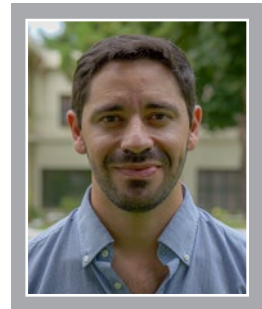

Leader, Historian, Analyst and Prophet

“Two leaders in the same circumstances, doing the same thing,
can produce completely different results.”
(Br. Emili Turú – Marist Voices, chapter 9)

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I am Rodrigo Rivas, 33 years old, son of Maribel and Roberto, husband of Andrea and father of Geronimo and Leandro. I am a Marist former student, and I took my degree as a public accountant and later did an MBA.

I belong to the Province of Cruz del Sur and live in Montevideo, Uruguay. I am currently developing the mission in the Santa María School in Montevideo, and I contribute at the provincial level to the area of economic and financial management. I was also part of the educational community centre Hogar Marista de Montevideo. Together with my wife we volunteered for several months in the Marist community of Santo Domingo, Medellín, Colombia.

A leader must be simultaneously “historian, contemporary analyst and prophet” (E. Turú, ch. 9). This has captured my imagination. I see in the conjunction of these three characteristics a powerful way of responding to the needs of today’s world.

Historian

The ability to be a historian allows us to identify our origins, to construct our story and from there to build foundational pillars that determine us, define us and make us unique. Both on a personal and institutional level, having clarity about who we are, what characterizes us and what we were founded for is an inexhaustible source of reference and guidance when we need to make decisions.



I understand that, when connecting with history, it is necessary to be honest, to take into account all the facts (pleasant or not), so as not to run the risk of creating a story in our own image and likeness that prevents us from questioning ourselves in order to learn from it.

Contemporary analyst

Being realistic, we find ourselves in a highly dynamic world where it is impossible to “keep up with the times”. In the 1990s we spoke of VUCA environments (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity), which evolved into the BANI model (brittle, anxious, non-linear and incomprehensible) and which will surely soon change again. Whether we like it or not, the world lives in constant change and movement, so it is impossible to understand it in its entirety.

But it is possible, and increasingly necessary, to subject the environments in which we are immersed to analysis, so that we can give the most effective and efficient response to the different challenges we face.

I believe there are some elements that can help us to better analyse our environment and how we interact with it. One of these is to rely on collective intelligence as mentioned by Heifetz, Ronald and Laurie, Donald L (2021. The work of leadership. Harvard Business Review), because given the enormous complexity of today’s world, the sum of different views gives us a greater breadth. At this point, it is especially important to include the views that challenge us or are critical of our actions.

Another element that can help to improve our way of seeing the environment is to “take a step back” (Lowney, Chris., 2021. *Three Vital Lessons from the World’s Tallest Leaders*. Forbes) to seek perspective, to move away in order to see more broadly, distanced from the daily noise. Turú speaks of a firefighter type of leader, who runs around putting out fires and is therefore constantly solving the problems that arise. This dynamic can diminish our ability to ask ourselves: what for? and what is the meaning of our tasks?

Prophet

The prophet is the one who “intuits the future” (Turú, E.). This intuition must be contextualised, that is to say, it must start from its origins, from its fundamental pillars, considering an analysis of the environment, in order to be able to generate responses to the needs that emerge. This vision of the future allows us to get a little closer to what we want.

Below, I will share some of the keys to experiencing what I have set out in this text. One of them is to build and promote communities and teams where, beyond roles and responsibilities, they are challenged to be historians, analysts and prophets in an open and honest way, in order to dream together that intuition of the future and agree on how to go about trying to achieve it, each with their own degree of responsibility.

In addition to this, I believe it is essential to be able to iterate the process, that is, to repeat the history, analysis and prophecy scheme with a certain frequency, so as not to get stuck in a





particular historical moment from which it is difficult to emerge. Constant review of the process is key to assessing when it is necessary to change or introduce modifications.

As another key, I believe it is essential to seek to be coherent between what we say, do and feel, both from an individual perspective and at an institutional level. It is this coherence that makes it possible to legitimise leadership.

In closing, I would like to share my thinking that in order to be a good leader it is not enough to be a historian, analyst and prophet, it is also necessary to “awaken hope” (Turú, E.). That is to say, to encourage others to believe that this intuition of the future is possible. To instil hope, it is necessary to trust, to cultivate presence and to know how to “share and communicate”.

I invite myself and I invite you to be sentinels of the dawn, to be capable of knowing how to wait, to cultivate patience and to be able to attentively and sensitively observe what surrounds us, being guardians of our history. I also invite you to be inspired to work actively and intentionally so that, true to our essence, the first light of morning will find us ready for what is new.



The opinions expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Marist Institute.

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