CONVERSATION IN THE SPIRIT FACILITATOR TRAINING

April 28, 2025

19:00-21:00 CET (Rome)

Ignatian Encounter Ministry

OPENING PRAYER

Leader:

"Teach me your way, O Lord,
that I may walk in your truth;
give me an undivided heart to revere your name." Psalm 86: 11

All:

"**Teach me wisdom and knowledge,
for in your commandments I trust.**" Psalm 119:66

Reader:

"Discernment is necessary not only at extraordinary times, when we need to resolve grave problems and make crucial decisions… We need it at all times, to help us recognize God's timetable… Often discernment is exercised in small and apparently irrelevant things, since greatness of spirit is manifested in simple everyday realities. It involves striving untrammeled for all that is great, better and more beautiful, while at the same time being concerned for the little things, for each day's responsibilities and commitments."

- Pope Francis, Gaudete et Exsultate, #169

All:
**"Teach me wisdom and knowledge,
for in your commandments I trust."**

Reader:

"It is not a matter of applying rules or repeating what was done in the past, since the same solutions are not valid in all circumstances and what was useful in one context may not prove so in another. The discernment of spirits liberates us from rigidity, which has no place before the perennial 'today' of the risen Lord."

- Pope Francis, Gaudete et Exsultate, #173

All:

"Teach me wisdom and knowledge,
for in your commandments I trust."

God our Father,
You have a plan for each one of us,
You hold out to us a future full of hope.

Give us the wisdom of your Spirit
so that we can see the shape of your plan
in the gifts you have given us,
and in the circumstances of our daily lives.

Give us the freedom of your Spirit,
to seek you with all our hearts,
and to choose your will above all else.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Discernment Prayer of the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus

AGENDA

Welcome/Introductions
Opening Prayer
Overview of Conversation in the Spirit and event platform
Role of Facilitator
Conversation Event Agenda
Registration and Preparatory Material
Ground Rules
Examen
Fishbowl Exercise – Modeling the Conversation
Debrief Conversation/Q&A Small Groups
Notetaking
Closing Prayer

CALL FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH

- from XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, Final Document November 24, 2024

Conversation in the Spirit is a tool that enables listening in order to discern **"what the Spirit is saying to the Churches"** (*Rev* 2:7). Its practice has elicited joy, awe and gratitude and has been experienced as a path of renewal that transforms individuals, groups, and the Church. The word "conversation" expresses more than mere dialogue: it interweaves thought and feeling, creating a shared vital space. Grace brings this human experience to fruition. Conversing "in the Spirit" means living the experience of sharing in the light of faith and seeking God's will within which the Holy Spirit's unmistakable voice can be heard. (45)

The spread of digital culture and the opportunities that the internet provides are reshaping relationships, bonds and boundaries. Christian digital communities and groups, particularly young people, are called to reflect on how they create bonds of belonging, promoting encounter and dialogue. They need to **offer formation, developing a synodal way of being Church**. The internet, constituted as a web of connections, offers new opportunities to better live the synodal dimension of the Church. (113)

IGNATIAN ENCOUNTER MINISTRY

Mission: To infuse practices of synodality and communal discernment within Catholic communities and organizations and work collaboratively to foster a deeper understanding and experience of a synodal church.

To create a virtual infrastructure for facilitated Conversations in the Spirit and other discernment processes

To provide an online training program for facilitators in Spiritual Conversation for both virtual events and local use. (www.ignatianencounterministry.org)

Using the virtual infrastructure, to create opportunities for synodal dialogue on various topics of importance among Catholics at various levels and across boundaries (local, regional, national, continental and universal)

"It is the encounter that converts" – Pope Francis

Ignatian Encounter Ministry

WUCWO CONVERSATIONS IN THE SPIRIT MAY 6, 8, 10 2025

- Over 1,000 participants around the world
- 3 events
- Young Adult Event – May 10
- 6 participants in each small group
- Specific language groups (English, French, Spanish)
- 200 facilitators needed over 3 events
- Arrive early – 30 minutes

5 mins	Welcome, Introduction to Conversation Event
2 mins	Ground Rules
1 min	Reading of Primary Question(s)
5 mins	Examen Prayer
70 mins	Small Groups
3 mins	Naming Graces
3 mins	What next - reporting
2 mins	Thanks and Closing Prayer

