

Holy Manners for the Group Process

- 1. First and foremost we acknowledge that we come together as brothers and sisters in Christ:** When we remember that Christ is in our midst, it is easier to behave in ways we know he would ask of us—compassionate, open and supportive.
- 2. Confidentiality:** What's said in the group stays in the group unless there is full agreement and permission to share a piece of information.
- 3. Respect:** Disagree without being disagreeable. Acknowledge the other person's point of view. Confirm that you heard correctly before responding. Avoid sarcasm and hurtful comments and tones of voice.
- 4. Truly Listen:** Sometimes the hardest thing to do is simply listen to a person without already thinking of what you are going to say back before they even finish. Rather than get into a "discussion," just simply receive the person's sharing and give only a response of affirmation or understanding.
- 5. Be more committed to relationship than to "winning" or being "right:"** It is hard to have true dialogue with people whose whole goal is to prove their point or win their agenda. It is best to be able to just listen and be respectful. Stay open in your sharing.
- 6. Sabotage or manipulation are not acceptable under any circumstances:** When destructive behavior is discovered, it must be named to the person (keeping in mind the above guidelines) and agreement reached to cease such behavior. Support and help should be offered as appropriate. A person who persists in this kind of behavior needs to be asked, in love, to leave the group.
- 7. Be committed to attending each group and really "show up."** When we are busy or stressed it is easy to physically show up, but mentally or emotionally be elsewhere. Make the commitment to not only physically make the group meetings, but to be fully present to each other while you are here.
- 8. Affirm your brothers and sisters!** When someone shares something that comes right from the depth of their soul and you can tell this is not easy for them to do...thank them! When someone shares something you have been thinking or feeling yourself, but have been unable to articulate...thank them! A little affirmation goes a long way in reminding us that we are fellow travelers on this journey.