



We build DISCERNING. Clues for a life in discerned MISSION

Index:

1. A shared responsibility: MAKING MUSIC TOGETHER
2. Some previous ones:
 - a. BE ATTENTIVE, slow down to listen
 - b. LOOK AS GOD LOOKS
 - i. Brief prayer of contemplation of personal reality from the contemplation of the Incarnation of SP.Ex.
3. A way of listening from the depths: IGNATIAN DISCERNMENT
 - . BEING PEOPLE OF DESIRE
 - a. LEARNING TO RECOGNIZE THE SPIRITS. Train and promote interiority (recognize the spirits; one to receive it and the other to reject it"), sharing general brushstrokes of Ignatian discernment.
 - b. DISCERNING TOGETHER. To discern as a person, and Centered, with a Mission that is dear and accepted.
4. Learning from Claudine. DISCERN IN HER FOOTSTEPS

1. A shared responsibility. MAKE MUSIC TOGETHER.

We were asked to share this afternoon something about Ignatian discernment... A tool with a long tradition in Jesus-Mary, not always known, which invites us to take another step in our way of being and doing. A step not only forward but inward, deeper. We are invited to **live the mission together by listening deeply to what God wants from us.**

Symphony orchestra came to mind. An orchestra is a group of people who make music together to beautify the world. For this they need to listen and be heard. And this metaphor helps us to highlight some ideas that seem important to us:

- We too are a group of people, each one an expert in the instrument we know to play - different vocations, missions, calls and sensitivities - all of them necessary and important, but today the world and the Church asks us to be an orchestra, to make music together. The African proverb says that *"To educate a child, the entire tribe is needed."*

In the GCE, the Pope invites us to *" look for fellow travelers on the path of education."* What is being asked of us is not great new methodologies...; we are invited to go together. To agree on what the next stage will be and where we want to go. Going together as a methodology, aware that boys and girls learn what they see.





- We are invited **to a pact for education**. To agree, two or more people are needed who decide to commit themselves to a common cause, where each instrument is essential, and none threatens the identity of the other, but rather their music completes the harmony. It is not better to be a violin than a trumpet, they are just different. They listen to each other and no one gives up their score but they know they are part of a whole. Respecting, welcoming and valuing diversity is the first condition for the pact. Hopefully those who attend the concert know how to recognize each sound, each vocation and mission and arouse the desire to find their own.
- To make music together **we need to listen and listen to each other**. Listening to oneself, distinguishing what is out of tune or sounds shrill, and listening to each other to be able to harmonize the melody... to be able to play from the heart and from the gift that God has placed in each one.
- And we do it because today the world needs our melody - **our way of educating in Claudine's style** - to beautify it and make it a more humane, fairer and more fraternal place. It's good to remind ourselves from time to time, as an institution, the meaning for which we were created, the music that binds us as a family. The Sp. Ex. of St. Ignatius, begins with the **Principle and Foundation**. We are invited to recognize from the beginning the end for which we have been created, which gives us the deepest roots. We have not been thrown into this "Solar orbit" but created with a genuine and shared "for" that identifies us. And that implies discovering what we are still called to today. Hopefully we know how to find in discernment, the tool that invites us to listen, to recognize what God continues to encourage in us - *praise him* -, to welcome him - *revere him* - and to implement all those daily decisions that make God's dream come true - *serve him* -.

1. Some points:

From the awareness of this responsibility and the shared desire to make music together in the style of Claudine, we are going to give some points on Ignatian discernment as a tool that helps us to continue listening to what God wants from us today. We start from two previous ones that seem important to us...

- a. **PAY ATTENTION, lower the volume to listen.**

"Patience, it will come; castles are not built in a day"





Discerning implies lowering the volume... If you walk up the mountain shouting in a conversation, you cannot hear the sound of the wind, nor the birds, nor the murmur of the water in the distance... And we "go shouting through our daily mountains" ... We need to listen to be aware of what is happening within us and around us... We are in a fast pace of life, but our processes are slow and need to be listened to. The time we live in is not exactly slow and it is not easy to sit down to listen and contemplate processes, rather the rhythm drags us and takes us at a speed that any day passes us by...

