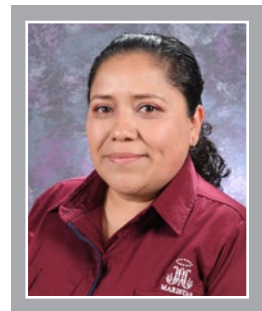

Live your mission every day in service to others

“In fact, I tell this story to highlight three characteristics that, in my opinion, should accompany authentic leaders, trust, caring and compassion, and a spirit of service.”

(Br. Seán Sammon)

Priscila Aguilar

Education, academic co-ordination of pre-primary and Primary School
Province of Central America, Guatemala



For 16 years I have been a member of the Marist educational community of Liceo Guatemala in the Province of Central America. With much gratitude, I enjoy the mission as academic coordinator of the initial grades of the school. This experience involves a relationship with students, teaching staff, parents, administrators, and other persons who participate in the educational project. In my process of formation as a leader, I have had significant learning experiences. The community has given me experiences with people who inspire me and whom I keep in mind today as an example of a Marist servant leader. But how do we recognize Marist servant leadership?

To answer this question, in the third chapter of *Marist Voices* (2022), Br. Seán Sammon asks us “what kind of leader do you want to be?” and shares a series of characteristics that clue us in. An exercise that helps in identifying the characteristics can be the relationship with key elements. In this sense, I would like to invite you to keep in mind the words of Pope Francis’ message “Educate in integrity, head, hands, heart and soul” (López, 2005) to relate them to the characteristics of a Marist servant leader:

1. Head

He is clear about the purpose of the project he is leading. He plans, foresees, organizes and is constantly reflecting on the processes and results of the work being carried out. He considers the actions to be carried out in the present with an eye to the future. Is interested in researching and reflecting on the needs of his/her environment.

They recognize their own mistakes and seek to solve difficult situations creatively.



2. Hands

Recognizes with humility its importance in the mission, as someone who inspires through action. Understands that it requires a team to achieve the proposed objectives but must build a harmonious relationship inspired by presence and service.

The relationship with people requires attentive listening, dynamic communication, and paying full attention to their needs. Listening, communicating, attending, empathizing is to serve. It is to be at the disposal of those who seek help. The leader is relaxed and demonstrates the pleasure of serving others. He takes risks, but with prudence, trusts and delegates, recognizes that everyone contributes to service in a project.

3. Heart and soul

Recognizes that each of its members has specific gifts indispensable for the success of the mission. It respects and values each member.

It is compassionate, admits its own and others' faults. Accompanies and cares, is attentive to personal and professional situations, interests and needs. Facilitates moments of dialogue and understanding which, in turn, allow the experience of family spirit, trust and belonging. Educating with integrity requires "harmonizing" the language of the head, hands and heart. In the same way, it is possible to "harmonize" the characteristics of a Marist servant leader. In the experience of leading as an academic coordinator, I recognize the positive or negative impact I can have on the educational community. Servant leadership is a special commitment and an opportunity to spread the joy of sharing life and service. Live your mission. Keep in mind the harmony of head, hands and heart to live the teaching, direction and pastoral mission from the place to sow the grain of seed.

How to live it? Firstly, by recognizing that, for some reason, at this moment in history, in the place where you are, you are the right person. Secondly, by living with gratitude and enjoying the service you offer to each person who comes to you and seeks you out. Listen and observe



One way to measure the extent of the characteristics of a Marist servant leader is to listen carefully and observe the actions of students, teachers, parents when you arrive at your area of responsibility. It gives me great satisfaction to be present in the playground during recess and to notice the confidence of the children who approach their teacher to discuss personal issues. I especially like it when they come up to me and call me by name to share what happened to their pet at home or ask my opinion on a topic of interest. Another significant environment is the teachers' room, where it is possible to have a casual conversation and ask how the family or personal project is going. As for families, the presence in the school's entrance and exit area becomes a valuable space for encounter and service.

Enjoy Marist servant leadership. I invite you to answer: how do I live my leadership today, with whom and how do I experience it, in what environment would I like to gauge my service?



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

