

TEAMS - REFLECTION



I ask for what I desire as we begin this topic



I pray that my entire being become open to God's grace



I imagine these texts being addressed to me, and note my response

Grace: To develop with my team members a sense of shared mission

It was just before the end of Lent. The time was drawing near when we would have to be separated from one another. We were looking forward to this dispersal with great anticipation, recognizing it as a necessary means for attaining more quickly the goal which we had conceived and set as the object of our hearts. We decided to assemble before the day of separation and discuss for a number of days our common calling and the style of life we had adopted. After a number of such sessions, we found ourselves divided. Some of our group were French, others Spaniards, still others Savoyards or Portuguese; our views and opinions were diversified. We were in perfect accord in singleness of purpose and intent; namely, to discover the gracious design of God's will within the scope of our vocation. But when it came to the question of which means would be more efficacious and more fruitful, both for ourselves and for our neighbor, there was a plurality of views. No one should be astonished that among us, weak and frail men, this difference of opinion should have arisen, since even the princes and apostolic pillars of the most holy Church, and many other holy men with whom we are in no way worthy to be compared, experienced a similar diversity of opinion and, at times, were in open conflict. They even left us a written record of their controversies. Well, then, since we too were of diverse opinion, we were anxious to find some course clearly indicated as the path to follow in offering ourselves as a holocaust to God, to whose praise, honor, and glory all our actions might be dedicated. Finally, we decided and resolved unanimously to devote ourselves to prayer, the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice and meditation, in a manner even more fervent than usual; and after we had diligently expended all human effort, we would then cast all our cares upon the Lord, trusting in Him who is so good and generous. [...]

For many days we discussed the various aspects of this question, analyzing and weighing the relative merits and cogency of each argument, always allowing time for our customary practices of prayer, meditation and reflection. Finally, with the help of God, we came to a decision. We concluded, not only by a majority vote but indeed without a single dissenting voice, that it would be more advantageous and even essential for us to vow obedience to one of our number in order to attain three aims: first, that we might better and more exactly pursue our supreme goal of fulfilling the divine will in all things; second, that the Society might be more securely preserved; and finally, that proper provision might be made for those individual matters, of both spiritual and temporal moment, that will arise.

The Deliberations of Our First Fathers - trans. Dominic Murca.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

The Deliberation of the First Fathers is a key foundational document in the Society of Jesus. It was the moment when they decided to stay together as a team rather than separate individuals. As I read this text do I feel there is cohesion in my team? How can we share a strong bond to fulfil our mission?