistic
and competitive age,
we should remember
that the **community** plays
a very special role
since it is
**a privileged place
of apostolic discernment.**



CG 36 ~ Rowing into the deep

...we should leave room
**for encounter
and sharing.**

This disposition helps
the community become
a space of truth, joy,
creativity, pardon,
and of seeking
the will of God.

Thus, **community can
become a place of
discernment.**



#8 - 12



Communal discernment requires that each of us
develop some basic characteristics and attitudes:
**availability, mobility, humility, freedom,
the ability to accompany others, patience,
and a willingness to listen respectfully**
so that we may speak the truth to each other.

#8 - 12



An essential tool that can animate apostolic communal discernment is **spiritual conversation.**

Spiritual conversation involves an exchange marked **by active and receptive listening and a desire to speak of that which touches us most deeply.**

#8 - 12



It tries to take **account of spiritual movements, individual and communal,** with the objective of choosing the path of consolation that fortifies our faith, hope and love.

Spiritual conversation creates an atmosphere of trust and welcome for ourselves and others.

We ought not to deprive ourselves of such conversation in the community and in all other occasions for decision-making in the Society.

#8 - 12



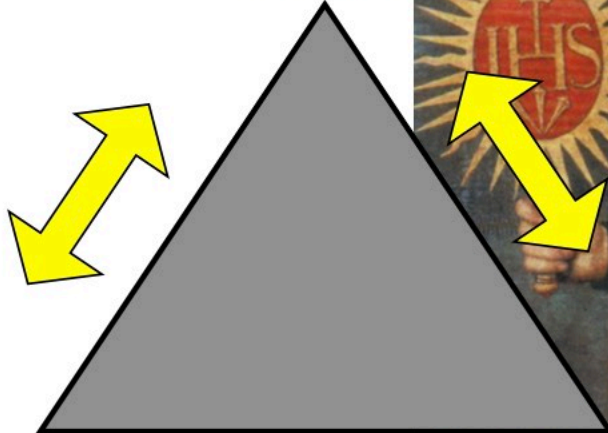
The Ignatian Leader



Annotation 15
Don't take center stage.
Let **God** deal directly
with the retreatant.

