



Communal Discernment

A Discerning Leadership Way of Proceeding

Based on the work of Mark Ravizza, S.J.



Discernment in Common

Two Dangers:

- Think of Discernment in Common as a special technique or a “stand-alone” process
- Imagine it is done by “holy” participants in an ideal setting

Not for us...

*Not for everyday
business...*



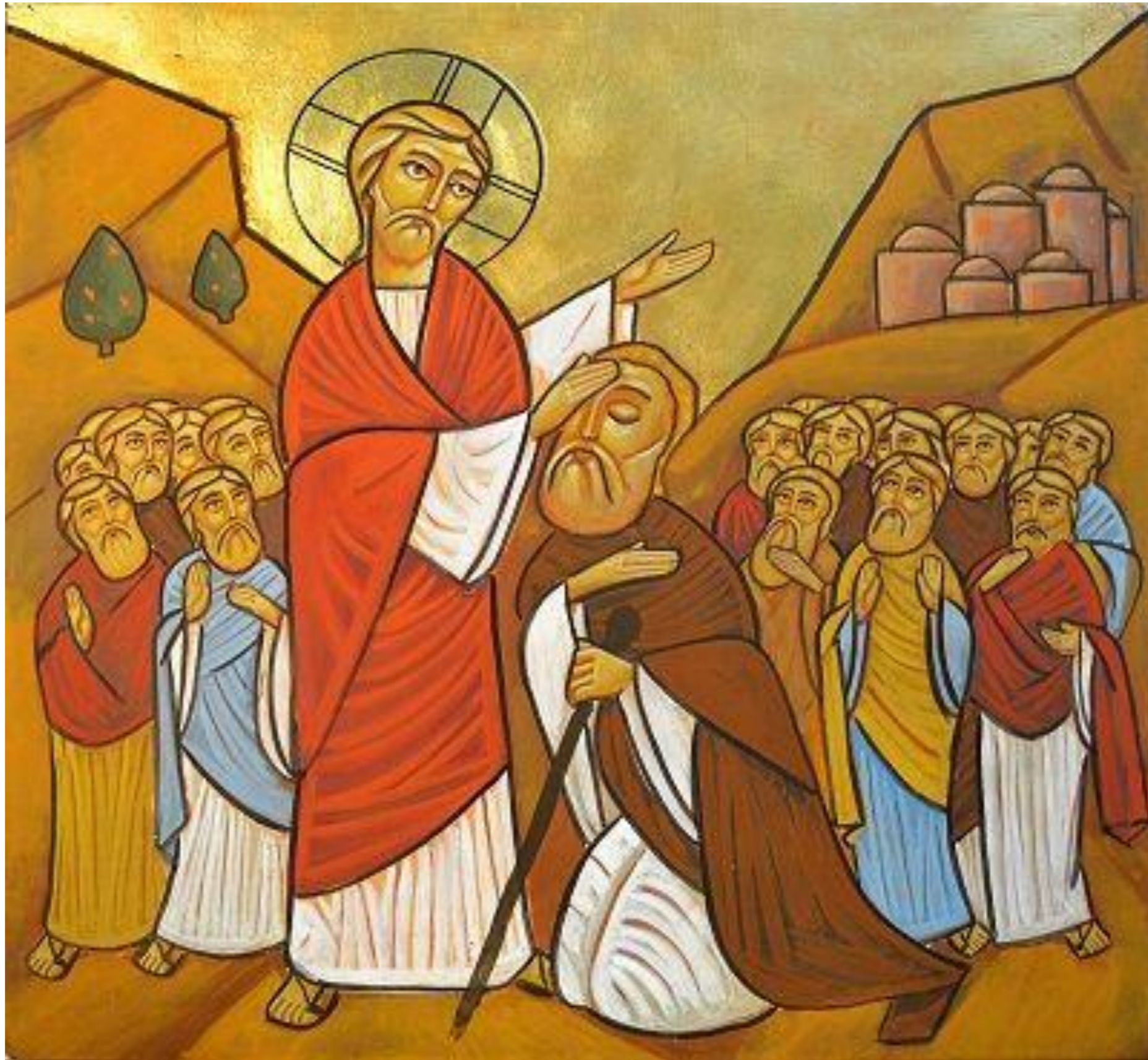
Communal Discernment



- Not just a stand-alone process used at special moments by holy people in an ideal setting
- but part of an everyday way of proceeding
- How do we as leaders foster the **structures, processes, habits, and culture** that enables us as a community consistently **to listen and be guided by the Spirit?**



Our Human Condition...



John 9:1-12 Jesus Heals the Man Born Blind

We have our different blindnesses



- Asking the wrong question “Who sinned?” (disciples)
- Stuck in old mindsets (the neighbours)
- Reserve the old system at all costs (Pharisees)
- Fear (parents)
- From blindness to sight (the man)

Ways we can be blind...



- Biases/Prejudices
- Expectations
- Attachments
- Passions and compulsions
- Self centered or interest group driven motives



The Risen Christ helps us to see and follow...



Communal Discernment: Three Dimensions



Communal Discernment Prerequisites

- The question is well defined
- Get the right people involved
- Collect the data
- Take time to pray...and get a method to share the fruits of prayer
- Clarity about who makes the final decision
 - the group?
 - the superior?
- The photo shows the Discernment of the IBVM and CJ congregations about coming to form one congregation



Three Dimensions:



- Initiating the Project: Structures
- Uses of Spiritual Conversation: Process
- Reaching a Key Decision: Process
(Discernment)

- Initiating the Project: **Structures**

Corporate Culture vs. Discerning Culture



- Perfunctory Prayer not integrated into work of the meeting
- Busy Agenda without any time for silence, reflection, depth
- Group of Individuals not a discerning body
- Conversation: Intersecting Monologues (skipped on the surface)



- Initiating the Project: **Structures**
Corporate Culture vs. Discerning Culture



- Integrate prayer into the meeting both as **input** and as a **process**
- Busy Agenda without any time for silence, reflection, depth
- Group of Individuals not a discerning body
- Conversation: Intersecting Monologues (skipped on the surface)



- Initiating the Project: **Structures**
Corporate Culture vs. Discerning Culture



- Integrate prayer into the meeting both as input and as a process
- **Change Agenda: Less topics; Return to topics over multiple days**
- Group of Individuals not a discerning body
- Conversation: Intersecting Monologues (skipped on the surface)

Daily Schedule							
Week: Date		Start Time: 9:00 AM					
Time	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
5:00 AM		Go to gym					
5:30 AM							
6:00 AM							
6:30 AM							
7:00 AM							
7:30 AM							
8:00 AM							
8:30 AM							
9:00 AM							
9:30 AM							
10:00 AM							
10:30 AM							
11:00 AM							
11:30 AM							

- Initiating the Project: **Structures**
Corporate Culture vs. Discerning
Culture



- Integrate prayer into the meeting both as input and as a process
- Change Agenda: Less topics; Return to topics over multiple days
- **Create a discerning body with practice of Spiritual Conversation**
- Conversation: Intersecting Monologues (skipped on the surface)



- Initiating the Project: **Structures**
Corporate Culture vs. Discerning Culture



- Integrate prayer into the meeting both as input and as a process
- Change Agenda: Less topics; Return to topics over multiple days
- Create a discerning body with practice of Spiritual Conversation
- **Conversation: Shared “clearing” where the Spirit could speak**



Personal/Group Reflection



- Journal: How can I as a leader foster processes, habits, and culture that enables my community (council?) **to better listen and be guided by the Spirit?**
- Group: Share one insight that emerged during your journaling