

Two weekends ago I attended Franciscan Seminar at St Francis University in Loretto, PA on the subject – “**Servant Leadership.**” The principle speaker was Fr. Michael Higgins, former International Minister General of the Third Order. He has two PhDs and was an excellent speaker.

Below is a summary of my crude notes feel free to read them as you wish.

Two authors used as models for servant leadership were

Robert Greenleaf (coined the term “servant leader”) and Max DePree. Both men came from a business and corporate culture but very Christian in their personal values.

“Handbook of Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership” – a suggested read. Look in the back page of TAU for ordering copies of “Servant Leader Handbook”

Greenleaf, R.K. (2002) *Servant Leadership: a journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*

Smiles get returned as smiles.

When conducting meetings think about how people learn: Some are visual, Auditory, kinesthetic. Think also about generational issues - high tech for the younger; visual, auditory and ambulatory and balance impaired considerations for the older.

If you are doing a poor job of serving you are probably doing a poor job of leading.

Emphasis is on SERVICE to others as first priority. Leadership roles become a later choice.

Focus on the other, not on self.

Test: Do those who are being served grow? Are they becoming more autonomous and more likely to one day be a leader?

When power dominates leadership loses its benefit.

Not directing – serving.

Priorities of Leadership:

Listening – Establish trust

Empathy – Willing to assume that the other is motivated by good intentions.

Say only the good things that people want to hear.

Healing – help heal broken trust, build self esteem, build respect

Awareness – leaders are keenly aware of what they see and hear. Having a sense of always being reasonably disturbed is helpful. Expect the truth from self and others

Persuasion – not authority

Conceptualization – dream big dreams, but grounded in reality; establish a strategic vision

Foresight – “By failing to prepare you are preparing to fail.” – Ben Franklin. Look at lessons from the past, realities of the present, and likely consequences of a decision for the future. A good vision helps shape the action to accomplish it.

Stewardship – not mastery, guardianship. Respectful care of others property. Commitment to growth of others. Leaders nurture the growth of those around them.

Building Community – equip and empower

Max DePree’s ideas:

Real leadership is **covenantial**, not contractual. Contracts break down as the setting changes. Covenantial relations rely on bonds of personal involvement and authentic sharing of lives.

Covenantial reflects unity, grace, poise, and sacredness of relationships. Hospitable to the unusual person and situation. Tolerate risk and forgive errors.

Covenantial – group of people working intentionally together.

The leader sees himself as part of the team.

Leadership calls for **profound personal investment**.

Artful leader has 4 attributes:

Integrity

Personal maturity

Willingness to accept accountability

Builds and nurtures Relations

Community Building – all members are challenged to become actively involved in each other’s lives. This is participative leadership. It arises out of the heart, not a policy book. Having a say is different than having a vote. People who don’t have a vote respect the opportunity to have a say.

Foster leaders – to foster good leaders you have to be a good leader yourself.

Integrity

Sense of humor

Intellectual energy and curiosity

Respect for the future, regard for the present, understanding of

the past

Predictable

Comfortable with ambiguity

Presence

Another suggested read - DePree, M (1992) *Leadership Jazz*. Also (2004) *Leadership is an art*.

Managers do things right. Leaders do right things.

Dysfunctional Leadership – occurs when it causes:

Negative consequences (cost is real, or subjective – reputation is diminished and stress is felt)

It must be intentional in some way. It may not be controllable – but it IS intentional. The leader refuses to accept or acknowledge deficiencies.

Problems:

- Loneliness of command, lonely at the top. Previous colleagues become distant. Some people don't want the top job for fear of being isolated.
- Addiction to power and fear of loss of power. This is found in large bureaucracies – military and church!
- Fear of success – really fear of increased responsibility. Depression frequent after leaving a top job and fear that no future success is possible.
- Big Three of all dysfunctional behavior:
 - Narcissism – biggest factor.
 - Exaggerated sense of self importance
 - Rules only apply to others
 - Lack empathy
 - Focus on superiority
 - Entitled
 - Must “get even”
 - They are blind to their impact on others
 - Have a need for admiration
 - Have a grandiose sense of self importance
 - Surround themselves with “yes” people
 - Believe they should only associate with other “important people”
 - They show an arrogant or haughty behavior
 - The narcissist gets further isolated by his own self defeating behavior
 - Transference – relates how the needs of past experiences are impacting on the present.
 - Idealizing – deal with it by seeing authority figures as protectors
 - Mirroring – takes cues from others to get self esteem
 - We carry our past with us, good or bad
 - Anti-Social Personality Disorder – intimidate, domineering – seen in some physicians and police. Acting intelligent helps create the facade of normality

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

Jesus is the example for Francis and Clare.

