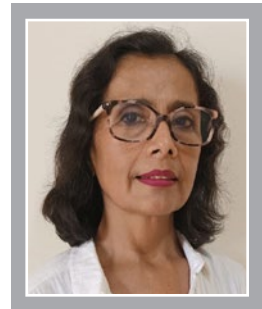

Each of us has an important role to play

“Those responsible for resources at the service of the Institute take good care of them...In their management, they show great concern for the common good, for justice, poverty, charity and the mission of the Institute. (C.101) “Father Champagnat was aware that he could not carry out his leadership mission alone, that needed other people to help him...”.
(Marist Voices, cap.10 - Br. Libardo Garzón)

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Province of Norandina, Ecuador



I am from Loja, a small city in the south of Ecuador, where the Marist Brothers began their mission in the country in 1957. My first experience of the Marist community was when I was very young. The Brothers educated my six brothers in secondary school, and then at university. The seven of us became professionals, benefiting from the Marist charism and solidarity. At the same time as starting my university career in Accounting and Auditing, I began to work in the Newspaper Library of the prestigious UTPL, and then moved on to the Secretariat of Human and Religious Sciences. This lasted five years during which I received my first practical schooling in responsibility and work commitment: organization, teamwork, vision and leadership in the service of education.

I was fortunate in that one of my brothers, Patricio, opted for religious life as a Marist. With him I learned more about this exciting life of service, dedication and love for others. I continued my work in the Provincial House where the fraternal bonds of unity with the Marists and their mission became even closer. As a secretarial and accounting assistant, I noticed some needs in the administration that I could solve personally; those that I could not, were also solved, with external help. As the years went by, the needs grew, so the team expanded. At that time, I was the general accountant and, like my colleagues, my tasks were never limited to my job description, but to what needed to be done.

After a few years, the opportunity arose to take on the general Marist administration in the country, a challenge I undertook with courage and with the conviction that I was accompanied

and supported by the whole community. This was not only a personal milestone. I became the first woman to hold this position in the Norandina Province, a step that represents a move forward in the realisation of the historical rights of women. One thing that was clear to me from the beginning, and even more so when I assumed this position, is that simplicity and humility cannot be lost when exercising leadership in any field.

Over the course of these years, I met very valuable people from whom I have learned a myriad of skills and advice that guide my journey. Brothers Patricio Gálvez, Laurentino Albalá, Galo Rivera, Germán Merino – to name a few – have been very generous with me, and have become my true guides in the professional and spiritual spheres. I remember long strategic conversations that turned into heated discussions on how to improve the management of resources for the benefit of those who came to the Marist ministries. There has never been a fear of debating, opposing ideas or changing course on decisions, for if there is one thing service-minded leadership demands, it is the courage to do the best we can and to do it with a strong commitment to social justice.

I am also convinced that this work is built in conjunction with others. Teamwork is the driving force of the Marist way. Each one of those serving our Institute plays a decisive role in the mission we carry out. Something worthy of note in this team is the way in which the tasks are undertaken: not only with responsibility and professionalism, but also with dedication, devotion and union with God that surpasses any area of work. If the works are sustained, it is also thanks to the lay people who serve, committed to the mission and charism of this great Marist family.





One of the most valuable things I learned was the culture of care. This has to do with empathy for, and attention to, the people around us, the collaborators and users of our services; and with the optimisation of economic resources to guarantee the sustainability of the mission.

In my experience, servant leadership represents the practice of principles that come from my own home and are reinforced by the Marist charism and those enacting it. The role of the leader is only possible thanks to a whole team that supports him or her in an atmosphere of fraternity and unity. And, on this path, honesty, tenacity, simplicity, genuine dedication, transparency, humility, love... make sense when each action is designed to serve others, especially those most in need.



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

