

PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY DISCERNMENT

Missionary Situation for Reflection

Two Good Options

A Claretian community had been entrusted with opening a new missionary presence in a rapidly growing urban area. After several months of consultation, two possible ministries emerged.

One group believed the community should establish a centre for youth and vocational accompaniment. They saw many young people searching for meaning and believed this ministry would strengthen the Church for the future.

Another group felt that the more urgent need was among migrant families living on the outskirts of the city. They believed the Gospel called the community to be present among those who were poor, displaced, and often forgotten.

Both proposals were rooted in genuine missionary concern. Both reflected the Congregation's charism. Both had practical advantages and limitations. As discussions continued, however, the atmosphere in the community gradually changed. Members became more attached to defending their preferred option than to listening together for the voice of the Holy Spirit. Conversations became debates. Some remained silent to avoid conflict. Others tried to persuade rather than to discern.

The superior decided to pause the discussions. He invited the community to spend several days in prayer, personal reflection, Eucharistic adoration, and spiritual conversation. Instead of asking, "Which ministry do I prefer?" each member was encouraged to ask, "Where is God leading us at this moment?"

During the days that followed, some members recognised that their preferences were influenced by personal interests, previous experiences, or fear of change. Others discovered a growing interior freedom and a deeper peace as they listened carefully to one another. Gradually, the community began to move beyond defending personal opinions toward seeking God's will together. When a decision was finally reached, not everyone had chosen the same option at the beginning, but all were able to support the final decision with peace and unity because they recognised it as the fruit of genuine communal discernment.

Formation Insight

Missionary life constantly presents choices. Some decisions are personal, such as responding to an interior call, embracing a new responsibility, or dealing with personal struggles. Others are communal, involving apostolic priorities, community life, assignments, and mission planning. Often the question is not choosing between good and bad, but discerning which good God is inviting us to embrace here and now.

Authentic discernment is therefore more than careful analysis or seeking consensus. It is a prayerful process of listening to the Holy Spirit with freedom of heart, testing interior movements, and seeking what most faithfully serves God's mission. Personal discernment helps missionaries grow in fidelity to God's call. Community discernment enables the missionary community to discover together how the Spirit is leading them in service of the Gospel.

As missionaries mature in discernment, they learn not only to make better decisions but also to become more attentive to God's presence in everyday life, more free from self-interest, and more available for the mission entrusted to them.

I. From Principles to Practice

Discernment is an essential part of missionary life. Every day, missionaries make choices that affect their relationship with God, their community, and their apostolic mission. Some decisions are

simple and routine; others shape the direction of a vocation, a community, or an entire missionary project.

The previous modules have introduced the foundations of discernment: learning to recognise the movements of the spirit, understanding the dynamics of spiritual consolation and desolation, cultivating interior freedom, and developing an attitude of prayerful listening to God. These principles provide the necessary framework for discerning God's will.

This module moves from understanding discernment to practising it. It explores how discernment is exercised in two closely related settings: personal discernment and community discernment. While personal discernment helps each missionary respond faithfully to God's invitations in daily life, community discernment enables the formation community to seek God's will together when making decisions that affect the common mission.

Discernment is not simply a method for solving problems or reaching agreement. It is a spiritual practice rooted in prayer, attentive listening, honest dialogue, and openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Its purpose is not to defend personal preferences but to discover what God is asking here and now.

For those in formation, learning to discern is as important as learning to pray or to study. It gradually forms a missionary who is capable of making wise decisions, remaining faithful in times of uncertainty, and responding generously to the ever-changing demands of the Gospel. Communities that practise discernment together also grow in trust, communion, and shared responsibility for the mission.

Throughout this module, the emphasis is on practical application. The aim is to develop habits of personal and communal discernment that become part of everyday missionary life, enabling both individuals and communities to seek, recognise, and faithfully accomplish the will of God.