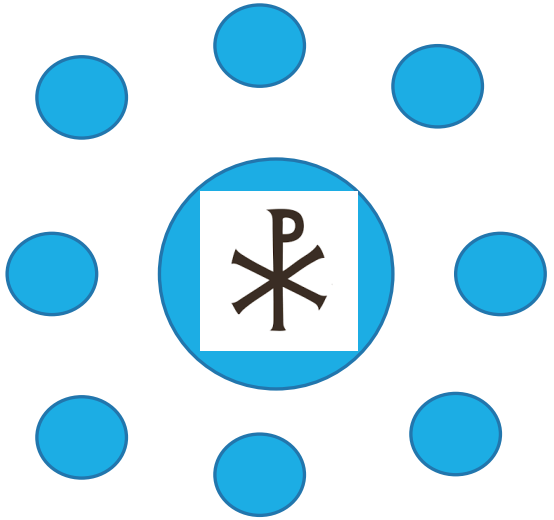
CONVERSATION IN THE SPIRIT

EVENT AGENDA

CONVERSATION IN THE SPIRIT

- Synod Process
  - Local, Continental Consultations
  - General Assembly, Rome 2023/2024
- Common discernment
- 1+1+1>3 - The Holy Spirit is present
- Lateral conversations about experience
- Active listening – without judgment
- *Metanoia* – Conversion through conversation
- Focused on
  - Experience
  - Future hopes and dreams

- 3 rounds of listening and speaking
- Round 1: Each person speaks – offers reflection on questions
- Silence
- Round 2: Each responds to what resonates with them
- Silence
- Round 3: How is the Holy Spirit calling us?
- Reporting - Sharing



WHY CONVERSATION IN THE SPIRIT?

Trust

Trusting in the presence and action of God in our hearts, our lives, in the group and in each member
of the group.

Communion

The goal is not to advance my point of view to the detriment of others, but to listen together to what the Spirit tells us.

Reconciliation

We talk about our experiences, not ideas. This allows us to go beyond personal opinions and connect on a deeper level.

Justice

Each participant benefits from the same conditions and the same time

Inclusion

Every person's voice matters. Everyone is heard and taken into account.

FACILITATORS ARE THE HEART OF SYNODAL CONVERSION

- Model Conversation

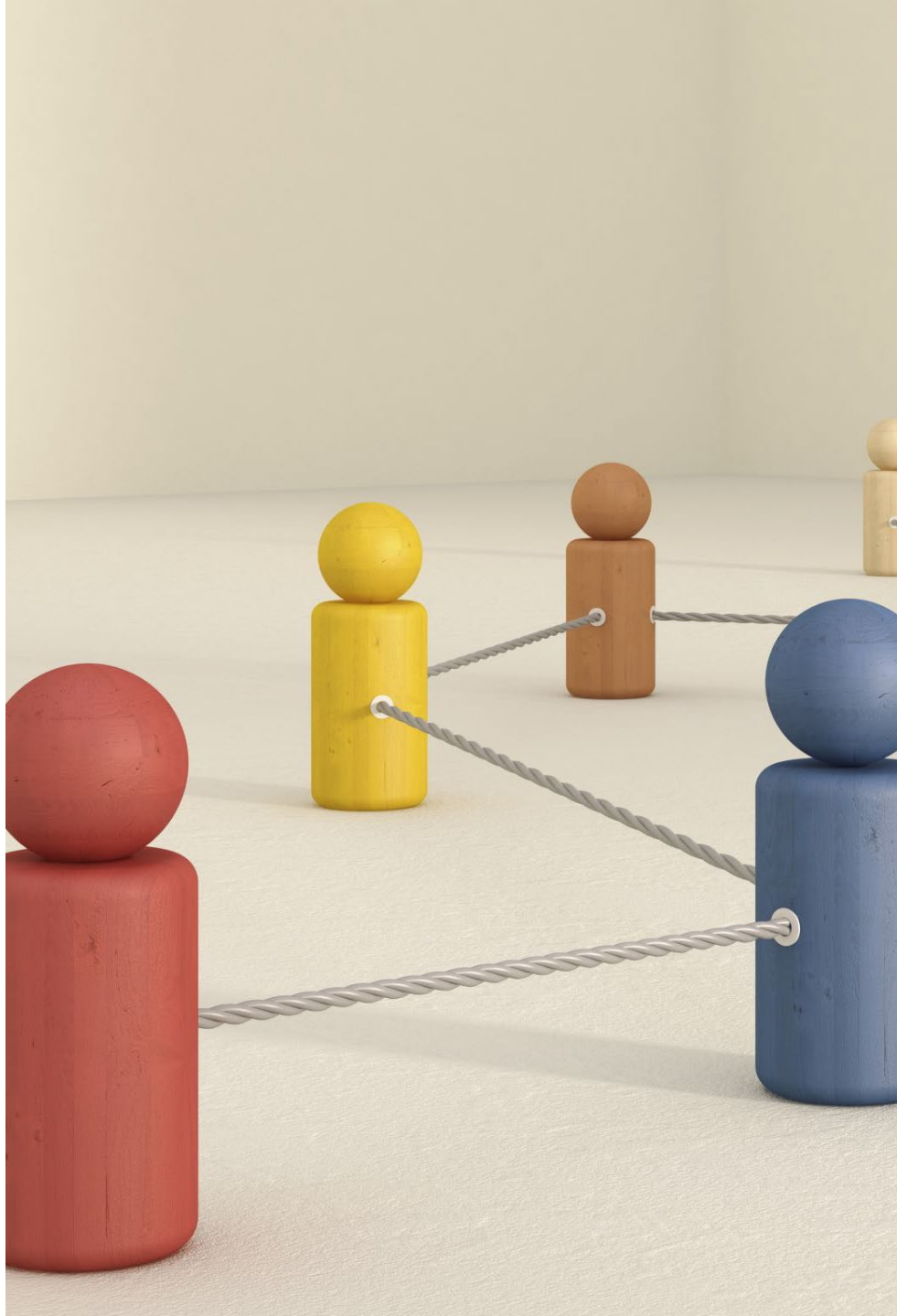
- Create safe, welcoming, inviting space for encounter