Pope Francis reminds us, even though we know it, that today's world is in continuous transformation and we are living through a change of era, a cultural and anthropological metamorphosis.

Everything is too fast - and although the pandemic seemed to want to tell us not to run so much, to stay at home and rediscover what we carry inside - it turns out that it did not work because we set our pace and invented the multiple connections and resources. We had never stopped so abruptly before and yet, the materials, connections, invitations and hobbies managed to enter our house and get us back into a dizzying rhythm (I don't know about you, but I lived a real stress situation because I didn't have time to look at everything that came daily). We were at home, but not within us.

With the parenthesis of the pandemic closed, the truth is that speed and discernment are contradictory and impossible to reconcile. It is like going through a beautiful landscape but doing it in a racing car... It is impossible to see the sprouts, the small beings that inhabit the landscape, listen to the sounds of nature or perceive the nuances of the colors... they are incompatible activities.

We are facing a new paradigm in history but we do not have time to know what it demands of us and how we want to live it. Everything is too fast and that involves our personal lives. Every day we work at the touch of the agenda, of emergencies and although it is true that things have to move forward, too often they impose their rhythm on us and we lose control over our own lives, as well as imposing it on others... everything is for yesterday and we have to lead two lives, the real one and the digital one. The one we live in and the one that needs our response on our mobile or our computer. Emergencies make you decide at a rhythm that is not that of the heart, that is not the rhythm of nature or the rhythm of God.

This speed also affects education. As educators we have to train and change at an accelerated pace in order to provide children and young people not only with knowledge but also with skills, strategies and competencies that allow them to adapt, face and improve the current world and the one they will live in the long run, his life, a world we don't know what it will be like because it advances at an exponential rate. What happens is that forging identity and psychological structure require a natural slowness typical of biological evolution. And it's not that what's coming isn't good, I'm sure it is, but it has something unnatural and we have to think of ways to deal with it so that it is an evolution in favor of human beings and not against them.





We need to pause from time to time, listen to ourselves and listen to the God who shows himself slow and paces himself to the rhythm in which we can understand him. How to play an instrument, which takes time, rehearsal, listening... and we intend to learn it in an express tutorial.

Nature also teaches us a lot... The bamboo tree is the fastest growing tree that exists, but if you plant one in the garden of your house, you can already wait months and months without seeing results. Bamboo spends the first 7 years of its life growing inwards, during which time only the root grows. But after 7 years a plant begins to glimpse that will grow every day at a dizzying rate.

It always helps me to think of Claudine because the texts say that she "handled the needle skillfully" and to do something skillfully is to spend many hours doing it. Knitting is something serene, which cannot be done in the midst of the hustle and bustle, it requires concentration and I imagine her absorbed, letting what she had inside come out while she dedicated herself to that manual activity that also relieved her tension and her continuous shaking of the head... Sometimes I think it would be good to make the art of weaving compulsory in our centers to slow down the rhythm of the boys and girls, and us.

Education can and should adapt its times to the natural rhythm of learning, of nature...

A rhythm that helps us to be more attentive to the processes than to the results. To remember that understanding is something slow and is opposed to a mercantilist conception of learning where much and fast are synonymous with better but it is superficial and ephemeral. Doing things in a more leisurely and natural way is remembering that the person is at the center and giving them the time they need to be, to grow, to discover, to learn...

Doing things slower has its benefits: accepting and accepting personal rhythm, favors dialogue and sincere communication, awakens creativity, favors reflection and debate that makes what we learn permeate, improves participation, concentration and helps us to be less dispersed, it helps to contemplate nature and its processes... It favors discernment. As teams, we have to help each other to slow down, to go to what is essential, to not want to do more things than we can, to choose, to delegate... to be able to see, contemplate and thus row out into the deep, towards what is essential, toward what God wants.

If slowing down and volume is a prior to discern... the other is to suspend our judgments and dare to look as God looks.

b. LOOK AS GOD LOOKS. The contemplation of the Incarnation.

In the Sp. Ex, Saint Ignatius proposes **contemplating the Incarnation** to help us understand how God invests in humanity and becomes one of us to share what we are. St. Ignatius presents us with three scenarios that have only one intention: to save the world, humanity, each person and not condemn them.