Being rooted in the Gospel is essential.

“Let nothing hinder us or separate us from Jesus. Our rule of life is rooted in the Gospel.” It is the source of our life and energy.

Francis was contagious with his joy of following the Gospel. Show your joy.
If you are joyful tell your face about it!!! ☺

The divine office was essential to him.

Francis is portrayed as a gentle bird loving person but he was also strong and deeply committed to what he knew and believed and he would not let anyone change his mind, even the pope.

He created a brotherhood of equals. He and Clare washed the feet of their followers. Remember they all walked barefoot. There were horses, cows and no indoor plumbing. Clare personally washed the feet of her sisters every night when they returned to San Damiano after a day of begging.

The power to decide was communal and the brothers wrote the rules. No brother was useless, they were all precious. Love your brothers as a mother loves their sons.

Francis felt that he was the mother of his followers, never their father. “My father is in heaven.” Clare referred to him as ‘Father Francis’ after he died, because now he was in heaven too.

Leadership we learn from Francis and Clare

1. Let your attitude be one of service
2. Make regular visits to those who cannot be with us
3. When the brothers came together they encouraged each other and they also corrected each other when they saw things being done incorrectly
4. Forgive bad behavior. Face the problem, don't wish it better. Don't pray for the other person to be a better Christian. Focus on mercy and love.
5. Each fraternity should have an outreach of some kind. It can even be for its own members who cannot get out. The leader is first and foremost a sister (a brother) and servant to the members of the fraternity.
6. If you join your suffering to Jesus that brings perfect joy.
7. Clare knew how to meet the physical, psychological and spiritual needs of her community without losing anything of the essential character of St. Francis's devotion to poverty, contemplation and fraternity.

Carney, Margaret (1993) *Clare of Assisi: The First Franciscan Woman*.

Koch, C (2014) *Leading like Francis: Building God's House*.

Schreck, A (2014) *St. Francis and Pope Francis: Prayer, Poverty, and Joy in Jesus*.

Read the Rules of Clare. She was able to take the example of Francis and translate it into a household!

Pope Francis Leadership

Live so deeply with the flock that you smell like the sheep
We have to be willing to accept service as well as be served

Andre Vauchez: *Francis of Assisi: Life and After life of a medieval saint*. This will be THE book about Francis for the next decade.

Fraternities have to keep contact with its aging members who cannot attend. Some have been away so long that the active fraternity members don't know them and don't know how committed that person was to the fraternity when he or she was able.

For filling office vacancies on councils – Ask “Are you willing to SERVE?” not are you willing to RUN.

Nominating committees must ask some pointed questions to avoid later problems. e.g. treasurers who are bad at math or secretaries who can't take notes. However, some fraternities have assistants in these positions. One fraternity has an accountant member help the treasurer. Another has a secretary who is legally blind - another member types the notes. Some jobs are team efforts.

Characteristics of Franciscan Life and Leadership

Respect the individual	All are sons and daughters of God, made in the divine image
Empowerment	Empowers others
Collaboration	Invites others to share in decision making and execution of common projects
Communication	Strives for open communication with all stake holders
Ethical world view	Has a deep seated value system and does what is ethical simply because <i>it is</i> ethical
Committed to growth of others	Helps others grow as persons and professionals
Informed decision making	In addition to standard decision making practice the leader attempts a consensus and makes the decision if one cannot be reached
Open to learning	May not have the relevant experience but is willing to learn through experience, consultation, and ongoing

Compassionate, fair and strong

Servant

personal education.

Fair but knows how and when to be
decisive

Uses Jesus as the example who washed
the feet of his disciples