- Insure equity in process

- Move from I to We - A collaborative exercise

- Hold tensions

- Hold space for the Spirit



ROLE OF FACILITATOR

Guide Accompany a group of 5-7 in a 70-minute Conversation in the Spirit

Welcome Create a welcoming and prayerful space. Establish order of speakers.

Script Follow the script for introduction, three rounds of sharing, and evaluation.

Guidelines Keep the conversation on track using **ground rules.**

Timekeeping Be sure that each participant adheres to the time limits.

Silence Observe times of prayerful silence between rounds.

Note-taking Using note-taking function, scribe open notes during final round only.

GROUND RULES

EVERYONE IN THE CONVERSATION IS EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE. WE ARE ALL PARTICIPANTS.

ONLY ONE PERSON MAY SPEAK AT A TIME. ALL ARE ASKED TO ACTIVELY LISTEN WITH AN OPEN HEART TO WHAT EVERY PERSON SHARES.

THERE IS NO CROSS-TALK OR INTERRUPTION WHEN SOMEONE IS SPEAKING.

TIME LIMITS ARE RESPECTED. THE FACILITATOR WILL PROVIDE A 30 SECOND WARNING AND WILL ALSO LET EACH PERSON KNOW WHEN THE TIME LIMIT IS REACHED. YOU CAN FINISH YOUR THOUGHT WHEN TIME IS CALLED. NO PARTICIPANT IS REQUIRED TO USE ALL OF THEIR ALLOTTED TIME.

CONVERSATIONS ARE CONFIDENTIAL. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SHARING.

ROLE OF FACILITATOR

Guide Accompany a group of 5-7 in a 70-minute Conversation in the Spirit

Welcome Create a welcoming and prayerful space. Establish order of speakers.

Script Follow the script for introduction, three rounds of sharing, and evaluation.

Guidelines Keep the conversation on track using **ground rules.**

Timekeeping Be sure that each participant adheres to the time limits.

Silence Observe times of prayerful silence between rounds.

Note-taking Using note-taking function, scribe open notes during final round only.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACILITATORS

•**OWN Experiences**. The first round is a time to share one's own direct, personal experiences, particularly experiences of the heart and spirit—joys, affirmations, sorrows, challenges. **Everyone is the expert in their own experience.**

•**Listening sessions**. We are listening with attentiveness and openness to others' experiences and stories, and we are allowing these stories to touch our hearts. We are not expected to solve any problems nor defend positions.

•**Sacred spaces.** Participants are invited to enter this space with reverence and to be open to the presence of God in our midst. Participants enter prepared through the Examen and prep reflection. Provide one minute of silence between rounds to listen to interior movements of the heart and spirit.

•**Safe spaces.** Participants should trust that their words will be heard with respect, kept confidential, and not judged nor criticized.

It is **NOT** the place for:

•Debating, defending, or arguing
•Correcting others, feeling obliged to teach others, even if well-intentioned
•Counseling (Facilitators are not trained for this.)

FACILITATOR TIPS

- **Exceeding Time Limits**
- **Interrupting**
- **Non-experiential Inputs**
- **Pastoral Correction**
- **Strong emotion**
- **Upset**
- **Disregarding Ground Rules**

NOTE-TAKING AND REPORTING

Participants are encouraged to take notes to help them reflect

Facilitators take notes on themes and movements, consensus and differences

Facilitators submit report after event – within 24 hours

Report includes:

- Convergences
- Divergences
- Recommendations

Google Form: https://forms.gle/rq7Ny5Sj34b9AnD56

FISHBOWL CONVERSATION

- 20 minute demonstration conversation
- Only 4 participants
- Each Round will only be one minute (Normally 3, 2, 1)
- Imagine yourself as the Facilitator
- Small Group debrief after
- Take notes

CLOSING PRAYER

Father in heaven,
may the *faith* you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of *charity* enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed *hope*
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.
May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.
To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.
Amen.