- A first scenario: The world with its diversity of races and people. Some at peace and others at war, some crying and others laughing, some healthy, others sick, some being born and others dying.
- Another scenario where the three divine persons contemplate the world and discover all that chaos that hurts them, makes them move and in which they decide to intervene. They determine that it is the Son who enters the world to save it.
- A third scenario that makes us zoom in because "this intervention" occurs in a small and unknown corner of that humanity. In a house in Nazareth, in a dialogue between Mary -a frightened girl- and an angel who invites her not to be afraid and to trust and welcome the God who is salvation into her womb.

Ignatius invites us to contemplate the scene: see the people, hear what they say, watch what they do. He also invites us to enter the scene and watch how He looks at her, remembering his intention to save and not to condemn.

We are going to do a brief exercise of contemplation of the reality that each one of us inhabits on a daily basis, the place of our life and mission...

***serene music.** Sometimes we need to isolate ourselves, go to a chapel or to nature to feel that we connect with the God of Life, we also need to have time, in the midst of busy schedules... It's okay when those moments come but to discern but it is not something reserved only for spaces or moments of life, Ignatian discernment is in everyday life... God is found in silence, but you have to learn to "listen" to him in the midst of the noise and hustle and bustle of life because there he is speaking and living. God lives in the noise, in the classroom, on the subway or the bus, in the middle of the street, in everyday life... also in a hotel room with 200 people.*

(We invite you to calm down, to close your eyes, to take a deep breath, to feel God in our midst looking at us and looking at the reality that each one of us carries in our hearts)

We invite you to bring your daily reality to heart: people, spaces that you inhabit and in which you develop daily, those in which you leave your life and that excite you and wear you out in equal parts... Go asking simple questions:

- *What is the reality that I live in, that people live? What do they say, what do they do?*
- *How is my presence there, my look and words are they of salvation or judgment?*
- *I now allow God to stand by my side and invite me to look as He does.*
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Then we can make a whisper with 1-2 closest people.

To discern is to listen and it is to look. It is living our mission looking at reality as God looks at it, from the desire to save it and not to judge it. Reality is complex, we already know it and there are thousands of analyzes and doomsayers of reality that show it to us every day, but God invites us to take another look...





God's gaze on the world, on each one of us, is always one of appreciation, of abundance, of LIFE. There is no room for judgment, there is only room for the invitation to grow. His way invites us to discover that "changing the way of looking at things changes the things that are looked at". And today we are invited as people, as teams, as an organization to have a look of appreciation, to see the good in reality, in the world, in ourselves. To look at ourselves not as a problem but as a miracle. How God looks at us.

In 1982, researchers at the University of Wisconsin conducted a study of the learning process. They videotaped the game of the two teams. Team A was asked to analyze the mistakes made. Team B was asked to analyze only the hits. Both teams played again and got better. But team B doubled its score compared to team A.

We have inherited the Ignatian practice of "examination of conscience", we analyze our lives and become aware of how we live. But often we analyze the mistakes more than the successes. We think about what we have done wrong, we repeat how little progress we have made. Our plans as a team and institution also tend to start with problems. This is how we look at society, education and our mission: we ask ourselves about the deficiencies, we try to diagnose why and then we offer our solution and the way to implement it. The result is usually more of the same! We put the focus of attention on the problems. We assume that it is in our hands to fix everything and that every problem has its solution. Sometimes we think that our educational mission is to solve the problems of children, youth, families and we believe that we are the solution. We focus on what we lack...

The Ignatian exam is to look at ourselves as God looks at us and give thanks for what we receive each day. It is taking distance and looking at ourselves from it. It is looking at where we come from and where we want to walk with sense and from personal freedom. It is asking for light to discover God walking by our side and acting in our life. It is not only looking at the what of what we are or do, but also the how. And it also implies discovering what we move away from and lock up. It is becoming aware that God invites us into life and asking him for the strength to walk through it with meaning.

To discern is to discover the source of life of each thing, person or situation and to discover God beating in the midst of it. It is lighting life within a reality that already has a lot of life. We know that when we look at someone with tenderness and trust, that person improves, improves their ability to collaborate and change.

