

## Week 9: Discern and Decide - December 26, 2021

### Theme 9: Discerning and Deciding

*In a synodal style, decisions are made through a process of discernment, based on a consensus that emerges from a common obedience to the Spirit.*



*Acts 15,22-35*

### ***The Council's Letter to Gentile Believers***

*22 Then the apostles and the elders, with the consent of the whole church, decided to choose men from among their members<sup>[a]</sup> and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers, 23 with the following letter: "The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the believers<sup>[a]</sup> of Gentile origin in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. 24 Since we have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us, though with no instructions from us, have said things to disturb you and have unsettled your minds,<sup>[a]</sup> 25 we have decided unanimously to choose representatives<sup>[a]</sup> and send them to you, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. 28 For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials: 29 that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled<sup>[a]</sup> and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell."*

*30 So they were sent off and went down to Antioch. When they gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. 31 When its members<sup>[a]</sup> read it, they rejoiced at the exhortation. 32 Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers.<sup>[a]</sup> 33 After they had been there for some time, they were sent off in peace by the believers<sup>[a]</sup> to those who had sent them.<sup>[a]</sup> 35 But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, and there, with many others, they taught and proclaimed the word of the Lord.*

- ∞ What are the procedures and methods we use when discerning and making decisions together?
- ∞ How could they be improved?
- ∞ Do we encourage the participation of as many people as possible in decisions?
- ∞ Do we consult? Do we deliberate?
- ∞ Do we encourage transparency and accountability?
- ∞ How can we cultivate community spiritual discernment?

If you are interested in these questions, please send your answers by email to [synode@diocesevalleyfield.org](mailto:synode@diocesevalleyfield.org) or give them to a responsible person in your parish who can forward them to me.

Thank you for your participation!

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