II. Personal Discernment

Personal discernment is the prayerful process of seeking and recognizing God's will in the concrete circumstances of daily life. It is more than choosing between alternatives or solving problems. It is an attitude of listening to the Holy Spirit with a heart that desires to know, love, and follow Christ more faithfully.

For missionaries, personal discernment is not reserved for major life decisions. It is a daily practice that helps them respond to God's invitations in prayer, community life, ministry, relationships, and personal growth. As they become more attentive to God's presence, they gradually learn to distinguish between impulses that lead them closer to Christ and those that draw them away from their vocation and mission.

1. Begin with Prayer and Openness

Every discernment begins with God. Before seeking answers, the missionary first seeks the presence of the One who calls. Prayer creates the interior space where the Holy Spirit can enlighten the mind, purify motivations, and free the heart from undue attachments.

This openness requires humility. Rather than asking God to confirm a preferred choice, the discernor prays for the grace to desire whatever best serves God's will. Such freedom allows the person to move beyond personal ambitions, fears, or expectations.

Questions for reflection:

- Am I sincerely seeking God's will or simply asking God to bless my own plans?
- What attachments or fears may be influencing my decision?
- Have I placed this decision before God in prayer?

2. Attend to the Interior Movements

God ordinarily guides us through the movements of our hearts. As explained in the previous modules, these movements may include peace, joy, hope, courage, attraction, restlessness, anxiety, confusion, or discouragement. Not every feeling comes from God, but every significant movement deserves attentive reflection.

Instead of reacting immediately, the missionary learns to observe these movements patiently. Over time, recurring patterns become clearer, helping to distinguish passing emotions from deeper spiritual guidance.

Questions for reflection:

- What interior movements have I experienced while considering this decision?
- Which movements lead me towards greater faith, hope, love, and generosity?
- Which movements draw me towards fear, self-centredness, or discouragement?

3. Test the Movements

Interior movements should not be accepted uncritically. They need to be tested through prayer, reflection, the Word of God, the teachings of the Church, and, when appropriate, spiritual accompaniment.

The Ignatian Rules for Discernment provide valuable criteria for recognising whether these movements lead towards God or away from Him. Decisions made during times of genuine spiritual peace generally deserve greater confidence than those made under the influence of confusion, fear, or spiritual desolation.

Questions for reflection:

- Does this attraction remain steady over time?
- Is this movement consistent with the Gospel and my missionary vocation?
- Have I sought the guidance of a wise and trustworthy companion?

4. Make the Decision with Trust

Discernment eventually leads to a decision. Waiting indefinitely for absolute certainty often becomes an obstacle rather than a sign of prudence. Once a decision has been prayerfully examined, tested, and confirmed through appropriate means, it should be embraced with confidence and generosity.

Christian discernment seeks moral certainty rather than perfect certainty. The missionary trusts that God continues to guide those who sincerely seek His will, even if every detail is not yet clear.

5. Confirm the Decision through Its Fruits

A discerned decision is not the end of the process. Its fruits should be observed over time. Authentic decisions usually produce greater peace, freedom, generosity, humility, perseverance, and commitment to God's mission. Difficulties may still arise, but they do not destroy the deeper conviction that one is walking in God's will.

If persistent confusion, unrest, or contradiction develops after sufficient time and prayer, it may be necessary to review the discernment with the help of a spiritual guide.

Practical Guidelines for Personal Discernment

When facing an important decision:

- Pray before deciding.
- Seek interior freedom rather than personal advantage.
- Observe your interior movements patiently.
- Test these movements in the light of faith and the Ignatian principles of discernment.
- Seek wise spiritual accompaniment when needed.
- Decide with trust once sufficient clarity has emerged.
- Review the fruits of the decision over time.

Personal discernment is not a technique to guarantee perfect decisions. It is a lifelong way of growing in friendship with Christ, learning to recognise His voice amid the many voices that compete for our attention, and responding each day with greater freedom and fidelity.