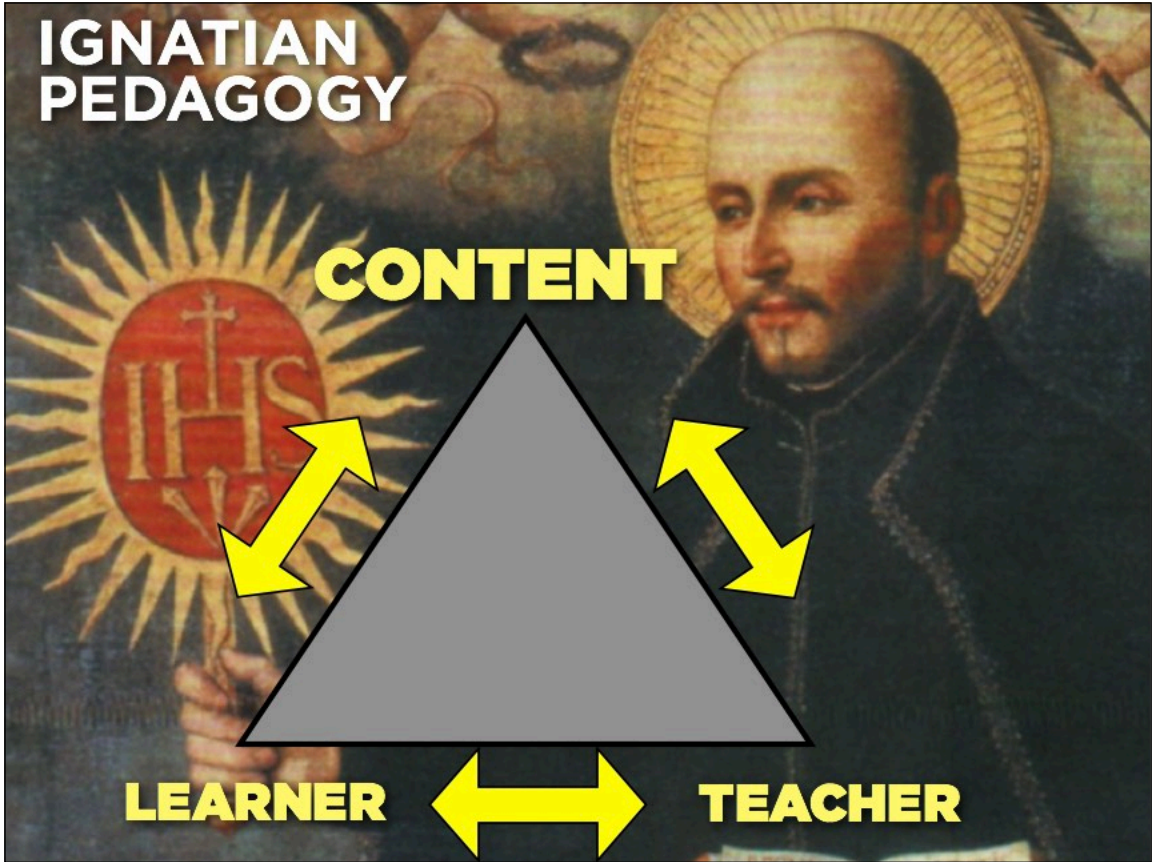


GOD



RETREATANT

RETREAT DIRECTOR



LEADERSHIP STYLE & DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Before we begin with communal discernment, it is helpful to clarify the type of **decision-making process** that will be followed based on the prescribed **leadership style** and the needs of the community.

* Who makes the **FINAL DECISION** on the matter? Is it the leader or the community?

*What is expected of the community or group—i.e., to make the **FINAL DECISION** or merely conduct an **EVALUATION** and submit a **RECOMMENDATION**?

*Given the needs of the community or the group's condition, which style is preferred?

LEADERSHIP STYLE & DECISION MAKING PROCESS

GROUP CONDITION	NEEDED STYLE OF LEADERSHIP	DESIRED GROUP RESPONSE
<p>Lack of Identity</p> <p>External or internal crisis</p> <p>Survival</p>	<p>DIRECTIVE</p> <p>The leader alone makes the decision (including evaluation & recommendation).</p>	<p>Accept decision.</p> <p>Cooperate in action.</p> <p>No communal discernment.</p>

LEADERSHIP STYLE & DECISION MAKING PROCESS

GROUP CONDITION	NEEDED STYLE OF LEADERSHIP	DESIRED GROUP RESPONSE
<p style="text-align: center;">Security & Stability</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sense of identity and mission developing</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CONSULTATIVE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The leader makes the decision (evaluation & recommendation) with members.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Cooperate in evaluating & making recommendation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Accept decision.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Act responsibly.</p>

LEADERSHIP STYLE & DECISION MAKING PROCESS

GROUP CONDITION	NEEDED STYLE OF LEADERSHIP	DESIRED GROUP RESPONSE
<p style="text-align: center;">Mature sense of identity & mission</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Clear & shared perception of resources & limits</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FACILITATIVE & DELIBERATIVE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The leader facilitates the decision making, and all the members make the decision.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Responsibility & collaboration in every phase.</p>

LEADERSHIP STYLE & DECISION MAKING PROCESS

A

DIRECTIVE

NO COMMUNAL
DISCERNMENT

B

CONSULTATIVE

COMMUNAL
DISCERNMENT for
RECOMMENDATION

C

**FACILITATIVE &
DELIBERATIVE**

COMMUNAL
DISCERNMENT for
DECISION



Jesuit Refugee Service

a case study

Read pp. 1 - 5, especially pp. 3 - 5
excluding "Changes in the refugee realities"



What struck you about the decision making process? How different it is from our usual manner?

What was the decision the group was to make? What were the choices?

How did they go about making the decision?

What was the final decision?



The Ingredients of

IGNATIAN DISCERNMENT

REFLECTING on My Experience

DISCERNING My Response

PRAYING for Confirmation

The Ingredients of

COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT



REFLECTING ON OUR EXPERIENCE

Every member of the group should be mindful of—
and reflecting on—one's experience,
**noticing one's thoughts,
feelings, and needs.**

The Ingredients of

COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT



DISCERNING OUR RESPONSE

Crucial here is monitoring
the group's **spiritual freedom**
in relation to our biases, needs,
and inordinate attachments.

