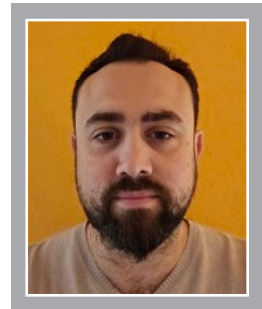

A small and free healing experience

“It has been said that we heal from the inside out, but that can be a slow process. It is a deeply spiritual journey to be undertaken with honesty and trust in God”.
(Br. Peter Carroll – Marist Voices, Chapter 5)

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Hello dear Marists of Champagnat! I am currently serving as a teacher, coordinator of the Human Resources team, and member of the provincial Mission Council. I must warn the reader that I am not the best person to write about spiritual leadership, nor healing; I am fragile, perhaps too fragile in these aspects. I understand that Jesus, as he often does, makes my weakness an instrument of his infinite love. That is why I have happily accepted this responsibility that has been entrusted to me.

I will begin by briefly commenting on some experiences in my journey related to healing and leadership:

As a child I was raised by my grandparents, who had just lost their son. My humble upbringing enhanced my leadership skills. Walking among simple people allowed me the possibility to discover the importance of the little things in life.

My humble upbringing in a suburb has helped me a lot in my leadership, always walking among simple people and that has given me the possibility to discover the importance of the little things in life.

I remember as a child in school, praying to then, Blessed Marcellin Champagnat, asking him to mold my life and lead me on whatever pathway he would entrust to me. I now understand that it was there that my long vocational journey began. My pastoral formation was with the Sacerdotes Operarios Diocesanos, a congregation that influenced me to serve our young people; however, I was never inclined towards the traditional pastoral ministry as I always found it uninspiring and conventional. In his chapter on healing, Brother Peter reminds us: “first of all there



is the encounter” and I was always captivated by this aspect of Jesus’ life, so I embraced it as my own way of living and feeling.

As I grew up, I realized that when I was not accepted, I would feel disappointment and sadness and felt like an angered and enraged wounded lion. I could not dodge that feeling and I did not understand what brought on that feeling. I could not find any other answer than my childhood experiences. Without many other tools, time went by, and I found myself developing leadership roles within the community. At times, I would come home frustrated and saddened, feeling that I was giving too much and doing it badly, that I was not living up to the leadership role entrusted to me. However, there was one thing that kept me going: someone always trusted me. Despite my frailty, certain people saw light where I saw darkness. To quote Brother Peter Carroll: “Simple words, always” (Carroll:97). Just as Jesus restored people to their wholeness, I felt restored by Him when people chose to trust me despite my frailties.

The Healing Process

The year was 2020, the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and I was serving in three different leadership roles. This involved dependents, significant stress, 25 kilos overweight, and high blood pressure at the age of 35. I had lost my father and practically all my grandparents. My family consisted of my wife and two children. I was grieved by conflicts in management with people, who, like me, had not healed and we “defended” our low self-esteem and ego. One thought kept recurring: if I wanted to serve, if I wanted to be happy, if I wanted to fulfil my mission and live, I had to heal.

“Jesus could heal because he himself was healed” (Carroll:99). No one can give what he does not have; as Jesus made clear to his disciples: “He called the twelve together and gave them authority and power over all demons and to cure diseases. Then he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal” (Lk 9:1-2).

I realized that I had to start my spiritual journey of healing from the inside out. It was difficult for me to embark on the path of silence. How daunting it was to listen to my inner self and connect with Jesus and with that wounded child who promised Marcellin Champagnat his life and service.

“Heal your wounds, accept your limitations and purify your desires. Overcome selfishness and touchiness and try to remove all resentment from your heart” (cf Mt 5, 23-24). That was the beginning of the journey: to heal, to accept, to put aside ego and individualism. Simple words so difficult to live out. How does one begin this process? With time...and understanding that uncomplicated “theology of slowness” to feel and do things. How to do this being an Argentinian from Buenos Aires, of Neapolitan descent, hyperactive and anxious? The most important thing was to seek help. As with leadership, fragility is part of our greatest treasure. Recognizing our weakness draws back the veil of ego in order to love and not feel threatened. It is the challenge to let others and Jesus enter my life. We cannot heal alone, we must do it with others and in community, promoting this healing and working for peace.

The second is Forgiveness: “If we are to truly serve and heal others, we must learn to forgive and ask forgiveness of others” (Carroll:106).

And the third is Humility. Sometimes professional responsibilities make us believe that we are infallible, indispensable and unique in solving issues. Leadership roles make us feel important with the possibility of making decisions and coordinating work teams. These ego trips, make for a deadly disease: the belief that we have all the right answers and no one else does. The path to healing is not possible without humility: accepting that we do not have all the right answers and that it is impossible to lead and serve without this trait. “Leadership based on humility is open and welcoming. It is committed to working in the interests of others. It prioritizes the needs of those we accompany” (Carroll:111).





As you see, my dear reader, I have not contributed much in theological beliefs or in biblical concepts; I have tried to share with you a corner of my life; my strengths and weaknesses. I have only forgotten one very important detail that I want you to know: humor and joy have saved my life. Living with joy and having a sense of humor have made my healing process possible, as well as leading me to the service of leading.

As I shared with you at the beginning of this document, it is and will be my greatest challenge to build a prophetic overview that will guide me to service and hope for our Mission as Marists of Champagnat.

Finally, I would like to share with you this quotation, which reminds us that healing, serving and leading are also a free choice:

“One day while riding on horseback across a plain near Assisi, Francis unexpectedly came across a leper. He felt an intense horror, but remembering that he had chosen a perfect life, and that above all he had to overcome himself if he wanted to be a “soldier of Christ” (2 Tim 2:3), he jumped off his horse to embrace the wretched man. The latter, who stretched out his hand asking only for alms, received, along with the money, a kiss.”



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