III. Community Discernment

Missionary life is lived in community. While every missionary is personally responsible for discerning God's will, many important decisions are made together. Community discernment is the prayerful process by which a community seeks to recognise the guidance of the Holy Spirit in matters that affect its common life and mission.

Community discernment is more than consultation or discussion. It is a shared search for God's will. Its goal is not to defend personal opinions, achieve compromise, or secure a majority vote, but to listen together to the Holy Spirit and respond with one mind and one heart.

1. When is Community Discernment Needed?

Not every community decision requires a formal process of discernment. Routine administrative matters can often be resolved through ordinary consultation. Community discernment becomes particularly important when decisions involve:

- apostolic priorities and missionary planning
- significant changes in community life
- formation policies and practices
- new initiatives or ministries
- major financial or institutional commitments
- situations involving conflict or differing viewpoints
- decisions that affect the long-term mission of the community

The more significant the decision, the greater the need for prayerful discernment.

2. Essential Attitudes for Community Discernment

A fruitful discernment depends not only on the process but also on the dispositions of those who participate.

Members are called to cultivate:

- sincere desire to seek God's will above personal preferences
- interior freedom from attachment to one's own ideas
- attentive listening to God and to one another
- humility to recognise that no individual possesses the whole truth
- honesty in expressing one's convictions
- patience with the discernment process
- trust in the guidance of the Holy Spirit
- willingness to support the final decision once it has been prayerfully discerned

Without these attitudes, community meetings easily become discussions or debates rather than occasions of discernment.

3. A Practical Process for Community Discernment

Although every situation is unique, the following process provides a practical guide.

Step 1: Clarify the Matter to Be Discerned

The community first identifies the question clearly. Members should understand what decision is required, why it is important, and what information is needed.

A poorly defined question often leads to confusion throughout the discernment.

Step 2: Pray Together

Before discussing the issue, the community places the matter before God through prayer, Scripture, silence, or Eucharistic adoration. Prayer reminds everyone that the purpose is not to win an argument but to seek God's will.

Step 3: Listen and Share

Members then share their reflections, not simply their opinions. Each person speaks honestly about the interior movements experienced during prayer and reflection, explaining what has led them towards a particular conviction.

Others listen respectfully without interruption or immediate response. The aim is understanding rather than persuasion.

Step 4: Seek Spiritual Convergence

As the sharing continues, the community begins to notice where the Holy Spirit may be leading. Certain insights may gradually receive wider confirmation, while others lose their force as members continue listening and praying.

The focus is not on counting votes but on recognising the deeper unity that emerges through prayer and dialogue.

Step 5: Reach the Decision

When sufficient clarity has emerged, the competent authority or the community, according to its responsibilities and governing norms, makes the decision.

Even when unanimous agreement is not possible, members are invited to support the decision generously if they recognise that it has been reached through an authentic process of discernment.

Step 6: Review the Fruits

After implementation, the community reflects on the fruits of the decision.

Questions for review include:

- Has this decision brought greater unity?
- Has it strengthened our missionary commitment?
- Are we experiencing deeper peace and freedom?
- Is our service becoming more fruitful?

Reviewing decisions helps communities grow in wisdom and strengthens future discernment.

Case Study: Discerning a New Apostolic Commitment

A Claretian formation community receives an invitation from the local diocese to begin a weekend youth outreach programme in a nearby parish. The opportunity seems promising. Some members believe it would provide valuable pastoral experience and strengthen the community's missionary presence. Others are concerned that it might reduce time for study, prayer, and community life. Rather than making an immediate decision, the superior invites the community to undertake a process of communal discernment.

Step 1 – Clarify the Matter: The first meeting focuses on identifying the real question. The community realises that the issue is not simply whether they like the proposal, but whether God is calling their formation community to undertake this ministry at this particular stage of formation.