Claudine has that ability to see possibilities where others see limits. When little Duchaux arrives home, she is 12 years old and has a behavior that reveals her lack of values and training. From the first day, Claudine saw the limitations and knew that there was a lot to do, but she knew that "she will be a good girl" and that "she could even be the comfort of her mother".

It is necessary to change our gaze: from a contemptuous one –towards what is or works badly-, to an appreciative one –towards what is and works well. And that look creates in us the desire to be better and multiplies our dreams and projects. In the words of David Cooperrider: "Our world is not a problem to be solved, but a miracle to be embraced."

When we embrace the miracle of who we are and appreciate it, we open ourselves to dialogue, to collaboration... Good news is needed. When an organization has experienced its limitations and its incapacity, it does not need to blame itself, nor prophets of misfortune to announce its end.





It needs the consolation that comes from the Spirit, to be embraced as a miracle, to hear that she has regenerative capacity, based on relationships, abilities, strength and possibilities. Together we can discover new opportunities and possibilities, create innovations, think differently, transform our systems. This is how we generate “meaning”. One was asked: "How would you define a good leader?" He replied: “very simple. The task of a leader is to create such a readjustment of forces that the weakness of the people becomes irrelevant.

To see as God sees, we need to live so that the center is the heart (*in the Hebrew sense the corporeal and the spiritual are a unit, the center of the person where God is found*)

All our actions or reactions in life are a mode of response to external stimuli. It depends on where it hits within us, we respond in one way or another :

- Sometimes we receive an external impact that remains in the sphere **of senses** and we react from there: spontaneously and quickly. It is an automatic response, not thought. So our looks and responses are primary, not very reflective, immature...
- Other times, we let it pass to another inner area, **intelligence**. We analyzed it and came up with a thoughtful response. Then we are excessively rational, we lack spontaneity and we are even cold.
- Sometimes, the stimulus reaches the **affections**. Our response is charged with feelings and we respond in an affective, sensitive, changing or unpredictable way...
- It will help us learn to go through the previous levels, so that the impact reaches the center of our being, the **heart** , and that is where the answer is elaborated. Those are our mature, discerned, pacified responses. Ignacio qualifies her as a person "owner or lady of herself" (EE 216)

In short, we are a complex unit and, although this way of cataloging is imperfect and simplifying, it helps us to understand something important: that we can look at the world and at people from within, with a look of appreciation that moves us or is blocked in some way. of the other spheres of the Self – of sensitivity, intelligence or affectivity-. And therefore, going out to reality from one of those levels or from the center.

The difference lies in our ability to discern and realize... reality is already inhabited and God is there working... [Sp. Ex 234-237] and it is, in that reality, where we are invited to recognize his presence.





3. A way of listening from the depths: IGNATIAN DISCERNMENT

- a. **BEING PEOPLE OF DESIRE**
- b. **LEARNING TO RECOGNIZE THE SPIRITS.** Train and promote interiority (recognize the spirits; one to receive it and the other to reject it"), sharing general points of Ignatian discernment.
- c. **DISCERNING TOGETHER.** To discern is to be a person, and Centered, with a dear Mission that is dear and accepted.

4. Learning from Claudine. DISCERN IN HER FOOTSTEPS

If we are gathered here today and we are family, it is because a woman unites us. We do not know if she was clearly aware of applying discernment, but contemplating moments and aspects of her life, they serve as an example for us to learn to live a discerned mission.

- To discern, it is essential that **there be a subject** (SP.EX. 18)

That is to say, that there is awareness of oneself, meaning, root... and a certain experience to understand the language of life. From the beginning of her life, God has been forging in Claudine a subject that will make her capable of listening, of keeping in her heart, of making decisions from the center where God dwells. Everything that we live in our life is weaving the network that sustains us. Claudine is becoming a person of discernment because a strong network enables her to do so: family ties and affection, a solid faith, the experience of solidarity lived in the family and with the religious, the ability to undertake and look to the future that she carries in her genes... In the course of events, that network is going to be strengthened.

