



Dear friends,

God, who loves us, desires that we live according to his plan—only then will we find true fulfilment and happiness. God as well as the world, our environment, our self and the devil speak to us urging us to do one thing or another. Discernment is the prayerful process of identifying the source of these communications or inner movements and choosing what aligns with God's will. This is needed not only on rare occasions like deciding whether to get married, become a priest, or volunteer as a missionary. This is needed daily as for example in choosing whether to study, relax, or help someone in need, whether to keep quiet or report the harm done to us by another person. This brings peace and strengthens our relationship with God and others. It helps us live with the love and wisdom of Christ. So, we need to cultivate the habit of daily discernment.

Jose Kuttianimattathil

● Fr Jose
Kuttianimattathil SDB
Formation Sector

For the Gift of Discernment, we Give Thanks



In decision making, it is important that I know what my choices are. What I do not know, I will not consider a choice. Hence, it is important for me to know what my choices are. Having many choices doesn't necessarily lead to confusion in deciding. Rather, the options help me to have a clear understanding when comparing one with the other.

The options will always be there. How do I choose? What will be my **criteria in choosing?** There are 3 criteria:

- Will the choice make me a better person? It starts from self-fulfilment that leads towards self-transcendence.
- Will the choice make others better persons? Self-transcendence in terms of going beyond myself and giving myself to others
- Will the choice bring me closer to our Lord? Not only self-transcendence or human transcendence but leads to religious transcendence - Pneumatic life - life lived according to the Spirit. A life lived that is not anymore just about me nor the other, but about the other who is God.

There is also **the importance of a spiritual guide** who accompanies one in the discernment. The spiritual guide brings into the discernment process the perspective of God. The spiritual guide helps in clarifying, deepening and even challenging the motivations for the choices made. The spiritual guide has a way of accompanying the person "to see" and "to consider" what is not evident, what one is not aware of, and the perspective of the God who calls one to himself and to be sent to mission.

The discernment **process has also to be given time**. It does not always come in an instance. Even an instant decision-making needs confirmation. The time of discernment helps one to make his decision to be grounded and rooted. Hence, confirmation comes from the lived experience of the person with our Lord.

There are three **important formative interventions** necessary in this regard:

- An exposure-immersion experience of Salesian life and mission, a lived experience in community
- Journaling of the experiences so that they do not just become mere activities or experiences but rather learned experiences
- Individual and group accompaniment of the process by a guide (spiritual guide and other formators in-charge of various formation processes)

Eventually, we help the person not only to discern his Salesian missionary vocation, but we help him **to become a discerning person**. For the grace to be accompanied, we give thanks. And this is the primary purpose of the school of Salesian spiritual accompaniment organized by the formation sector – to prepare Salesian spiritual guides who can offer the ministry of personal spiritual accompaniment.

● Bro. Raymond Callo SDB, Formation Sector

FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING

- How has discernment unfolded or is unfolding in my life?
- Who has been, or still is, a key person in my discernment?



HOW DOES MISSIONARY DISCERNMENT WORK?

Dear Reginaldo, you as course leader for missionary formation in the Mission Sector, what do you think is most important for a good and up-to-date missionary formation today?

To help the missionaries in their formation, the sector offers three courses: *Corso Germoglio* (Sprout) for departing missionaries; *Corso Respiro* (Breath) for missionaries in mission or for those who want to update themselves in the mission theme; and the *Corso Sorgente* (Source) for senior missionaries over 70. With these courses the sector wants to strengthen elements that help each individual confrere in his life in mission.

And for a good up-to-date missionary formation today, I think the first thing is to have the awareness that being a missionary today means being attentive to respond to the needs that arise today in different contexts of the world and the church.

How does the discernment and accompaniment process work if someone wants to become an Ad Gentes missionary?

The missionary vocation Ad Gentes needs careful discernment. This is a gradual and progressive process that is carried out with the help of the spiritual guide, the Director and the formation team when one is in initial formation. The criteria and the process of discernment of the missionary vocation are clearly explained in the document "*Missionary Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco*" (SDB: Rome, 2014). However, some elements must be emphasised.

There is no age limit for leaving as a missionary. A confrere can write directly to the Rector Major presenting his missionary availability after consulting his Director, Provincial and spiritual guide. On receiving the letter, the Rector Major forwards it to the General Councillor for the Missions. It is he who initiates or continues the dialogue with the candidate by involving the Provincial and his Council, asking for a written opinion to verify the candidate's suitability. If the candidate is in initial formation, he asks for the written opinion of the Director and the House Council. Having received the favourable opinion of the Provincial and his Council (and of the Director and the Council of the House), the Missions Councillor makes a study with the Rector Major on the needs, missionary priorities for the year and possible destinations. The Missions Councillor proposes to the General Council the destinations of the members of each missionary expedition.

As the final part of the discernment, the candidate participates in the "*Corso Germoglio*" in Salesian locations in Italy, where the Salesian Missionary Cross is presented at the end during the sending ceremony by the Rector Major in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Valdocco.



Fr Reginaldo Lima Cordeiro SDB

I am originally from the Salesian Missionary Province of the **Brazilian Amazonia**, Manaus-Brazil (BMA). As a Salesian, I have performed some services as Delegate of Missionary Animation and Youth Ministry, director of schools, formation house, assessor of reflections on the **theology of the original peoples** in Brazil and Latin America. I did Theological studies for the Salesian Pontifical University - UPS- Rome and **Licentiate in Missiology** for the Urbanian University.

I am currently a **member of the Missions Sector** of the Salesian Headquarters of Don Bosco in Rome, and I collaborate with the missionaries' training programme and coordinate the work of the Advisory Team for Salesian missionary museums.



F O R M	Ignatian discernment	Salesian discernment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic Methodology: A precise method to distinguish between spiritual motions that come from God (consolations) and those that turn away from Him (desolations). • Ignatian indifference: To be available to whatever choice God wants, without disorderly attachments. • Accompaniment: Always have a spiritual guide to help in the process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason, religion, loving-kindness: Based on the 'preventive system', discernment must be rational, based on faith, and characterised by brotherly love. • Family spirit: Discernment is not only individual but communal, it takes place in the family environment. • Pedagogical optimism: Trust in the fundamental goodness of the human person.

<h2 style="margin: 0;">JULY SALESIAN MISSIONARY INTENTION</h2>	<h3 style="margin: 0;">GIVE THANKS > DISCERNMENT</h3> <p style="margin: 0; color: #f9a825;">SALESIAN INTENTION</p> <p style="margin: 0;">We give thanks for the opportunities for spiritual discernment by those who feel the call to be missionaries and for those who accompany them.</p> <p style="margin: 0; color: #f9a825;">Prayer intention of Pope Leo > <i>For formation in discernment</i></p>	 <p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold;">Provincial Formation Delegates</p>
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