Step 2 – Pray Together: For the next several days, each member prays personally with the question. The community also spends time together in Eucharistic adoration and reflects on the Gospel account of Jesus sending out the disciples. They ask for the grace of interior freedom and openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Step 3 – Listen and Share: When the community gathers again, members share not only their opinions but also what they experienced during prayer. One formandus admits that his hesitation comes largely from fear of speaking in public. Another recognises that his enthusiasm is influenced by a desire to prove himself. Others speak of a growing sense of peace about accepting the ministry, provided it does not weaken the primary purpose of formation. Throughout the meeting, members listen respectfully without trying to persuade one another.

Step 4 – Seek Spiritual Convergence: As the conversation continues, the community begins to notice a common direction emerging. While they started from different viewpoints, they gradually recognise a shared conviction that the outreach could enrich formation if it remains properly balanced with prayer, study, and community life. The focus shifts from defending individual preferences to recognising where the Holy Spirit appears to be leading them together.

Step 5 – Reach the Decision: After further prayer and consultation, the superior, having carefully listened to the community, decides that the outreach programme will begin as a six-month pilot project. Clear responsibilities are assigned, and the community agrees to review the experience regularly.

Step 6 – Review the Fruits: Six months later, the community evaluates the decision. Members recognise that the ministry has strengthened fraternity, increased pastoral sensitivity, and deepened their appreciation of missionary service. They also identify practical adjustments needed to maintain a healthy balance between apostolic work and formation. Although not every difficulty has disappeared, the community experiences gratitude and unity because the decision emerged through genuine communal discernment rather than personal preference.

4. Community Discernment Is, and Is Not

Community Discernment Is...	Community Discernment Is Not...
Seeking God's will together	Defending personal opinions
Prayerful listening	A debate or argument
Sharing spiritual insights	Trying to convince others
Openness to the Holy Spirit	Protecting personal interests
Building communion	Forming opposing groups
Faithful obedience to God's call	Simply following the majority

5. Common Obstacles to Community Discernment

Communities should remain attentive to attitudes that weaken discernment, such as:

- attachment to personal preferences
- fear of change or uncertainty
- hidden personal agendas
- rushing important decisions
- dominant personalities preventing others from speaking
- silence caused by fear or insecurity
- confusing personal desires with God's will
- allowing conflicts or past grievances to influence present decisions

Recognising these obstacles honestly helps preserve the spiritual character of discernment.

Formation Note: Communities that regularly practise prayerful discernment gradually develop greater mutual trust, deeper communion, and wiser decision-making. They learn to value listening more than arguing, collaboration more than competition, and God's will more than personal preference. Such communities become credible witnesses that the Holy Spirit continues to guide the Church and her missionary mission today.

IV. Discernment Across the Stages of Formation

The ability to discern develops gradually. It is learned through prayer, accompaniment, reflection on experience, and faithful response to God's invitations. Consequently, the formation of discernment should be adapted to the maturity, responsibilities, and challenges of each stage of formation. While the fundamental principles remain the same, the focus of discernment evolves as the missionary grows in vocation and ministry.

1. Pre-Novitiate: Learning to Recognise God's Presence

At this stage, the primary goal is to help the formandus develop spiritual awareness. Many are only beginning to recognise the relationship between their thoughts, emotions, desires, and their response to God's call.

Formation Focus

- Develop habits of daily personal prayer.
- Foster regular reflection on daily experiences.
- Introduce the practice of the Daily Examen.
- Help recognise basic interior movements such as peace, joy, anxiety, fear, and discouragement.
- Encourage openness and honesty in spiritual accompaniment.

Role of the Formator: The formator patiently helps the formandus become aware of what is happening within him without judging every feeling too quickly. The emphasis is on learning to observe, reflect, and pray rather than making major vocational decisions.

2. Novitiate: Learning the Practice of Discernment

The novitiate is the privileged time for developing a disciplined practice of discernment. Through deeper prayer, the Spiritual Exercises, regular spiritual direction, and community life, the novice gradually learns to distinguish the movements that lead towards God from those that do not.

