
Leading for future generations, ethically, with gratitude, and simplicity

“Leadership must not only serve the present and be faithful to the past, but also transmit the future of the project to which it is committed”

Br. Josep Maria Soteras, *Marist Voices* - Chapter 16

Ricardo Tavares
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I express my gratitude for being part of this initiative with a fraternal greeting to all those who contribute in any way to this mission. An opportunity like this, to add my voice to those of thousands of such inspiring people, is something I welcome with humility and joy, and I bring with me the voices of those close to me here in Brazil.

I've been married to Clarice for 27 years, the father of Lígia, Ana Luíza and Ricardinho. I am a Confirmation-Catechist and I help organise meetings of Couples with Christ in a community close to home. I am part of the Marist Province of Brasil Centro-Sul and I base my life on the values of the Gospel in unity, cooperation and celebration.

Today, I am an executive in the area of educational solutions and I hold the position of general director of FTD Educação, a company that for more than 120 years has been offering printed and digital educational solutions for students from 1 to 17 years of age, and I am very proud to be part of such a special, serious, ethical place with legitimate values. But the path that brought me here has been a long one, as a metalworker, teacher, book distributor and in a series of leadership positions in the publishing sector. In education, I consider myself to be a salesman of dreams, hope, positive attitudes and progress, both individual and collective.

One of the Marist pillars, love of work, for me means doing what you love, with whom you love and for a legitimate purpose. And the word purpose, according to the etymological dictionary, means “to set out”, so working with the mission we have here at FTD, which is to transform society through education, is something that quickly wins us over and invites us to get moving and follow the path between our daily duty and what we are called to do.

In this sense, working in favour of education naturally makes us people and professionals who are servants, because we focus on transforming the future of thousands of children and young people, making a positive impact on the teaching career of educators and the lives of so many families and school communities.

However, beyond this natural impetus that the power of education possesses, we need to know how to guide, teach and develop people. I’m therefore a great believer in the African concept of “ubuntu”, which, in short, means that those who go it alone may go faster, but those who go together go further.

Being a leader goes far beyond holding an important position and giving technical instructions. It’s a commitment, not just to the company or institution, but to inspire everyone around you, especially your closest team. After all, a leader’s daily choices have an impact on the lives of many inside and outside of work. A leader is a reference-point, even when they don’t want to be.

It’s essential to lead with planning and strategy, knowing how to recognise everyone’s strengths and weaknesses in order to make adaptations and recalculate the route when necessary. You also have to make sure that everyone is noticed, whether it’s the one who stands out or the one who feels demotivated. It’s a question of maintaining a balance and being together from start to finish, from difficult subjects to the breaking of bread, as on the “road to Emmaus”.

During my journey, what struck me most is the support I have received and still



receive from heaven, which reaches me quickly through people. Consequently, when I exercise my leadership, I try to return this in the form of welcome, active listening, empathy and humanised management, without losing firmness and pointing the way.



Putting ourselves in the role of servant doesn't make us any less of a leader, but it does show us, through example, a better way of carrying out our work. I believe that success is possible when we can see the people we choose to work with us having the same sparkle in their eyes and the same desire to make a difference that we ourselves must have every day when we get up for work.

Simple, everyday things can speak louder than complex speeches; helping to fix a billboard, taking a walk together or sitting at the next table bring security and messages like "I'm here", "I hear you" or "You can count on me". I don't rule out executive practices and decisions that require concentration and responsibility, but regardless of the context, the key is to be whole, never half.

Jesus, true God who became man, left us the message that he came to serve and not to be served. He teaches us to lead with humility and simplicity of heart. And this example carries us along, because it is a safe harbour that does not make accusations, but welcomes and brings peace of mind; sincere, honest, upright, transparent and that casts out all fear.

I'd like to leave you with a few simple tips that have helped me get this far: trust in God, love your family, work hard, welcome what's different and hold your head high.



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If you would like to share your ideas, reflections, or experiences about servant and prophetic leadership with the Commission as a result of these reflections, write to fms.cimm@fms.it

