

St. Ignatius Parish

Sanctuary Discernment Notes

This is a brief summary of the steps St. Ignatius Parish took in discerning its movement to establish solidarity with migrants, ultimately declaring Sanctuary Status.

- Call to Discernment
 - Early spring, 2017, parish sent an invitation to anyone interested in discerning our call to Sanctuary. Some targeted outreach to our Las Vecinas Ministry (Sister Parish in El Salvador); other parish groups with similar ministries, and those who had expressed interest in this issue
 - The purpose was to agree on what we as a parish are seeking to accomplish in addressing this issue of immigration and refugees, in the broadest of terms.
- Discernment Meeting
 - Participants were provided an overview of Discernment
 - Discernment is a method of Christian decision-making that seeks to understand God's voice by careful examination of our deepest, most authentic, holiest desires and by prayerful consideration of the movements of different "spirits" within us. This presupposes that God is present and active in all of creation, including the human heart. Think of "Finding God in all things."
 - Participants watched a short, four-minute video that captures Ignatian Discernment well. The link is here: <http://www.jesuit.org.uk/discernment>
 - Small Group Discussion
 - Small groups discussed and objectively considered the pros and cons of each of two statements:
 - St. Ignatius Parish WILL declare Sanctuary
 - St. Ignatius Parish WILL NOT declare Sanctuary
 - Each group listed all Pros and Cons of each statement
 - Each group reported on its discussion, and the Pros and Cons were summarized
- Prayer and Individual Discernment
 - The summary of pros and cons was sent to everyone who participated, and the larger group of invitees, along with specific guidance:
 - Per the overview of discernment and the video above, use the notes for your prayer, having in the back of your mind the agreements on what we broadly hope to accomplish,
 - Ask for the graces of God's light and wisdom, to be sensitive to God's voice within you, to be free from your own attachments and biases, to understand God's will for our parish, etc.
 - Begin with the first statement: We will declare ourselves as a sanctuary parish. Imagine having made that decision, with its pros and cons - what feelings emerge in you? Peace, anxiety, joy, fear, etc? There may be several. Then notice why you have those feelings; what's underneath them? Make some notes.

- Go next to the second statement: We will not declare ourselves as a sanctuary parish. Imagine having made that decision, with its pros and cons - again, what feelings emerge, and what is underneath them? Make some notes.
 - Pray with these over several days.
 - When you feel that your prayer has borne all the fruit it is going to, send an email briefly describing what happened in your prayer when you consider each of the options. NB: The data we're after in discernment is not what you think about the matters at hand, but what happens in you when you pray about them.
- The notes were summarized (anonymously) and became the foundation for the initial meetings of the Solidarity Committee.

That's it! The parish committee has met monthly and will hold occasional follow-up discernments, using a similar process, to assess our direction and where we're being called at the moment and to continue to engage the larger congregation.