**General Commission Assembly Presentation**

**April-May 2018**

***COMMUNAL REFLECTION and DISCERNMENT***

***…from “I” to “WE”***

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**Communal Reflection and Discernment: a movement from the “I” to the “WE” in service of the *greater good of the whole***

***“A prophetic call never happens in isolation; it happens within the context of a particular community, a particular culture, a church culture, a societal culture. Coming home to the honing and conversion in this process must be contextualized within all these cultures.”***

Janet Malone, CND “Prophets in Religious Life”

Human Development

**Communal discernment presupposes before all else that those who will engage in it have experienced the discernment of spirits within themselves. That is, each individual must have engaged in a process of contemplative prayer…”**

William Barry, SJ, “Communal Discernment As A Way To Reconciliation,”

Human Development Fall 2008

**Dimensions of Communal Reflection & Discernment**

* Process is deeply spiritual, assumes that each person commits to personal prayer and reflection, to prayerful consideration of all issues and decisions.
* Process assumes a commitment to the integrity of the dialogue; as far as possible, each person speaks her truth directly to the others.
* Process of speaking the truth in love.
* All have a voice. There is space and welcome for each person’s insights and inspirations in a contemplatively paced process.
* It is peaceful, respectful, but not necessarily easy; participants make a commitment to participate in the dialogue.

The Communal Reflection Process is **transparent** with all participants present as **equals** and, if members are discerning, all have equal access to all information needed to make the best decisions together. It **unites** rather than divides.

* Each participant is being invited to be **open to diverse voices**, is being called to **suspend judgment** in order to hear more deeply.
* The dialogue format is more concerned about listening than speaking, and is committed to contributing to a **shared future**.
* This contemplative process enables persons in a dialogue to **speak honestly** about their **own insights, feelings and needs** rather than about **what is wrong with the insights, feelings and the needs of others**. This can open up new avenues for sharing in a compassionate way.

**Communal Reflection Process**

* Rooted in communal prayer and faith sharing:

Scripture, Commentary on Scripture,

Readings from documents that are meaningful to a specific group,

Readings from significant wisdom figures, living and deceased.

* Atmosphere of reverent quiet and silence.
* Focused questions for the group:

How am I coming to this process today?

What are my feelings?

How are these readings speaking to me today? To us?

What wisdom and insight am I, are we receiving?

**COMMUNAL REFLECTION PROCESS**   
***Movement from the   
“I” to the “We”   
In the service of the greater good of the whole.***