We talked before about her ability to weave and the hours that this activity would allow her to listen attentively to her heart. Knitting is an opportunity for interiority, for an active mind and concentration, to go through things through the heart again, for a serenity that will undoubtedly help you in your how-tos, your discernments... God uses anything to forge our personality.





- Claudine **discovers the complexity and the need to choose in the face of events**

Life does not ask us... Since the Revolution broke out, Claudine lived attentively, listening and without realizing it, she has been deciding how to position herself. In family discussions, the atmosphere of the new ideas of the Enlightenment that contrast with the traditional foundations in which she has been educated, a Church divided between the Old Regime and the invitation to something different... Everything became an opportunity for her to listen. Decision-making... She had to decide if she wants to lock herself up or take sides and we see her attend the events of besieged Lyon going to see her brothers in jail, surely assisting the acquaintances who demand her help and not looking down when finally, her brothers were shot before her.

We cannot choose most of the events in our lives, although many times we are led to believe that we do. Most of the things we experience are given to us: the place of birth, family, health, events... but we can choose how to face the circumstances that we must live. And that, at least in a Christian, implies attentive listening, looking as God looks and discern.

Following the death of his brothers she has two options: bitterness and forgiveness. Sometimes, life takes a turn and what sustains us is nipped at the root. Claudine sees the consequences that the Revolution has left in the city, in the country, in her family, in the Church, in her neighborhood and in her body. It is not a choice that is made all at once, but is given little by little in daily life and in the invitations of each day, even with a broken heart, in the midst of silence, moving between the gaze that is sometimes deficient -how much for doing- and sometimes for appreciation - "*she will be a pretty girl*" -.

In Claudine, decisions are not made from one day to the next... Discernment is not choosing at a certain moment. It is always listening to the God who speaks to us at all stages and events, who slowly gestates the work of art that is our life. It takes many years to glimpse life, 25 years as a committed layperson before JM's project sees the light: forgiveness was not a magical fruit, her commitment to the education of children and young people was not a visionary light, the foundation of JM it was not a heroic response in a jiffy... Everything is a process.

- Claudine was **attentive to reality**

She listened to everything that happened around her: her family that has changed so much, the clandestine church in which we imagine her together with so many lay people carrying the Church forward, vulnerable childhood and youth, the companions on the way that she found and with which she responded daily, putting the **person at the center of her choices** ... Her aching heart shuddered at the misery, thinking of so many orphaned creatures who would grow up without knowing the love of God. A lot to listen to and answer from a look that is always appreciative and that demands answers that encourage and makes life grow.





- **Claudine learns to discern with others**

Since the family settled in Croix Rousse and the Church of San Bruno was reopened in 1804, we have seen Claudine from one place to another with many companions who share sensibility and who are also attentive to a reality that demands answers. In 1815, Fr. Andrés Coindre was assigned there and would play a significant part in Claudine's life. Together they listen to a reality that cried out especially in childhood and youth and they made decisions that took them which was unimaginable. Before, she had participated in clandestine lay associations from which she learned, among other things, the importance of walking with others and shared leadership.

The Acts of the Association provide for the Meeting, discernment in common. In them the spirit of the associates is shown: attentive listening to reality, the desire to act from the will of God, the importance of prayer, organization and the processes that they are living together while founding the Providence of San Bruno.

In the end, a life of discernment and listening grows at a dizzying rate like the bamboo tree. After the pain of the death of his brothers, years will come where only the root grows, 25 exactly, but then we will see the work grow at a dizzying pace, always from the desire to do everything with the desire to please God and carry out his kingdom.

A lot of life will emerge from this root founded on attentive listening to their will: welcoming the girls, the Association to financially support the work, the second providence in Pierres Plantées, the decision to live in community, the move to Fourviere when there is no space, leaving Providence when necessary, the foundation and leaving in Belleville, the approval of the Congregation and its approval as a Civil Society... Claudine will have many other opportunities to listen to others, discern, make decisions and search for what God wants with her companions in the Congregation and other people that life puts before her, but with these previous examples we get an idea of her vital and spiritual character.

A vertiginous rhythm that has solid roots and that is never the consequence of an outburst or impulse but of a life that has been woven from listening to the God who works slowly, who looks with appreciation and who continues and will continue to work every day in the world that we inhabit.

