
Leadership and communication

“A message, initiated and transmitted using the appropriate medium, received and understood must arouse or bring about a change in behaviour or attitudes”

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Upon a thorough examination of chapter 13 in the book, Marist Voices, which delves into the significance of communication, a suggestion put forth by Pope Francis regarding homilies sprang to my attention. In a catechesis delivered on February 7, 2018, at the Vatican, Francis advised that homilies during Mass ought to be concise, meticulously prepared, and no longer than 10 minutes.

This notion aligns with my understanding of communication as a crucial tool for Marist leaders to fulfil their actions and mission effectively. Communication is an integral aspect that leaders cannot overlook, as it serves as the conduit through which their leadership is conveyed to others and influences their commitment to the proposed direction.

Building upon this fundamental understanding of communication’s significance in Marist leadership, I put forth several suggestions for infusing it with inspiration.

The communication style of a Marist leader should be characterized by simplicity and courage. It should encourage open debate and dialogue, fostering conversations that embrace diversity of perspectives, ignite creativity, and culminate in unified and converging dialogue.

During the process of communication, as Brother Cyprian Gandeabo aptly highlights, “service leaders strive to avoid long and dubious sentences, abstract concepts, unfamiliar or ambiguous words (...) but simple ones. A leader must be clear and unambiguous when communi-



cating, since his aim is to add knowledge to the people listening to him.”

To communicate effectively, it is also essential to understand the intended recipients of our messages. This knowledge enables us to be more empathetic and assertive, which holds great power within the realm of leadership. It conveys the message that the other person is valued, that we are genuinely interested in their well-being and personal/family circumstances.

Here are several concepts that can assist a Marist leader in becoming an exceptional communicator, all of which are grounded in practices that stem from our identity and spirituality.

Above all is the significance of attentive listening. Mastering the art of listening entails recognizing that it originates from the ability to be silent, to perceive beyond what is superficially observed or heard. It involves delving into the underlying starting points, the profound convictions, and the diverse perspectives that may either impede or enhance our desired outcomes.

Another crucial concept is embracing the reality of the situations and individuals with whom we collaborate. It is through this acceptance that we can establish both our starting and ending points. Effectively communicating our perception of others, acknowledging them as they are rather than how we desire them to be, becomes an essential development toward transforming and advancing the reality we strive for as leaders. This approach will undoubtedly aid others in comprehending the processes required to attain the desired objectives.

Furthermore, the skill of integration plays a pivotal role in communication. By embracing diverse ideas and learning to blend them harmoniously, we create an environment that consolidates the collective efforts and contributions. This collaborative effort fosters team commitment and engagement, leading to shared achievements.

Communication should also serve as a conduit for conveying acquired knowledge and novelty. It should instill the leader’s self-assurance in both themselves and others, while emphasizing the unique and distinct contributions made by each individual. When leaders achieve this level of communication, they engender trust and inspire confidence, as they demonstrate attentiveness to both the individual and the community, and express genuine recognition.

Ultimately, communication must always uphold truthfulness, regardless of the circumstances, whether they be moments of triumph or failures. It is through this unwavering commitment to truth that trust can be established and nurtured.

Based on the above-mentioned points, I believe that communication acts as a pivotal key that profoundly influences the understanding of all endeavors, efforts, processes, meetings, time, and energy invested, both on an individual and collective level. Effective communication serves as a catalyst, fostering motivation, commitment, and an unwavering passion among those involved. It enables comprehension while igniting the spark of enthusiasm and dedication.

Communication also enables us to establish a shared understanding and coherence among all individuals, both individually and collectively, in the process of transforming our organizations. It facilitates the presentation of collective objectives and the necessary procedures while recognizing the importance of fostering individual and collective growth among the participants. It is vital to acknowledge that organizational transformation cannot occur without the simultaneous transformation of individuals. In this transformative journey, communication assumes a fundamental role in delineating our aspirations and charting the path forward, ensuring clarity regarding our goals and direction.

Furthermore, effective communication will facilitate our ability to articulate the rationale behind new projects and leadership transitions when necessary. Leadership should never be an end but rather a means to an end. In this regard, I propose a focus on communicating the purpose and objectives of the leadership roles we are establishing, enhancing, and reinforcing. What are we constructing? What is the essence of the leadership positions we are shaping? What are our aspirations and expectations? Communication holds a significant role in fostering a sense of involvement and engagement from all individuals within these emerging realities we are forging.

Lastly, communication emerges as a pivotal key in networking. Through adept communication, we become aware that we exist within an interconnected ecosystem, characterized by interdependencies and networks of connections at local, provincial, regional, and Institute levels. This realization becomes a catalyst for further exploration and development of our Marist Institution. Communication, in this context, becomes a catalyst for unity and collaboration, propelling us forward to deepen and expand our Marist endeavors.



In the realm of communication, the Compostela Province has decided to offer a formation program titled “We are all spokespersons - I communicate!” in 2023. This program is specifically designed for the leaders of various provincial teams and will be conducted by the Provincial Communication Team.



This program was comprised of four sessions that provided an immensely enriching experience, taking us on a transformative journey encompassing diverse aspects of communication. We delved into the art of effective writing, honed our public speaking skills, explored the significance of personal image and how we present ourselves in public, and delved into the nuances of selecting impactful photography for publication.

This practical training provided us with a valuable opportunity to contemplate the intricacies of writing, including how we compose our messages, how we interpret written communication, our intended audience, and the way we present ourselves through visual elements such as photos, images, colors, and branding. Moreover, it prompted us to consider the significance of communicating on behalf of others.

By understanding that communication encompasses not only what is explicitly expressed but also what is left unsaid—an invaluable lesson—we grasped the importance of ensuring that our intended recipients comprehend the intended message. This formation served as an exceptional learning experience, deepening our understanding of the vital role communication plays in perpetuating the Marist mission and its activities. It underscored its significance within teams, organizations, structures, and, consequently, leadership.

Recognizing the significance of effective communication, I believe that a Marist leader’s leadership capabilities can greatly benefit by assuming the role of both sender and receiver of their own messages. By embodying these dual roles, leaders gain the valuable opportunity to evaluate and enhance their communication skills. Furthermore, as communication inherently involves others, this dynamic emphasizes the essentiality of teamwork—a defining characteristic of Marist Leaders of Champagnat.



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