

Participant Guide: Parish Open Forum for Action
Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Hall
Sunday, November 4, 2018 – 2:30-5:00 pm

Agenda:

- 2:30 Welcome and Opening Prayer
- 2:35 Overview of Process and Themes
- 2:50 Move into Breakout Groups
- 2:55 Discussion and Drafting of Action Plan
- 4:10 Return to Plenary
- 4:15 Breakout Groups Report on Action Plans
- 4:45 Concluding Prayer
- 4:55 Evaluation
- 5:00 Adjourn

Prayer to Begin a Spirit-led Discussion

Adapted from *The First Spiritual Exercises*, Michael Hansen, SJ

Gracious and gentle God, help us to listen well to you and to each other. Help us to be fully present to each person in this room as we join in this discussion.

Give us the wisdom to listen attentively, to sense the meaning and interests of each other, to know when to be silent or when to speak.

Help us to listen without prejudice, to treat each speaker equally. Keep us considerate and respectful of others' opinions, able to appreciate the diversity of insights expressed.

Let the Spirit be present in this gathering with an abundance of her gifts. Above all, give us the greatest possible reverence and humility, and even affectionate awe of the way you dwell in each of us.

Amen.

Our Hope For Today and Way of Proceeding

Our parish entered into a *Season of Discernment* to help us process and respond to the crisis in the Catholic Church. Over the past three months, hundreds of Holy Trinity parishioners engaged in a series of listening sessions organized as an initial step in response to the anguish and anger prompted by new revelations in the Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report, the actions of Cardinal McCarrick, and the

response of the hierarchy. *Our intention today is to lead a process that brings us from the listening phase to action planning in a manner that ensures all voices are heard and that is drawn from the principles of Ignatian Spirituality and Catholic social teaching.*

Participants' responses at the listening sessions and feedback from emails to staff, phone calls and a form on our website can be grouped into five action-oriented categories:

- Church Structure
- Transparency and Accountability
- The Role of the Laity
- Supporting Survivors and their Families
- Prayer

These five thematic areas will serve as the topics for today's breakout groups. We invite you to join one of these breakout groups and to work with other group members to create an action plan including next steps for follow-up related to the breakout group's theme.

Our hope is that each breakout group will emerge from today's discussion with at least one outcome with a next step on their action plan and a volunteer responsible for the step. A sample action plan is included on the next page of this guide. Breakout groups will report back to the larger group before we leave today. We also plan to post on the parish website the outcomes and next steps proposed at today's Forum. We have set up a contact email address for each outcome, which we will post instead of the names of the responsible volunteers.

The Presupposition

As we engage in this process together, we are blessed that the Presupposition, from The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, paragraph 22, will help guide us:

- Give the other person the benefit of the doubt.
- When unsure about your neighbor's position, ask how she or he means it.
- Correct the other person with love when necessary.
- Search for mutually acceptable solutions.

Holy Trinity Parish Open Forum For Action: Action Plan

Breakout Group Thematic Area:

Restorative Justice Facilitator:

PPC Member Co-Host:

Action and To Whom the Action Is Directed	Responsible Person	Complete By (Date)	If proposed for parish action, Holy Trinity entity
Outcome #1: Next Steps/Actions:			
Outcome #2: Next Steps/Actions:			
Outcome #3: Next Steps/Actions:			
Outcome #4: Next Steps/Actions:			

We May Act on Our Own Behalf or Propose Actions for Holy Trinity

We recognize that each of us will move forward in our own way. We may still be discerning our own response to the crisis. We may feel called to act in a certain way. We may choose to accompany and support those who are called to act.

For those of us called to take action, we may choose to do so on our own behalf or we may propose an action that could be taken on the part of Holy Trinity parish. Those who choose to act in their individual capacity may find it worthwhile to explore whether to associate with other local or national organizations that share similar interests.

Actions to be taken in the name of the parish must be approved ahead of time by the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) and the pastor. For outcomes proposed for parish consideration, please specify with which entity or committee (Communications, Education, Facilities, Holy Trinity School, Ignatian Spirituality, Parish Life, PPC, Social Justice, Stewardship or Worship) you propose partnering. The relevant parish entity can provide experience, contacts, and other support and insight into how to effectively move forward. The parish entity will work with today's groups to develop a process to review and discuss outcomes proposed for parish action and will liaise with the PPC and pastor in deciding which ones the parish will move forward.

Please note that Holy Trinity parish cannot take action that would be contrary to a practice or policy of the Archdiocese of Washington. Under certain circumstances, however, the parish might advocate within the Archdiocese for changes in practice or policy.

