



Congregation of Holy Cross Mission

Discernment Guide



**HOPE BEYOND
BORDERS**

CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS

Rooted in the Charism of the Congregation of Holy Cross



“With eyes of faith consider the greatness of your mission and the wonderful amount of good which you can accomplish.”

***Blessed Basil Moreau
Christian Education***

Mission discernment is a sacred task. For institutions sponsored by the Congregation of Holy Cross, discernment is not simply a matter of strategic planning or operational decision-making — it is a spiritual act, a response to God's invitation to participate in his work of transformation, healing, and hope.

Founded by Blessed Basile Moreau, the Congregation of Holy Cross calls its members and partners in mission to be “educators in the faith.”

The charism of Holy Cross is one of hope in the face of struggle, zeal for mission, community in service, and trust in Divine Providence.

This charism animates our mission and shapes our way of proceeding. Discernment, then, must be more than practical — it must be formational. It calls us into prayerful reflection, deep listening, and collective commitment to act justly, love generously, and walk humbly with our God. It challenges us to ask: How does this decision serve the mission entrusted to us by Christ? How does it form minds and hearts? How does it bring about a more just and compassionate world?

This guide is designed to help our ministries engage in communal discernment, drawing from our Holy Cross charism. Through reflective tools, shared prayer, and structured conversation, this process invites leadership teams, faculty, parish councils, staff, and boards to enter into a meaningful journey of aligning institutional decisions with Gospel values and the distinctive mission of Holy Cross: to educate both the mind and the heart, to be people with hope to bring.

PHASE 1: GROUNDING IN MISSION

Begin prayerfully and orient the group around the ministry's mission and the context of discernment.

“Union, then, is a powerful lever with which we can move, direct, and sanctify the whole world ...” (Moreau, CL 14)



Actions:

- Review the ministry's mission statement
- Clarify the question or decision at hand
- Gather diverse participants (leadership, faculty/staff, students, etc.)
- Begin with prayer and reflect on God's presence

Discernment Questions

- What are we discerning together?
- What external or internal factors are prompting this discernment?
- Who needs to be part of this process to reflect our community fully?

PHASE 2: REFLECTION

Reflect prayerfully on how God has been working in the ministry.

“It is God's hand which has guided everything, and it is God whom we must thank above all.” (Moreau, CL 36)



Gratitude: What are we most grateful for in our mission work?

Mission Alignment: In what areas have we stayed true to our Holy Cross mission? Where have we drifted?

Community & Justice: Are we serving the marginalized and promoting belonging and solidarity?

Movements of the Spirit: Where have we experienced joy, growth, or clarity? Where have we felt stuck, frustrated, or anxious?

Looking Forward: What is God inviting us to consider or change?

PHASE 3: DIALOGUE

Use communal listening to surface insights and directions.

“We must be responsible each of us for the conformity of our lives to the Gospel and for the harmony of our ministries with the mission of Christ ... [W]e owe it to our confreres to enter into frank and respectful exchange about the decisions that are to be taken which affect us all. The Spirit of the Lord may choose any of us to speak the truths we all need to hear.”
(Holy Cross Constitutions, 7:81)



Spiritual Conversation Format:

- **Round 1** – Each person speaks without interruption.
- Silent Reflection
- **Round 2** – Resonances: What stood out to you?

Questions for the Group:

- What are we hearing together?
- What are the points of unity, tension, and movement?



PHASE 4: DISCERNMENT

Identify the path forward that most aligns with the promptings of the Spirit and the Holy Cross mission.

“We forgo the independent exercise of our wills in order to join with brothers [and sisters] in a common discernment of God’s will as manifested in prayer, communal reflection, scripture, the Spirit’s guidance in the church, and the cry of the poor.”
(Holy Cross Constitutions, 5:50)



Discernment Questions:

- Which options bring a sense of peace, hope, or creative energy?
- Which ones cause anxiety, fear, or confusion?
- Which option best serves the greater good of the mission?

PHASE 5: DECISION

Confirm the discerned path and develop a clear action plan that names

- the decision
- the rationale (both spiritual and practical)
- the responsible parties
- a timeline
- the resources needed to implement the new plan

"But there seemed to come a time when the Lord was calling us to take some further step." (Holy Cross Constitutions, 1:2)

PHASE 6: CONFIRMATION AND REVIEW

Confirm the decision through regular review.

Review Questions:

- Are we seeing fruits of this decision?
- Have new circumstances emerged?
- Are we still being faithful to our mission?

"I have been but a simple instrument, which the Lord will soon break that he may substitute for it others more worthy ... [T]his important work that has been entrusted to us is not yet completed ... I firmly trust, however, that the same God who has begun this work under such favorable auspices will carry it through to completion." (Moreau, CL 14)



"There is no greater freedom than that of allowing oneself to be guided by the Holy Spirit, renouncing the attempt to plan and control everything to the last detail, and instead letting him enlighten, guide and direct us, leading us wherever he wills. The Holy Spirit knows well what is needed in every time and place. This is what it means to be mysteriously fruitful!"

Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 280



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