
Servant leaders based on values

“General awareness, and especially self-awareness, strengthens the servant-leader. Awareness helps one in understanding issues involving ethics, power, and values. It lends itself to being able to view most situations from a more integrated, holistic position”
(Robert Greenleaf)

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Marist Institute is a covenant baby, born not just born, but born a rock of ages. Looking at the stories, and circumstances around the founding, is prophetic in all its ramifications.

Servant leadership is necessary because the world is evolving fast and challenging too. In this 21st century, some leadership skills are important like critical thinking, problem solving, adaptability, communication skills, creativity, innovation and imagination, global awareness, collaboration and leadership. However, beyond these skills, the philosophy and spirituality of servant leadership is a powerful approach to collaborate in nation and world building, and to overcome the rapidly growing world.

Br Consigli's write-up, “*Marcellin a model of servant leadership*”, on *Marist Voices*, expressed some inspiring ideas like listening, empathy, healing, awareness, foresight (signs of the time), commitment to the growth of people and community building (*chapter 18*).

The key reflection in mind is Marist formators, teachers, principals, and directors, leaders in various capacities must be trained/prepared and equipped with modern formation, trained and retrained, learn and relearn, formed and reformed with at least with basic skills in counseling, accompaniment, spiritual direction, moral and psychological development process.

Conceptualization and foresight are motivating factors as Br Consigli observed in his write up as the ability to dream great dreams, and the manner to understand the lessons of the past, the realities of the present and likely consequence of a decision for the future. This in the mind of the servant leader, learning, relearning and unlearning become a pattern. Conceptualization and foresight have helped me unlearn the notion of ‘If you cannot win them, you join them’ I rather say if you cannot win them, leave them, go ahead they will join you later.



EXPERIENCE

If there is anything I enjoy doing most is working with the young. Their novelty, dynamism, energy, vibrancy, and responsiveness are appreciated. The reality can be the reality when the leader is not prepared to love them, be with them that is the pedagogy of presence, and accept them for who they are. My love and passion for them help me to be with them and accept them too. Humility, docility, listening, accompaniment, pedagogy of presence, and above all authority over them by harmonizing the instruction or formation in my life makes it easier to deal with the challenges in the apostolate. I take their psycho-spiritual, physiological, development meticulously.

LISTENING: a great weapon to enter the world of a child. It helps to pay attention to what the child is not saying, also the state of the mind, and health of the child. Keeping seriously the cultural influences, attitudes, and values of the child.

HEALING: the changing world has a great influence on children, some of them are influenced by divorce, dysfunctional families, and chronic diseases both them and their parents. I use the skill of the healing process, counseling, and accompaniment. I am called brother and unscheduled meetings are entertained. I pay attention to the shortcomings of people which in turn gives way to self-discovering of their great potential.

FORESIGHT/AWARENESS: Marcellin would call this sign of time, I give children formation for life, and life-giving training to enable them to stand the taste of time and the one to come. I lead children and colleagues to face reality despite the great challenges it might cause.

They come to talk about who they are and accept that. I make room for my own evaluation by them, a difficult task in the beginning.

COMMITMENT TO THE GROWTH OF PEOPLE: my passion for the growth of children led me to adjust timetable to accommodate help relationships for the children where their emotions, temperament, personality type, moral and spiritual sociocultural development receive attention during moral class. some final year students writing their final exams, rushed out of the exam hall right to where I was and said, 'You are a prophet' The other said, 'You are god' because everything, topic, and revision I did with them appeared verbatim. I give interviews, and visitation to students, and staff over one thousand and five hundred people termly. All that stress is to build them spiritually, academically, and psychologically and to encourage teamwork and build them, follow up, harness, and exchange ideas and find ways to do things differently.

BUILDING COMMUNITY: applying all the necessary skills like accompaniment, counseling, spiritual direction, family spirit; this gives rise to help the relationship. In turn community building, I live in contact with past students through social media. I continually counsel and accompany them in their challenges outside the school. The past students in our communication use the tag names they coined on me while they were with us. They call me oracle'. Parents of the alumni hold and maintain the relationship urging their wards to be always in contact with Br Mark, 'de oracle', meaning to say we all are in communication and relationship. They all feel one with me, it is like a family bond.

AWARENESS OF THE WORLD: I always create opportunities to link the past, present, and future by availing seminars and in-service training for





the principal officers and the teachers, with the student to prepare them for the future and of the changing world.

This is the hallmark of my leadership style that led me to embark in:

- My value-based approach to the educational project starts from the perspective of forming ‘a good Christian and good citizens’. I seek to protect the integrity of life and the quality of education. Through the Marist pedagogy of presence, I promote a values-based education from teacher to student; I encourage peer mentoring to educate values. Servant leadership drives all of this.
- I seek to educate students on how to live positively an integral ecology and the Care of the Common Home. To do this, I incorporate presentations on the components of the environment; I encourage tree planting, crop production, animal husbandry, erosion prevention, proper waste disposal and respect for all to support a better life.



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