Meet Our Facilitators

Tania Chomiak-Salvi and Kathleen Coogan will serve as the lead facilitators for today's program. Both are members of the PPC who have served on the Ignatian Spirituality and Jesuit Identity Committee. Each breakout group will be led through a process of idea-sharing and action-planning by a member of Holy Trinity's Restorative Justice Ministry (which is guided by the Social Justice Committee), who is trained in facilitating challenging conversations. A co-host from the PPC will also support each of the five groups.

Background on Listening Sessions and Themes That Emerged

Holy Trinity parish began its *Season of Discernment* with a series of listening sessions that attracted hundreds of responses. During these sessions parishioners were invited to consider:

1. What is heaviest on your heart about the recent revelations?
2. What do you want each other/clergy/bishops to know from you?
3. How can you exercise your rights and power as a lay person?
4. What actions must the hierarchy take in order for you to see credible progress?

A summary of responses received through the listening sessions, emails, phone calls and the website is available on the homepage of the parish website (www.trinity.org). Suggested outcomes were sorted into five thematic areas in preparation for today's Forum. They are listed below along with a contact email address and associated actions that were proposed in furtherance of each outcome.

Church Structure (ChurchStructure@trinity.org)

- Change bureaucratic model of Church and parish structure
- Eliminate clericalism within the Church
- Revamp ordination and elevation (promotion) criteria within the Church

Transparency and Accountability (Transparency@trinity.org)

- National Diocesan Abuse Transparency Scorecard: An on-line display of each Diocese in the United States, together with the name of its current Bishop or Cardinal with a check in the box next to each detailed transparency category
- Commitment by Archdiocese of Washington to have 60% of all senior management positions occupied by laity, a majority of whom are women, by 2024
- Organize national network of dioceses and parishes advocating for Church reform
- Organize network of parishes within the Archdiocese of Washington to advocate for Church reform
- Encouraged by Vatican II, acting as empowered laity within Holy Trinity Parish and fostering inclusiveness, invite and organize the formation of new groups – similar to existing groups such as separated and divorced parishioners, young adults, and grief support groups – and encourage their full participation in the parish community. New groups could include one for

survivors of sexual assault and another for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) persons.

Role of the Laity (Laity@trinity.org)

- Assure lay role in Church leadership
- Foster training for lay empowerment
- Provide active support for priests of integrity
- Secure function as watchdog/oversight of local and national Church administration

Support of survivors and their families (SurvivorsAndFamily@trinity.org)

- Hotline for survivors to get help with healing
- Start survivors' fund to make restitution
- Support efforts that promote healing
- Do away with statute of limitations
- Explore tools, including web-based tools, to help survivors of abuse to report to authorities

Prayer (Prayer@trinity.org)

- Prayer services
- Monthly service in other locations open to those unable to come to Trinity and not just for Holy Trinity Parishioners
- Small morning or evening meditation retreat to listen to the Holy Spirit
- Prayer and discussion of 'What would Jesus do?'
- Discussion/prayer service – How do we maintain our relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church while continuing to be angry over the abuse?

How We Got Here and Next Steps

In addition to hosting the series of listening sessions, Father Kevin Gillespie, S.J., the pastor, appointed an Ad Hoc Committee on the Sexual Abuse Crisis ("Ad Hoc Committee") composed of parish and school staff and PPC members to help guide the parish through the *Season of Discernment*. The Ad Hoc Committee has been meeting every two weeks in preparation for today's Forum. The PPC has also met several times. In response to parishioner feedback the PPC hosted an evening of prayer open to all parishioners on October 17 in lieu of the previously scheduled Parish Leadership Night.

As a parish our next steps will be guided by the outcomes and proposed actions that come out of today's Forum. The Ad Hoc Committee will meet on November 13 to determine next steps. The recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee will be discussed during the PPC meeting on November 14. Parishioners who were not able to participate today will find information on the website about how to connect with a group.

