



## CONVERSATION AND CONSULTATION, FALL 2022

### Spiritual Conversation Participant Guide Jesuit Communities

#### Background

In his letter of July 28, 2022 initiating an apostolic planning process for the Jesuits West Province, Fr. Sean Carroll, S.J., provincial, invited Jesuits and Partners in Mission to stop, look around and notice the ways that God is present and at work in our ministries, and to consider the ways God continues to call us and guide us in our work. By doing so, he suggested, we are looking into God's heart to discern where we are being invited to go. It is this invitation that is at the very heart of our apostolic planning.

This fall the province is inviting Jesuits and colleagues to engage in this kind of reflection and discernment in conversation with one another. Throughout the province - in Jesuit communities, in apostolic works sponsored by or affiliated with the province, and among women and men who share a commitment to the mission of the Society of Jesus – conversation groups are being convened to reflect on God's presence and call in ways that will inform and shape the apostolic planning process.

Participation in a conversation group will involve the following:

- Pre-meeting personal reflection on the topic for conversation
- Participation in a facilitated 60-75 minute small group conversation with colleagues
- An opportunity for participation in a second small group conversation in early 2023

A report summarizing the principal themes of your conversation will be prepared by a group member and submitted to the apostolic planning steering committee. These reports will also be compiled and posted online (without attribution and with controlled access) for review and further reflection by Jesuits and colleagues. The Committee will process these reports in January 2023, and will use this information to recommend the next steps in the planning.

#### Preparation

In the days prior to your small group conversation, please set aside some quiet time for reflection. Specifically:

1. Read and reflect upon Sean Carroll's letter of July 28, 2022 that accompanies this guide, noting any thoughts or questions that come to mind as you do so.
2. Then turn your attention and imagination to your own ministry, and the people with and for whom you minister, focusing especially on those times when you have experienced or witnessed joy, hope and consolation in the ministry. Then reflect on these questions:
  - a. Where and in what ways do I see the Spirit present and moving in my ministry, and among the people with and for whom I minister?
  - b. How do I hear the Spirit calling our Province to Minister to the People of God: what opportunities might the Spirit be inviting us to pursue; what future do I imagine and desire for the Province and its ministries?
  - c. What obstacles might we face in pursuing this future, and how might we face these obstacles?

3. Either during or following this reflection, you may wish to jot down some notes on your responses. These will be helpful as you consider what from your reflection you would like to share with others.
4. Finally, in his letter, the provincial calls this a “pivotal moment” for discerning the apostolic future of the province. As you prepare for your sharing, it might be helpful if you to consider what, if anything, you consider “pivotal” about this moment.

### Small Group Conversation

Your small group conversation will be facilitated by a member of your community, and will follow this format:

#### 1. Opening Reflection and Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people.  
And kindle in them the fire of your love.  
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.  
And you will renew the face of the earth. Amen.

#### 2. Check-in

3. **Sharing I:** Each group member is invited to share what they wish from the fruits of their preparatory reflection. While one member is sharing, others listen attentively, noting what they are hearing and feeling, and withholding any response to the sharing.

4. **Sharing II:** Each group member is invited to share their experience of listening to others:

- a. What did I hear?
- b. Was I struck by any common themes?
- c. Is there something I expected to hear, but did not?
- d. Was I especially moved or touched by something someone said?
- e. Where did I experience harmony or resonance with others as they shared? Where did I experience dissonance?
- f. Did any insights occur to me?

5. **Review:** Group members are invited to look back on the whole conversation and note the principal themes of the sharing, paying attention especially to areas of strong convergence, and any notable differences in perspective. The group might then ask: what movements of the Spirit did we experience or recognize?

### Follow-Up

1. Your group recorder will write a summary report on your meeting, drawing from the conclusions reached during the **Review** of the meeting. You will receive a copy of this report. The report will be sent, as well, to the steering committee, and posted online (without attribution and with controlled access), along with reports from other conversations, for review and further reflection.
2. After having reflected on your conversation and read your group report, you may wish to make additional comments about meeting. You may do so by accessing the comment form at: [Spiritual Conversation - Participant Feedback Form](#)
3. You will also be invited to participate in a follow-up conversation in your Jesuit community in early 2023 to review and reflect upon the steering committee’s processing these fall conversations.