
Awareness as a servant leader: my personal journey

“If you want to exercise leadership that brings about change you [we] must be willing to change yourself [ourseves]”

(Kahane, 2010).

By being attentive to emotions, behaviours and reactions, Marist servant leaders become more self-aware and this helps us mature in our role.”

Br. Vincent Uchenna Abadom

Educator, Provincial
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I am the current Provincial Leader of my Province about to conclude my mandate. I started my leadership role by dreaming. I dreamt of a province where everyone is valued and giving an ample opportunity to be the best he could be, where team work is highly cherished at all levels in the life of the province, where old and young are well taken care of. I dreamt of a province where tribal sentiments, divisions and other barriers will give way to bridges and authentic fraternity. I dreamt of where new life is generated and nurtured to blossom.

For all these dreams to come true, I made conscious effort to accurately understand my capabilities through self-evaluation and feedback from the others. These helped me to identify my strengths and weaknesses as well as that of my province and the opportunities at our disposal which we must tap in order to solve some of our challenges. It became a bit clearer to me how my personality traits, habits and abilities affect my interactions with people and things around me as well as knowing well the realities of my brothers and province.

Leadership is about relationship and no transformation can be possible unless and until sensitivity to human condition is developed. If we cannot relate well, then it may be very difficult for us to lead well. In fact, any system that is not permeated with humanness will not and cannot work. Consequently, being mindful of my talents, behaviors and emotions enable me to embrace my vulnerabilities, and hidden biases and realized when they play out especially when things did not go as expected. I became aware that I can be very demanding in work and want things to be done well and on time. By so doing, some people find it difficult to follow my pace. Subsequently, I learnt to slow down so as to carry everybody along.



Besides, it enabled me to develop more empathy when I am dealing with people knowing that there is truth in the saying that “no one is perfect”. I learnt to listen attentively and with the third ear so as to understand deeply what the other person is saying and what he wants to say but not able to say it.

Self-awareness enables me to become conversant with my goals and how to align them with that of my province. Equipped with this knowledge, I was able to effectively communicate same to my team in clearer terms about the goals and objectives of the Province.

With the knowledge of myself and that of my province, I feel that in most cases I made truly informed decisions that have contributed in no small way to the growth of my province. Knowing that each of us has brought something with him for the growth of the Province, I was able to create space where everyone felt valued, trusted and empowered to be creative enough and contributed to the growth of the province. In other words, it promoted collaboration and innovation that led to the success of the entire province.

In conclusion, self-awareness is an important leadership skill everyone should develop. I strongly propose the practice of continuous reflective living for our leaders and anybody dealing with fellow human beings. For me I don't play with my 30 minutes meditation every day and 15 minutes examination of conscience before going to bed. These help me to deepen my awareness of God and my connectedness with myself and other people. It is of paramount importance to process and reflect on situations before, during and after every event. It requires honesty but at the same time requires kindness on oneself in accepting and dealing with what one will discover.



This will help the leader to develop self- awareness and a deeper understanding of oneself and others around him. Besides, it is worthwhile for the leader to be conscious of how his actions and inactions impact on his followers which can easily be discovered through their reactions. Most times, these reactions may not be verbally communicated but their attitudes and behaviors towards their duties will say it all. Moreover, a leader who wants to develop self-awareness should not be afraid of feedback. He should be able to encourage his subjects to share with him their true impressions of him. Finally, the leader should be ready to always acknowledge his mistakes openly rather than shifting blames.



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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