Contact Information

Please feel free to reach out to the following people to request additional information, to offer suggestions, or to provide feedback on today's Forum:

Tania Chomiak-Salvi, PPC member and facilitator, tanialuca@gmail.com
Kathleen Coogan, PPC member and facilitator, kathleencoogan@gmail.com
Jack Devlin, Holy Trinity School faculty member, jdevlin@htsdc.org
Kerri Edwards, Holy Trinity School Assistant Principal, kedwards@htsdc.org
Christopher Hannigan, PPC Vice President, chris.hannigan@gmail.com
Martina O'Shea, Pastoral Associate, Ignatian Spirituality, moshea@trinity.org
David Pennington, Pastoral Associate, Liturgy, dpennington@trinity.org
Bob Stump, Restorative Justice Ministry, rwstump@aol.com
Ellen Touns, PPC President, ellen.touns@gmail.com
Kate Tromble, Pastoral Associate, Social Justice, ktromble@trinity.org

Closing Prayer

Before we leave, we invite you to pause for about ten minutes to look back on our time together. We began the afternoon by asking God to accompany us in our discussions. Now we want to review our time to note how we experienced God responding to our pleas.

We invite you to settle yourself in this time and place.

Become aware of God's presence within you...and in the person to your right and to your left...and in our faith community.

Consider how God is looking at you at this moment and how God is looking at all of us gathered in this room.

We ask for the grace to see our time together through God's eyes... through the eyes of Jesus.

Now recall how you felt when you prepared to come here this afternoon.

What were you feeling as you walked through the doors of Trinity Hall?

Tania and Kathleen led us in prayer and helped us focus on what we would be doing in the breakout groups.

We each went to our chosen breakout group. Each restorative justice facilitator and PPC co-host oriented us and we began our discussions. What thoughts or feelings emerged for you as the conversation unfolded?

We identified action items and individuals volunteered to assume a leadership role and coordinate the action steps. Or perhaps the group became a bit unfocused.

Were there any times this afternoon when you felt drained of energy? Frustrated? Angry? Did you feel stuck on a negative feeling? *Feelings are data for discernment.* St. Ignatius would encourage us to look at whether we were being tempted to move away from God....sensing a decrease in hope, a decrease in trust in God, and love for others. These movements, Ignatius would suggest, are not of God. We act against the temptation to hopelessness, despair: remember that God is with you; persevere in patience while waiting on God; spend more time in prayer; talk to a person who is knowledgeable about discernment of spirits.

Were there times this afternoon when you felt encouraged, energized, filled with joy, at peace? Did you experience a surge of hope even in the midst of the challenges of trying to work for change? Were you in awe of fellow parishioners' passion? Did you feel grateful? Did you notice a sense of greater trust in God? St. Ignatius would encourage us to savor those movements...to thank God for these gifts.

As we leave this hall, how do you want God to help you as we try to respond to this crisis?

Close with The Lord's Prayer.

ADDENDUM: Tools for Further Reflection

Ignatian Discernment of Spirits

As a Jesuit-sponsored parish, Holy Trinity has the blessing of many tools to help guide us as we come together to reflect and move toward meaningful action. We offer some background on Ignatian spirituality here. These materials are a rich resource in the Catholic tradition; please use the tools if they can be of help to you. One of these tools is the Presupposition, which is described in the Participant Guide. Another tool is the Examen (included below), which can help us reflect on where we encountered God's presence.

In preparation for today's Forum and to aid us in noticing how we might respond to the Church's sexual abuse crisis, we offered thoughts on Spiritual Consolation and Spiritual Desolation in the parish bulletin over the past few weeks. We reprint these here.

The Examen

Preparation: Quietting myself, I become aware that I am in Your presence, O God. I imagine you looking at me, and looking at You loving me.

Intention: Loving God, open my eyes and ears to see where you have been with me today.

Thanksgiving: As I reflect, I realize that everything I have, even myself, is a gift from You.

Review: Let me allow you to bring to my awareness the moments, moods, and relationships of the day. For the times that were life-giving, I express my gratitude to You.

Forgiveness: I am still learning to grow in Your love. Forgive me for the times when I chose not to respond to Your invitations to love.

Hope: With gratitude to You, I ask for what I really want and need as I move into tomorrow.

Close with your favorite prayer.

Spiritual Consolation

You recall that, while Ignatius Loyola was recuperating from being hit with a cannonball in 1521, he began to pay attention to his inner experiences – his thoughts, imaginings, feelings, and desires. In The Pilgrim's Journey, Father

Joseph Tylenda, SJ tells how Ignatius began to “marvel at the difference between the spirits that agitated him, one from the demon, the other from God.” It dawned on Ignatius that what he was noticing were clues to understanding God’s direction for him. What a gift for our own spiritual journey...we too might sense clues to God’s direction for us!

Ignatius believed that these interior experiences came from what he called the “good spirit” or the “evil spirit.” “Good Spirit” meant God’s Spirit... God’s action in our hearts. It also meant God’s working in us through grace, and through all of those influences for the good that surround us in the world and draw us toward God - acting from our “true self.”

