

REPORT 2nd MODULE IGNATIAN LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME IN FALENICA (POLAND)

14 -18 OCTOBER 2024

Monday, October 14

At about 3:30 p.m., Cécile, my colleague from Antwerp, and I landed at the Frederic Chopin airport in Warsaw. The flight from Zaventem had gone very smoothly. After some time, we met Sister Valentina from Albania. Together we took a cab to the conference centre. Despite the rush hour, the ride went smoothly. Warsaw seems to be a traffic-friendly and green city.

We were warmly welcomed by the six members of the planning team. It was a pleasant reunion with the other participants from Germany, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Spain.

Through the Eucharist, a daily ritual, we settled down and were ready to start the 2nd Module of the Ignatian leadership programme.

During the first session we got a refresher from the first module. We live in a rapidly changing world, called the VUCA world: volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous; in which we must adapt as organizations and leaders. We were also made curious about the next sessions: what do we need to address - together with others in our schools - and how can we change and even transform things.

We ended the day with our “social.” Each participant had brought a typical product from their country or city. After a brief explanation, we enjoyed all those goodies.



Tuesday, October 15

After the morning walk, another daily ritual in which almost exclusively the Flemish participated, and a delicious breakfast, the following sessions began.

Christina Keng's model, a theological model of organizations, was explained. Then we could apply this to the functioning of our own school. Afterwards this was discussed in our “small group”. We found it an interesting model, but still needed more information. Bart, our group leader, will take care of this.

Changes in education, not unknown to us, are best handled in a well-considered way. For this, the U-model was explained: first determine the goal together with an open mind, an open heart and an open will to then resolutely go for it (= transformation) and not jump from one innovation to another (= change).

Thus we arrived at the leadership model of Matthieu Daum, where a co-creative leadership with a future and whole vision can be pursued.

In the afternoon, we were visited by the former socius of The Province Poland North. He explained to us what Ignatian leadership means to him. He indicated that it depends on circumstances and that when changes occur, you have to focus on the “go-go” and the “so-so” groups and not let the “no-no” group paralyze you.

Wednesday, October 16, 2024

Also today we started with a “morning prayer.” Using texts, images and music, we gained insight into a particular theme, today “hope.”

Then we reflected on the pastoral mission in our schools. Each time it strikes me how differently and more intensely this is experienced and lived in other European countries. If we really want to work as catholic dialogue schools, we will have to pay more attention to this in Flanders.

In the afternoon, we were given a tour of Warsaw. Our guide, Anna, talked about the reconstruction of the city after the Second World War.

We ended the day with a delicious feast. This time it was Bartosz's turn to speech for us as our host.

Thursday, October 17, 2024

On Thursday we discussed the exercise we were given after the first module: conduct a spiritual conversation with about 5 people around the topic "how do you walk with the poor in our school community?" and indicate how you have come to common discernment.

Through the words "thank you," "sorry," and "please," we conducted an examination of conscience (in Ignatian language "examen"). We shared our experiences first in pairs, then as a whole group. To gain a better understanding of this, we were taught to look through three lenses: dispositional conditions, practical conditions and two types of discernment, the situational one and the decision making one.

With this info, we were sent on a personal retreat. This was completed via a listening session in our "small group."

Time for the final "social." Still abundant choice.

Friday, October 18, 2024

After a final morning walk and morning prayer using texts from the evangelist Luke - it was his feast day - we reviewed the previous days; first personally, then through exchange in our "small groups."

With a final moment of synthesis and the completion of the evaluation form, we concluded the 10th session.

In communion, through a Eucharist and a delicious lunch, we said goodbye to each other in the early afternoon.

It was a fascinating and instructive format in which the meetings and exchanges with each other were of incredible value.

We are already looking forward to the 3rd module in spring 2025 in Malta.

Jan Ombelets

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