Formation Focus

- Deepen familiarity with the Ignatian Rules for Discernment.
- Practise discerning the movements experienced during prayer and daily life.
- Develop interior freedom from disordered attachments.
- Learn to make personal decisions through prayer and reflection.
- Grow in openness to spiritual accompaniment.

Role of the Formator: The formator accompanies the novice in interpreting spiritual experiences with patience and prudence. Rather than providing ready-made answers, he helps the novice recognise God's action and develop confidence in discerning with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

3. Post-Novitiate: Integrating Discernment with Mission

As formation increasingly includes study, pastoral ministry, intercultural living, and community responsibilities, discernment becomes more integrated with everyday missionary life.

Formation Focus

- Discern the balance between prayer, study, ministry, and community life.
- Reflect prayerfully on pastoral experiences.
- Learn to discern personal gifts and areas requiring growth.
- Practise communal discernment within the formation community.
- Develop responsible decision-making in ministry.

Role of the Formator: The formator encourages the formandus to reflect critically on experiences rather than merely describing events. He helps integrate intellectual formation, pastoral engagement, and spiritual growth into a unified vocational journey.

4. Preparation for Perpetual Profession and Ordination

As the commitment to lifelong missionary life approaches, discernment becomes more focused and comprehensive. The formandus is called to confirm his vocational commitment with greater maturity and freedom.

Formation Focus

- Deepen personal conviction regarding one's missionary vocation.
- Discern readiness for perpetual commitment.
- Integrate human, spiritual, community, intellectual, and pastoral growth.
- Recognise remaining areas requiring ongoing conversion.
- Confirm missionary availability and openness to the needs of the Congregation.

Role of the Formator: The formator provides honest and objective accompaniment, helping the formandus discern both his strengths and limitations. He encourages responsible freedom while ensuring that discernment is rooted in truth, prayer, and the demands of missionary life.

5. Ongoing Formation: A Lifelong Attitude of Discernment

Discernment does not end with initial formation. Every stage of missionary life presents new situations that require prayerful listening to the Holy Spirit. Changes in ministry, leadership, community assignments, health, and personal circumstances continually invite renewed discernment.

Formation Focus

- Maintain a regular practice of personal prayer and the Daily Examen.
- Continue spiritual accompaniment whenever possible.
- Discern new missionary assignments with generosity and freedom.
- Practise community discernment in local communities and apostolic teams.
- Reflect regularly on the fruits of ministry and personal growth.

Role of the Superior and Ongoing Formation Animators: Those responsible for ongoing formation foster a culture in which discernment becomes a normal part of community life and apostolic planning. They encourage missionaries to remain open to continual conversion, recognising that fidelity to God's call requires ongoing listening throughout life.

Formation Note: Discernment is not mastered in a single course or at one stage of formation. It grows through repeated practice, faithful reflection, and humble openness to the Holy Spirit. Communities that intentionally cultivate discernment at every stage of formation prepare missionaries who are not only capable of making wise decisions but are also attentive to God's presence in the changing realities of mission. In this way, discernment becomes a lifelong habit that sustains missionary fidelity, strengthens community life, and enables generous service to the People of God.

V. Formation Practices

Discernment develops through regular practice rather than occasional reflection. Just as prayer deepens through faithful repetition, the capacity to recognise and respond to God's will grows through daily habits that foster attentiveness to the Holy Spirit. Both the formandus and the formator have important responsibilities in cultivating a culture of discernment within the formation community.

A. Formation Practices for the Formandus

1. Pray Daily for the Grace of Discernment

Begin each day by asking the Holy Spirit for the grace to recognise God's presence and to respond generously to His invitations. End the day with the Daily Examen, reviewing where God was present, how you responded, and where further conversion is needed.

2. Reflect Before Acting

Avoid making important decisions impulsively. Take time to pray, reflect, and examine your motivations before responding to significant situations. Ask not only, "*What do I want?*" but also, "*What is God inviting me to do?*"

3. Pay Attention to Interior Movements

Become familiar with the movements of your heart. Notice what brings lasting peace, freedom, generosity, and hope, and what leads to anxiety, discouragement, resentment, or self-centredness. These movements provide valuable material for prayer and accompaniment.

