

METHOD – CONVERSATION IN THE SPIRIT (CnS)

In its etymological sense, the term "conversation" does not denote a generic exchange of ideas but a dynamic in which the spoken and heard words generate familiarity, allowing participants to draw closer to one another. The specification "in the Spirit" identifies the authentic protagonist: the desire of those conversing tends to hear his voice... Gradually, the conversation between brothers and sisters in faith opens the space for a "listening together," that is, a shared listening to the voice of the Spirit. (Synod I 2023, #33)

This spiritual practice allows us to move from the "I" to the "we": it does not lose sight of or erase the personal dimension of the "I," but recognises it and inserts it into the community dimension. In its concrete reality, conversation in the Spirit can be described as a shared prayer aimed at communal discernment, for which participants prepare through personal reflection and meditation. They offer each other a word that is meditated upon and nourished by prayer, not an opinion improvised on the spur of the moment. (Summary Report of the 2023 Synod, #35.37)

The word "conversation" expresses more than a simple dialogue: it intertwines thought and feeling, creating a shared living space. For this reason, we can say that conversion is at stake in conversation. It is an anthropological reality present in different peoples and cultures, who come together in solidarity to address and decide vital issues for the community. Grace brings this human experience to fulfilment. Conversing "in the Spirit" means living the experience of sharing in the light of faith and in the search for God's will, in an evangelical climate where the unmistakable voice of the Holy Spirit can be heard. (Final Document of the 2024 Synod, #45)

Preparation

Prepare for the CnS by dedicating time to silent reflection and prayer, while meditating on the key question proposed for the CnS. At this stage, we are intentional about moving beyond a purely intellectual response to the question; rather, we invite the Spirit to guide our response, allowing it to mature internally. It is helpful to write down what you intend to share, at least the main points.

Introduction

As a group, appoint a facilitator whose role is to ensure that:

- (i) each person has the opportunity to speak and
- (ii) all speakers respect the allotted time.

It is also helpful, at the beginning, to appoint a group secretary whose task is to record the outcome of the third round of sharing, that is, the fruit of the group's dialogue that you wish to share with the entire assembly.

The Role of the Facilitator

- Open the CnS with a short prayer
- Explain the task assigned to each round and invite a volunteer to begin sharing. Once one person begins, the others follow clockwise, to the left.
- Use your mobile phone to manage the time for each speaker. It's helpful to set a sound signal to alert you when the time is up (2 or 3 minutes, as indicated).
- Ensure each person's allotted time is respected.
- Alert the speaker when 30 seconds remain (a coloured card may be helpful).
- Ensure silence between speakers.
- Ensure 1–2 minutes of silence after the first and second rounds.
- Ask a "group representative/secretary" to record the group's contribution during the third round.
- Invite someone to conclude with a prayer of thanks at the end of the sharing.