

HORIZONS

A means of communication between the World Leadership Community in discernment and every member of CVX-CLC.



Discerning Together: A Gift for the Church Today

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CVX-CLC Global Formation Team

Call to Implement Synodality

Inspired by Pope Francis, the Church is experiencing a profound call to implement synodality. Through the Synod on Synodality, Francis invited the Church to rediscover itself as the People of God walking together, listening together, and learning to discern together the voice of the Spirit. Synodality is a true spiritual and ecclesial conversion: moving from a Church where only a few speak and decide to our origins as a Church where the entire People of God actively participate in prayer, listening, spiritual conversation and mission.

Ignite the Way Conference

In November 2025, CVX-CLC members Robert Choiniere (CLC in USA), Ivette Caceres (CVX in the Dominican Republic), Catherine Kelly (World CVX-CLC Executive Council, CLC in Canada), World CVX-CLC Vice Ecclesial Assistant, Fr. Jose de Pablo, SJ, and Blessing Imumoren (CLC in Nigeria) participated in the Ignite the Way conference in Salamanca, Spain.



Conference participants included Jesuits, ESDAC¹ members, Discerning Leadership², and other religious and lay people involved in facilitating communal discernment and training people to become facilitators. Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ challenged each continental region to leave the conference with a plan to train people to facilitate communal discernment as our gift to the Church as it implements synodality.

Spiritual Conversation and Communal Discernment – Way of Proceeding for CLC

CVX-CLC is uniquely positioned to serve the Church and the world in this way. Spiritual conversation and communal discernment are an essential part of our way of proceeding. Some of our members and national communities are already experienced in engaging communal discernment as a way of proceeding, as a way of discerning decisions about mission, structure and sustainability, and as way of forming community. Within our worldwide community, we can share this gift, guiding others to learn how to engage in and facilitate spiritual conversation and how to facilitate communal discernment.

True synodality requires learning to discern together: recognizing and responding to the action and invitation of the Spirit amid the diversity of voices, experiences, and sensitivities. In our fast-paced and polarized world, the Church is calling us to recover spaces of deep listening, shared prayer, and common searching for God's will.

¹ Spiritual Exercises for Apostolic Discernment in Common. An abbreviation of the French Exercices Spirituels pour un Discernement Apostolique en Commun

² <https://discerningleadership.org/>



History of Synodality

The early Christian church modeled synodality in the Acts of the Apostles 15 where the community faced complex questions regarding the inclusion of Gentiles in the Christian community. “The whole assembly fell silent” (Acts 15:12) as they listened to testimonies, prayed, and searched together for God’s will. The Council of Jerusalem concluded with a guiding statement for the Church: “It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and to us...” (Acts 15:28). From the beginning, the Church understood that certain decisions can be made only when the community is open to the action of the Spirit.

Discernment continued to involve within the Church through different spiritual traditions. Eventually, St. Ignatius of Loyola and the early Jesuit companions expanded the practice of discernment from the individual sphere to the communal one. In Venice, the first Jesuit companions began making important communal decisions through shared prayer, mutual listening, and the common recognition of the movements of the Spirit. This way of proceeding deeply marked Ignatian spirituality and today appears providentially aligned with the Church’s call to live synodality.

Invitation to Offer the Gift of Communal Discernment to Serve the Church

As part of the Ignatian family and as Christian Life Community, we sense the Spirit inviting us to place this gift of communal discernment at the service of the Church. Over many years, CLC communities around the world have received the grace of practicing communal discernment within community meetings, apostolic processes, assemblies, formation programs, and shared mission spaces. One of the most important ways through which we have experienced this grace has been spiritual conversation.

Spiritual Conversation

Spiritual conversation has become a key tool in many ecclesial and Ignatian processes, including CLC assemblies in Buenos Aires and Amiens, where listening together to the Spirit and forming a greater sense of being one body became as important as the decisions themselves. Spiritual conversation creates a space where people can truly encounter one another in God and where the Spirit can speak and be heard.

Spiritual conversation begins in prayer with inner listening. Each person shares what he or she has recognized within the heart: consolations, concerns, lights, or calls. The others listen attentively, not to prepare responses, but to welcome what the Spirit might be saying through that experience. Silence plays a fundamental role. After listening, the community holds space to recognize which words, feelings, or intuitions resonated most deeply.