The Ingredients of

COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT



PRAYING FOR CONFIRMATION

After a recommendation or decision has been formulated, there is need for **time and **continued discernment** after the process.**



**REFLECTING ON EXPERIENCE
+ COMMUNAL LISTENING**

**BEFORE DISCERNING OUR RESPONSE
+ PRAYING FOR CONFIRMATION**



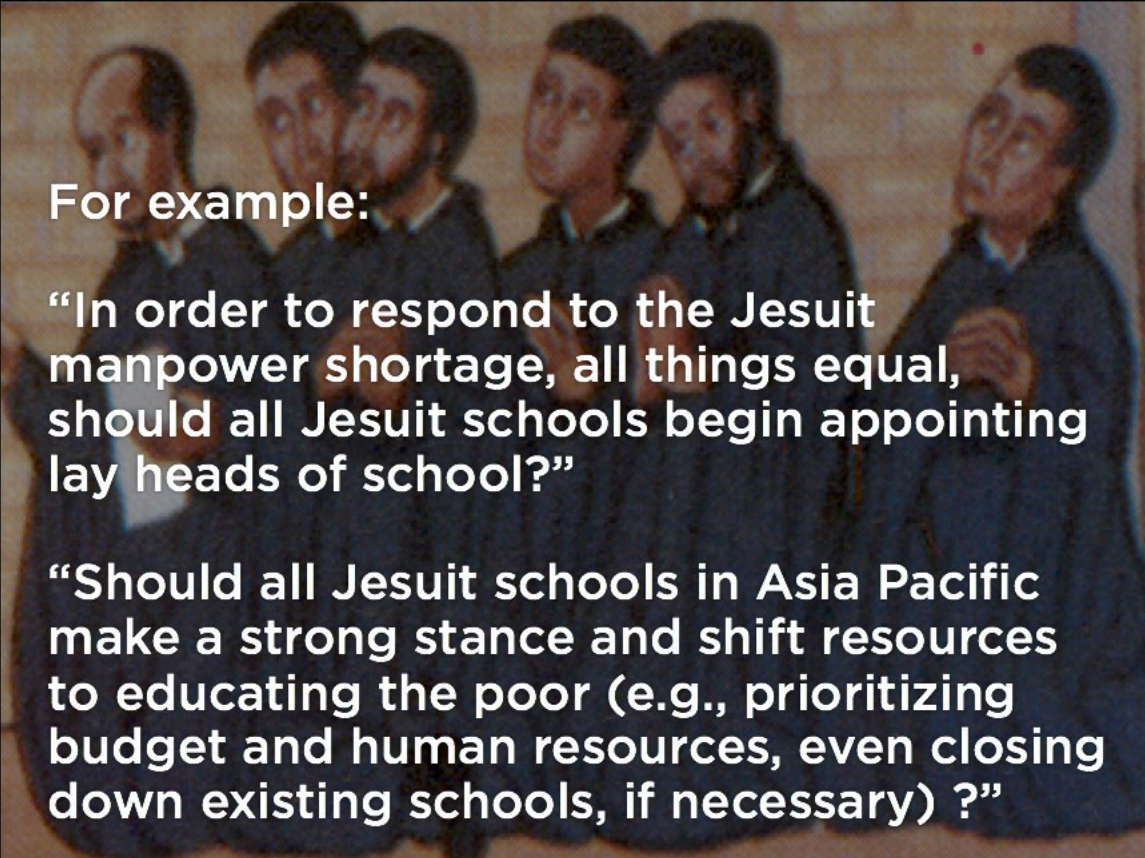
Formulate the **DISCERNMENT QUESTION** in a way that it is specific and answerable by “Yes” or “No.”

For example:

“Should we open a new campus/a satellite school in Location X?”

“Should we consider adopting the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme for our Grades 11 and 12 students?”

“Should Student A be asked to leave the school?”



For example:

“In order to respond to the Jesuit manpower shortage, all things equal, should all Jesuit schools begin appointing lay heads of school?”

“Should all Jesuit schools in Asia Pacific make a strong stance and shift resources to educating the poor (e.g., prioritizing budget and human resources, even closing down existing schools, if necessary) ?”



All the members of the group are asked to reflect and pray over their **PERSONAL POSITION** or **PREFERENCE** on the matter.

Everyone is expected to be honest and open.

