

## **Discernment Process for Communicating Christian Hope Seminar (6<sup>th</sup> June 2025)**

### 1. Opening Prayer (Grounding in the Spirit)

“Come, Holy Spirit, breathe new life into us as we gather in your name. Breathe your wisdom into us as we gather to reflect on the sacred task of communication. Open our hearts to your movement within each of us. Open our hearts to truth and compassion. Guide our voices and our silence, that we may speak with gentleness, listen with reverence, and share the hope that lives within us. May our words sow seeds of peace, build bridges, and make us pilgrims of hope in this Jubilee year. May our hearts be attuned to your will, and may your love shape our thoughts and actions. Amen.”

### 2. Meditation (Reflecting on Scripture and Tradition)

A reading from the first letter of St Peter (3:15-16)

“In your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence.”

and

Excerpt from the Message of the Late Pope Francis for the 59th World Day of Social Communications

“Do not allow instinctive reactions to guide your communication. Always spread hope, even when it is difficult, even when it costs, even when it seems not to bear fruit. Try to promote a communication that can heal the wounds of our humanity...Be witnesses and promoters of a non-aggressive communication; help to spread a culture of care, build bridges and break down the visible and invisible barriers of the present time. Tell stories steeped in hope, be concerned about our common destiny and strive to write together the history of our future.”

### 3. Guided Reflection Questions:

- What word, phrase or image from the Scripture or Pope Francis speaks to your heart today?
- In your context: personal, social, or professional, how are you being called to “account for the hope” that is in you?
- What does “gentleness and reverence” look like in your way of communicating, especially online or across differences?
- How can you practice hope-filled and healing communication, especially when tempted to react out of frustration, fear, or fatigue?

#### 4. Invitation to Listen Attentively

“As we gather on 6<sup>th</sup> June, I encourage each of you to approach every talk, discussion, and encounter with a listening heart—listening not only to the speakers and one another, but also to the voice of the Holy Spirit stirring within you. Throughout this time, be mindful of how the Spirit may be speaking through the words, emotions, or silences that arise in our sessions.”

Consider these prompts for attentive listening:

**Attentive Presence:** As you listen to each speaker, be fully present. Notice what stirs your heart or mind—whether it’s a word, an idea, or an emotion. These moments may be the Spirit prompting something important for you personally or for us as a community.

**Discerning Echoes:** Pay attention to patterns or themes that resonate repeatedly, either within you or in what is being shared by others. What keeps returning to your heart? What are the nuggets of hope hidden there? This may be a clue to what the Spirit is emphasising.

**Holy Curiosity:** Approach each session with a posture of curiosity. Ask not “What do I want to say next?” but “What is the Spirit inviting me to see, to hear, or to question more deeply here?”

**Silent Reflection:** Take intentional moments throughout the day for silence, even the briefest pause, to listen inwardly. In these moments of quiet, ask: “Spirit of God, what are you revealing to me in this? What hope do you ask me to carry and share?”

**Reflecting Together:** When we move into our Conversation in the Spirit later in the day, I invite you to:

- Speak as companions on the road, with respect and openness.
- Share not only ideas but the movement of the Spirit we sense in this dialogue.
- Bear witness to communication that heals, encourages, and inspires.
- Reflect on how our voices and presence might become sources of hope, unity, and communion in our fractured world.

#### 5. Conversation in the Spirit

Please see the Conversation in the Spirit handout that accompanied this document.



The Synodal Pathway  
of the Catholic Church in Ireland