In a second round, participants share what emerged through listening to others. Little by little, convergences, common movements, and calls begin to appear — paths that the community gradually recognizes as possible invitations from the Spirit. In this way, communal discernment becomes a shared experience of seeking God’s will.

This practice requires time, humility, and trust. It means accepting that clarity does not always come immediately and that the Spirit often works through processes. It also requires vulnerability: recognizing that we need one another to listen more deeply to God.



CLC Testimonies of Communal Discernment

French Canada

This way of discerning has enabled communities to go through difficult situations with surprising depth and peace. Marie-Gabrielle Vallet from CVX in Canada recently shared her experience accompanying the general assembly of a religious community that had to face decisions related to closing its ministries, selling the motherhouse, and transmitting its charism. To allow the older sisters to participate, the process was organized into several meetings and moments of prayer. The phase of proposals and elections was structured as a communal discernment process accompanied by spiritual facilitators.

Although the sisters were experiencing many losses and farewells, they maintained a deep concern for one another and sought to ensure that everyone could participate according to her abilities. Marie-Gabrielle testified that she became a privileged witness to the lucidity, courage, and mutual affection that animated the community and enabled them to make difficult decisions together. The greatest consolation came precisely from the profound sense of community they experienced during the discernment process. Even amid fragility and the closing of an important chapter, they were able to discover that the Spirit continued to act among them.

Lesotho

For World CLC Day of Prayer, Makoala Marake described CLC in Lesotho engaging in communal discernment at several levels: individual family reflection, local group discernment, and eventually a gathering of the two regional communities of Lesotho to pray and reflect together on family realities and shared experiences. Throughout the process, they practiced personal reflection, spiritual conversation, and other discernment tools while intentionally avoiding rushing decisions or forcing conclusions.

Makoala also shared how CLC engages communal discernment to accompany married couples and introduce Ignatian discernment to Marriage Encounter communities in Lesotho. Practices such as the daily examen, personal reflection, spiritual conversation, and the “sympathy walk” have created possibilities for bringing communal discernment into many forms of community life and group dynamics.

For more stories on how CLC communities are engaging and promoting communal discernment, click here: <https://cvx-clc.net/en/formation/formation-spirituality/>

Communal Discernment Applications and Graces

Communal discernment is not reserved for formal decision-making structures or major ecclesial assemblies. It can become a way of living relationships, mission, leadership, and accompaniment. Discernment helps communities become capable of listening together to God. The Church’s synodal journey cannot advance without communities capable of discerning together.

Yet spiritual conversation, communal discernment and synodality may be new to many people and places. We sense an invitation for CLC to promote communal discernment and synodality as a deeper way of being Church: it is a spiritual path of conversion, listening, and communion.



Invitation to CLC

CLC can create spaces where people can truly listen to one another, pray together, and seek God's will communally. We are encouraged to move beyond our own groups and approach parishes, pastoral teams, religious communities, movements, and apostolic works. We seek to collaborate humbly with other people of goodwill and with the synodal process that continues throughout the Church. We desire to walk alongside others, sharing an experience that we ourselves continue learning to live.

Perhaps the Spirit is inviting us to become facilitators and companions for broader ecclesial processes. Perhaps our vocation today as Ignatian lay people is to help others discover how to listen to God together.

Reflection questions:

Where do we feel the Spirit inviting us to share communal discernment beyond CLC? Which parishes, communities, pastoral spaces or other places need processes of listening and discernment? How can we concretely collaborate with the synodal journey of our local churches? Where are we already forming facilitators for communal discernment? With whom are we collaborating?

We invite you to share your responses via this link: [Discerning Together: A Gift for the Church Today](#)

Communal discernment is a path of hope, reminding us that God continues speaking, the Spirit continues guiding God's people, and mutual listening and seeking God's will can renew the Church. Look for the Global Formation Team's online formation sessions on Communal Discernment in November 2026.

Today more than ever, we are called to be communities that listen, discern, and walk together and communities that help others discover this path.

Let's continue walking together. The Spirit is already ahead of us.

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