

Fifth International Conference on Receptive Ecumenism  
Paper abstract

“Discernment: A Spirituality of Receptive Ecumenism”

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Listening to the Spirit in the context of transforming ecumenism has both a communal and a personal dimension. The intellectual and affective posture of receptive ecumenism is marked collectively by an intentionality of humble learning in an atmosphere of open listening. This paper explores how that posture translates into a personal spirituality, understanding it according to two of the principal emphases of Ignatian spirituality. First, that it is a movement of the heart, and, second, that there is an emphasis on interior freedom, on detachment from personal preferences, superfluous attachments, and preformed opinions. These two emphases offer helpful directions in which to look for a spirituality that, in its ecumenical case, will need to nourish and be nourished by the interplay between similarity and difference. They aid, in other words, in the practice of discernment of spirits so central to *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, truly an exercise of listening to what the Spirit is saying. As Pope Francis said, “if a thought or a desire leads you on the road of humility, of self-abasement and of service to others, it is of Jesus; but if it leads you on the road of self-importance, of vanity and of pride, or on the road of abstract thought, it is not of Jesus.”