4. Make Good Use of Spiritual Accompaniment

Approach accompaniment with honesty and openness. Share not only external events but also the interior experiences that accompany them. Be willing to receive guidance and allow yourself to be challenged when necessary.

5. Practise Discernment in Ordinary Life

Discernment is exercised not only when making major decisions but also in daily relationships, studies, pastoral ministry, use of time, digital media, community responsibilities, and personal habits. Fidelity in small choices prepares one for greater responsibilities.

6. Learn from Experience

After making an important decision, review its fruits. Ask yourself:

- Did this decision lead me closer to Christ?
- Has it helped me grow in charity, freedom, and missionary commitment?
- What have I learned that will help me discern more wisely in the future?

Regular reflection transforms experience into wisdom.

B. Formation Practices for the Formator

1. Model a Life of Discernment

Formators teach discernment most effectively by living it. Their openness to prayer, thoughtful decision-making, humble listening, and willingness to seek God's will provide the strongest example for formandi.

2. Create an Environment that Encourages Discernment

Foster a formation climate where prayer, silence, honest dialogue, and reflection are valued. Encourage formandi to ask questions, express their experiences respectfully, and reflect before making important decisions.

3. Teach Through Real Formation Situations

Everyday experiences provide valuable opportunities for learning discernment. Community tensions, pastoral experiences, intercultural living, academic challenges, and personal struggles can all become occasions for guided reflection and growth.

4. Help Formandi Distinguish Different Influences

Assist formandi in recognising the difference between spiritual movements, emotional reactions, psychological needs, cultural influences, and personal preferences. This requires careful listening and prudent accompaniment rather than quick conclusions.

5. Respect Freedom While Offering Guidance

The role of the formator is not to make decisions for the formandus but to accompany him in recognising God's action. Genuine accompaniment encourages responsible freedom rather than dependence.

6. Foster Community Discernment

Whenever appropriate, involve the formation community in prayerful reflection before important community decisions. Help formandi experience that communal discernment is an essential dimension of missionary life and not merely an administrative exercise.

7. Review Decisions with the Formandus

After significant decisions or experiences, invite the formandus to reflect on what has happened. Reviewing the fruits of decisions develops self-awareness, spiritual maturity, and confidence in God's guidance.

Formation Note: Discernment becomes a way of life when it is practised consistently. Formation communities that pray together, reflect together, and make important decisions through prayerful listening gradually develop a culture of discernment. In such communities, members grow in interior freedom, mutual trust, and shared responsibility for the mission. Over time, discernment is no longer seen as a special exercise reserved for major decisions, but as the ordinary way of seeking and accomplishing God's will in everyday missionary life.

VI. Missionary Integration

Discernment lies at the heart of missionary discipleship. Throughout his life, Jesus sought not his own will but the will of the Father, remaining attentive to the Spirit in every circumstance. He listened before acting, prayed before making important decisions, and remained faithful even when the path led to sacrifice. Every Claretian missionary is called to cultivate this same attitude of continual openness to God's guidance.

For missionaries, discernment is not limited to major moments such as vocation, perpetual profession, or new assignments. It is a daily way of living. It shapes how missionaries pray, relate to others, exercise authority, respond to challenges, and carry out their apostolic mission. Through regular discernment, they learn to recognise where the Holy Spirit is leading them and to respond with generosity, freedom, and courage.

Community discernment is equally essential. The Congregation fulfils its mission not through isolated individuals but through communities united in listening to the Word of God and the promptings of the Holy Spirit. When communities discern together with humility, prayer, and mutual trust, their decisions become more than administrative choices; they become shared acts of faith and missionary obedience.

