

## Checklist: Steps in Discernment in Common

I feel pretty good about the way we make decisions in our Catholic parish/diocese/organization. True or False? And why is that so? Pope Francis is calling for the Church to become synodal in its character, in its mindset, in its approaches and practices. One of the areas this influences is how we make decisions for the entire group. Who is involved and what steps do we take?

Want to know if you are even partially practicing the synodal action of discernment in common?

Check out these steps and ask yourself if this is HOW you make the decisions that affect the whole parish/diocese/organization?

### **1. Do we prepare the group?**

- a. Do we clarify the question or issue to be discussed?
- b. Do we father the key stakeholders (those who will most directly be influenced by our decision) and give them a quick formation on this process?
- c. Do we establish the group expectations and objectives for the process?
- d. Do we clarify who is going to make the final decision: the group or a single person?

### **2. Do we gather all the “data”/input we need to consider?**

- a. Do we have all the facts and figures we need? Do we have the input of experts in this area? Do we have viewpoints, feedback, suggestions and emotional responses of those most affected? Have we heard from the voices on the margins? Have we listened with our heart?
- b. Do we carry out analysis and reflection on the data we have assembled? Do we look at implications, surprising points, recurrent themes etc. Do we need additional information?
- c. Have we prepared a summary of the key information to share with a larger group? Are we allowing enough time to reflect and pray with this summary? Do we provide clarification and guiding points for prayer and specific questions to pray about? Do we spend adequate time in personal prayer around the discernment issue and process?

### **3. Do we have discussions and do we make provisional decisions?**

- a. Do we gather and share the fruits of our prayer?
- b. Do we look at each option, comparing the disadvantages to the objective/point we are trying to address?
- c. Do we make space in this process for more personal prayer?
- d. Do we seek the emerging consensus?
- e. Do we allow time for confirmation of the provisional decision?

### **4. Do we feel confident in making a final decision based upon a decision proposal?** Are we ready to do the will of God, indifferent to any other influences? Is the competent decision-maker in agreement with this?

- a. Are we ready to consider implementation of the decision. What are the specific actions that need to be taken by whom, in what order, and by when? What is the plan?
- b. Do we leave time to evaluate the decision after some significant actions have taken place? Does our evaluation include not just external outcomes but also reviews inner goals such as commitment, hope, endurance, solidarity?