

SESSION 1 MY JOURNEY

1) **Brief check-in** at the beginning of the meeting while eating lunch

Focus Question: *Tell us your name, what was your most recent job before coming to Santa Clara and what do you do at SCU now? Why did you come to Santa Clara?*

2) **Quiet reflection** – Meditative Reading - after lunch. (5-10 Min)

The Slow Work of God – Pierre Teilhard de Chardin
(Advice to a young friend)

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.
We are, quite naturally, impatient in
everything to reach the end without delay.
We should like to skip the intermediate
stages.

We are impatient of being on the way to
something unknown, something new.
And yet it is the law of all progress
That it is made by passing through some
stages of instability...
And that it may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you.
Your ideas mature gradually –
Let them grow; let them shape themselves,
without undue haste.
Don't try to force them on, as though you
could be today

What time (that is to say, grace and
circumstances acting on your own good
will)
Will make you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit
gradually forming within you will be.
Give our Lord the benefit of believing that
his hand is leading you.
And accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in
suspense and incomplete

*(Taken from Bannan Center "Book of Prayers." This
selection was contributed by Kathleen Donofrio,
Human Resources.)*

Readings:

David G. Schultenover, S.J., "The Ethos of Jesuit Education: Ignatius to Hopkins to Ellacuria."

Parker Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak, Listening for the Voice of Vocation*, Chapter 1: "Listening to Life" and Chapter 2: "Now I Become Myself"

William C. Spohn, "The Chosen Path," *America*, July 21-28, 2003. pp.10-13.

3) **Discussion and sharing** – issues or thoughts that the readings stimulated in you or other items you want to talk about. Below is a series of quotes and focus questions taken from the readings for the day which may serve as reminders. Review these quotes, if you wish and focus questions and respond only to those which strike a cord in you. Open sharing. (60 Min)

a) Parker Palmer (pg. 5) “Behind this understanding of vocation is a truth that the ego does not want to hear because it threatens the ego’s turf: everyone has a life that is different from the “I” of daily consciousness, a life that is trying to live through the “I” who is its vessel. This is what the poet knows and what every wisdom tradition teaches: there is a great gulf between the way my ego wants to identify me, with its protective masks and self-serving fictions, and my true self.”

Focus Question: *In what ways do you identify with Palmer’s statement that the ego can take me in a direction that is not my true self?*

b) Parker Palmer (pg. 10) “Today I understand vocation quite differently – not as a goal to be achieved but as a gift to be received. Discovering vocation does not mean scrambling toward some prize just beyond my reach but accepting the treasure of true self I already possess.”

Focus Question: *Can you describe your earliest thoughts or messages you received from others about what you were meant to do in life; your career, your vocation?*

c) Parker Palmer (pg. 16): “Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic selfhood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we *ought* to be. As we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks – we will also find our path of authentic service in the world. True vocation joins self and service, as Frederick Buechner asserts when he defines vocation as ‘the place where your deep gladness meets the world’s deep need.’”

Focus Question: *Are you able to name and describe the joy inside you that you believe meets one of the world’s deep needs?*

d) Parker Palmer (pg. 18): “But before we come to that center, full of light, we must travel in the dark. Darkness is not the whole of the story – every pilgrimage has passages of loveliness and joy – but it is the part of the story most often left untold. When we finally escape the darkness and stumble into the light, it is tempting to tell others that our hope never flagged, to deny those long nights we spent cowering in fear.”

Focus Question: *Describe a time in your own personal vocation journey which was like the travel in the darkness that Palmer speaks of here?*

e) Parker Palmer (pg. 29): “Here, I think is another clue to finding true self and vocation: we must withdraw the negative projections we make on people and situations –

projections that serve mainly to mask fears about ourselves – and acknowledge and embrace our own liabilities and limits.”

Focus Question: *Can I spot times in my vocation journey when I was projecting my own fears on to other people in an attempt to deny to myself what was my own true vocation?*

f) Parker Palmer (pg. 30): “...I have become clear about at least one thing: self-care is never a selfish act – it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer to others. Anytime we can listen to true self and give it the care it requires, we do not only for ourselves but for the many others whose lives we touch.”

Parker Palmer (pg. 34): “The punishment imposed on us for claiming true self can never be worse than the punishment we impose on ourselves by failing to make that claim. And the converse is true as well: no reward anyone might give us could possibly be greater than the reward that comes from living by our own best lights.”

Focus Question: *What do you believe Palmer is referring to when he talks about “claiming true self” and “living by our own best lights.” Have you experienced such a struggle in your own search?*

h) Bill Spohn (pg): “The experience of invitation is central to the *Spiritual Exercises*. It doesn’t come like a bolt from the blue or a “mission from God” with the clarity of the Blues Brothers. It is not a command, but an invitation addressed to our freedom. If this invitation were simply marching orders, Ignatius would not have spent twenty years of trial and error learning wisdom the hard way. Those mistakes taught him to help others find the path for their freedom to take. Instead, Ignatius asks us to look into our own personal consciousness and ask: “What am I attracted to?” What draws me over time in a certain direction?

Focus Question: *This is basically a different way of saying what Parker Palmer says in his first chapter. Does this expression of those same sentiments stimulate any additional thoughts for you?*

4) **Ignatian Tradition:** Brief summary/discussion of Schultenover’s article on Ignatius’ life and Jesuit education.