Discernment also calls for continual conversion. It invites missionaries to recognise and surrender personal ambitions, prejudices, fears, and attachments that can obscure God's voice. As they grow in interior freedom, they become more available for the mission, more receptive to the needs of the Church and the world, and more willing to embrace new missionary challenges with hope.

The missionary vocation today unfolds in a rapidly changing world marked by cultural diversity, social transformation, technological advances, and new pastoral realities. These situations often present complex questions without simple answers. Discernment enables missionaries to respond creatively and faithfully, remaining rooted in the Gospel while being attentive to the signs of the times and the needs of God's people.

For Claretian missionaries, discernment is inseparable from the Congregation's missionary charism. Like St. Anthony Mary Claret, they seek to know and accomplish God's will with availability, courage, and apostolic zeal. Personal discernment deepens their fidelity to Christ; community discernment strengthens missionary communion; together they enable the Congregation to respond with creative fidelity to the demands of evangelisation.

Ultimately, discernment is not simply about making good decisions. It is about becoming the kind of missionary who habitually seeks God's will, trusts the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and joyfully places every gift, every decision, and every moment of life at the service of the Kingdom. In this way, discernment becomes a lifelong path of conversion, communion, and missionary fruitfulness.

VII. Reflective Questions

A. Personal Reflection

1. When faced with important decisions, do I first seek God's will through prayer, or do I tend to rely mainly on my own reasoning and preferences?
2. How attentive am I to the interior movements of consolation, desolation, peace, anxiety, hope, or fear? What have these movements taught me about my relationship with God?
3. Are there attachments, fears, ambitions, or personal preferences that make it difficult for me to discern with interior freedom?
4. How faithfully do I practise the Daily Examen or another regular method of reviewing God's presence in my life?
5. When I make important decisions, do I seek appropriate spiritual accompaniment and remain open to honest guidance?
6. Looking back over the past year, which decision has most strengthened my vocation and missionary commitment? What helped me discern well?

B. Reflection for Formators

1. Do I model a life of prayerful discernment through my own attitudes and decisions?
2. How do I help formandi distinguish between spiritual movements, emotional reactions, personal preferences, and psychological influences?
3. Do I encourage responsible freedom, or do I unintentionally make decisions on behalf of the formandi?
4. How effectively do I use everyday formation experiences as opportunities to teach discernment?
5. When accompanying a formandus, do I help him discover God's action in his life, or do I tend to offer solutions too quickly?
6. In what ways can I strengthen the practice of personal and community discernment within the formation programme?

C. Reflection for the Formation Community

1. Do our important community decisions arise from prayerful discernment or mainly from discussion, efficiency, or majority opinion?
2. Does our community create an atmosphere where members can speak honestly, listen respectfully, and seek God's will together?
3. How well do we balance personal responsibility with communal discernment when making decisions?
4. Are there attitudes such as attachment to personal opinions, fear of change, or unresolved conflicts that hinder our discernment?
5. After making important decisions, do we take time to review their fruits and learn from our experience?
6. What concrete step can our community take to strengthen its practice of communal discernment during the coming year?

Invitation to Prayer: Conclude this reflection by spending a few moments in silence before the Lord. Ask for the grace to recognise His voice more clearly, to grow in interior freedom, and to respond with generosity to His invitations. Pray especially for the grace that both you and your community may always seek not personal preferences, but the will of God for the service of the Gospel.

Further Reading

Suggested texts for prayer and reflection:

- 1 Kings 3:5–15 – Solomon asks for a discerning heart.

- Psalm 25 – “Teach me your paths, O Lord.”
- Isaiah 30:19–21 – Listening for the Lord’s guidance.
- Luke 1:26–38 – Mary’s discernment and response.
- Luke 24:13–35 – The disciples on the road to Emmaus.
- John 10:1–18 – The Good Shepherd and his voice.
- Romans 12:1–2 – Discerning the will of God.
- Philippians 1:9–11 – Growing in discernment.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:19–22 – Test everything; hold fast to what is good.