- What is my personal preference or inclination with regard to the question?
- What are my reasons for this position?
- Is this inclination based primarily on my personal needs?
- How strongly do I feel about this option?
Can I make myself open to the other option?



Round One MY PREFERENCES & INCLINATIONS

Communal Listening

Each person shares his/her preferred option and the reasons for it.

We listen to one another attentively and compassionately, calling to mind that God may be speaking to us through one another.



Reflecting on Our Experience

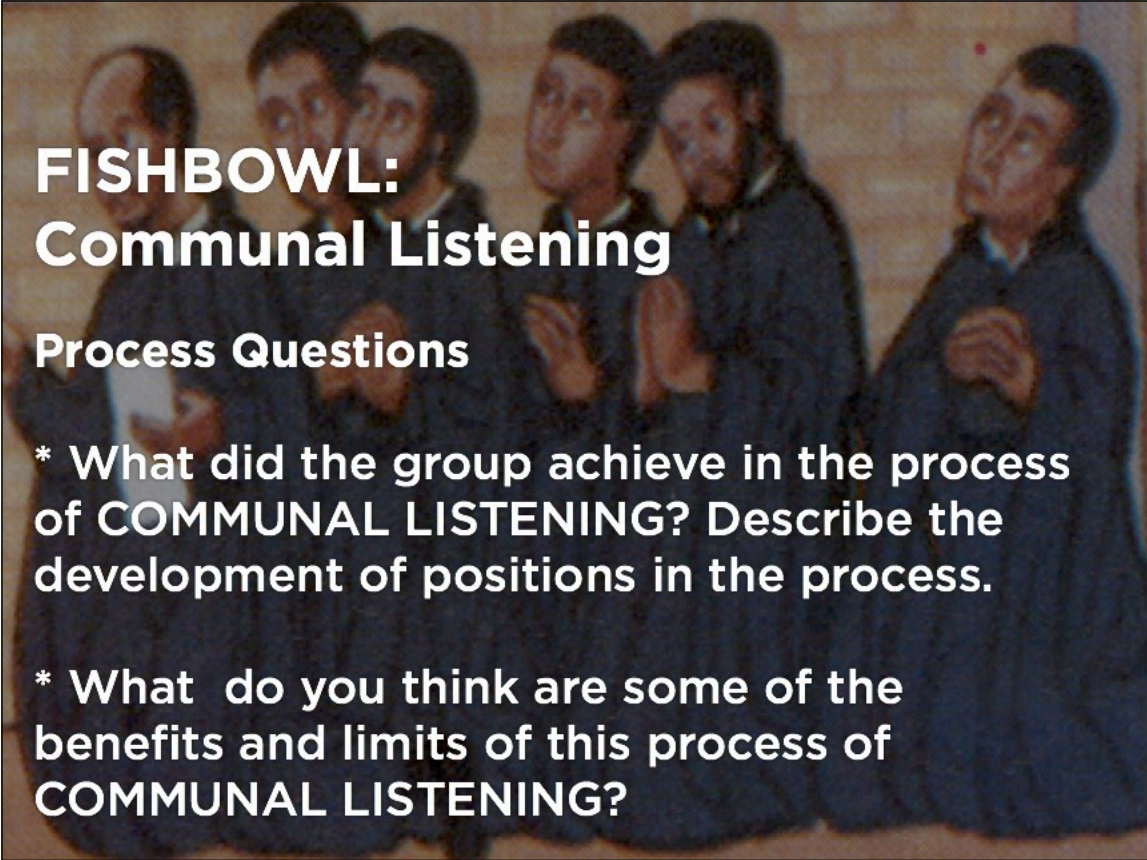
Each person reflects on his/her experience of communal listening, **noticing one's interior movements,** and discerns the response that the Lord may be asking from the group.

- How did I feel while listening to others in the group?
- Did anything anybody say in particular strike me—whether it confirmed my position or questioned it? Why?
- Am I being called to maintain or change my initial position? Why or why not?”



FISHBOWL Exercise

“Should all Jesuit schools in Asia Pacific make a strong stance and shift resources to educating the poor (e.g., prioritizing budget and human resources, even closing down existing schools if necessary) ?”



FISHBOWL: Communal Listening

Process Questions

- * What did the group achieve in the process of COMMUNAL LISTENING? Describe the development of positions in the process.**
- * What do you think are some of the benefits and limits of this process of COMMUNAL LISTENING?**