When Ignatius used the term, “evil spirit,” he was using his own 16th century language to recognize a 21st century truth: sometimes we can encounter obstacles when we try to place God at the center of our lives. For Ignatius such obstacles came from an “enemy of our human nature.” Today we might conceive of the “evil spirit” as a dark force that tempts us, using our vulnerable places of wounds, fears, or self-doubts, away from being faithful to our relationship with God. Or it could refer to the sinful world around us.

For Ignatius then, discernment of spirits is *paying attention to* our inner experiences to *understand* where they come *from* – from the Good Spirit, or from the evil spirit – and where they *lead* – toward God; or away from God and toward being “stuck in self.”

Non-spiritual consolation

Imagine a magnificent sunset and how you are moved by the multitude of colors: reds, oranges, and violets – spreading across the western sky as the sun gradually sinks below the horizon. Or imagine holding a newborn baby, and marveling at the perfection of her fingers and toes; her tiny eyelashes. Being consoled with such beauty might evoke feelings of peace, joy, good energy, a sense of expansiveness or being uplifted. This ‘everyday’ consolation is *non-spiritual*, and is not what Ignatius was talking about.

Spiritual consolation

The consolation that Ignatius explores is *spiritual* consolation. Consolation becomes *spiritual* when the consolation is experienced as being God-oriented, or God-connected. So, in *spiritual* consolation, you experience the beauty of the sunset or the wonder of a new-born baby and you are led to give glory and thanks to God for God’s mercy and love – you are being drawn to praise God-source-of-

all. If you freely go along with this feeling and the overall direction that it is pointing you toward, you might be drawn into a deeper faith, hope and love in your Creator and Lord. This is the *spiritual* consolation that Ignatius discusses in his Spiritual Exercises and encourages us to follow.

Spiritual Desolation

Just as with consolation, there can be *non-spiritual* and *spiritual* desolation. So what might *non-spiritual* desolation look like?

Let's say that you are feeling fear and anxiety owing to your concerns about the mental health of your sister. In your conversations with her, you notice that you are feeling agitated, accompanied by inner turmoil, and a heaviness. But despite these feelings, you are able to listen patiently to her. Each day, even many times a day, you hold her in prayer and trust that God is caring for her. You continue to trust that God wants her to flourish. You are aware of God's presence in your life. This is *non-spiritual* desolation.

Non-spiritual desolation is not what Ignatius talks about in his book, the Spiritual Exercises. Rather, Ignatius is talking about *spiritual* desolation. When we find ourselves in *spiritual* desolation, we are, according to Ignatius, under the sway of the "enemy of our human nature."

Desolation becomes *spiritual* desolation when the desolation is experienced as leading you *away* from God. Perhaps the feelings you have of heaviness and inner turmoil regarding your sister begin to draw you away from trusting and hoping in the reality of God in your life. The problems of your sister's family seem monumental and you begin to doubt that God is helping your sister. If you cooperate with these feelings, letting yourself go along with this movement *away* from God, your faith begins to erode, and it can become harder to love others. In this case, you are moving into *spiritual* desolation, in which you experience being cut off from God, without hope and without love.

Ignatius, in his book the Spiritual Exercises gave us guidelines for how to deal with *spiritual* desolation. Ignatius suggests that we do not make a change when in *spiritual* desolation, but stand firm in the decisions we made while in *spiritual* consolation. We might add a few more minutes to our intentional prayer time, or participate in daily Mass, or try to practice a virtue. We can be reminded that God has not abandoned us, even if that is how we feel. Rather, God gives us the grace to withstand this period of *spiritual* desolation. We can practice patience and trust

– spiritual consolation will return as God’s gift to us. It can be of help, when in spiritual desolation, to talk with someone who is familiar with discernment of spirits. The books listed below have been of help to many parishioners. These are also the sources consulted for the Addendum.

Resources for Further Support

Gallagher, Timothy M., *The Discernment of Spirits: An Ignatian Guide for Everyday Living* (2005)

McDermott, Brian O., *The Role of Spiritual Consolation in Christian Decision Making: A Plea for Ignatian Consensus* (In Press)

O’Brien, Kevin, *The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius in Daily Life* (2011)

Toner, Jules J., *A Commentary on St. Ignatius’ Rules for Discernment of Spirits: A Guide to the Principles and Practice* (1982)

**Parish Open Forum for Action
Evaluation**

What was helpful about this afternoon?

What would you add or subtract?

Additional Comments:

Thank you for your participation and your feedback!