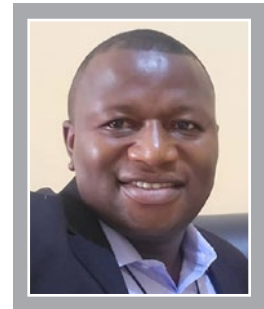

Evangelical & life-giving leadership style of mother Mary

“To lead in the style of Mary at the Annunciation is to do so from the place of vulnerability, which means to let ourselves be touched by reality, by people and daring to say ‘yes’”.

(Marist Voices, chap.17 - Br. Juan Carlos Fuertes)

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From a deeper reflection of the perspective of Br. Juan Carlos Fuertes, on Leading with “Mary in one’s Heart,” (Marist voices, 2022 p274–282), I got inspired by the search for meaning/purpose and our human tenderness that become a clarion call for every Marist leader in our humble vulnerable state of being and doing, to a special kind of servant leadership in the Marist Institute.

In my further reflection, I saw it as a special invitation to every Marist Leader to dis-identify him/herself from a mere ego-identification state to become in touch with our human reality so as to embrace leadership with a human touch. It shall definitely go a long way to enable the leader to create opportunities of growth for the members and to lead everyone to a realization of self-care and the care of others.

As Marist Leaders embracing the servant leadership style, we can only achieve all these by putting on the lens of our Mary, our good mother. She has a heart and world view charged by compassion, tenderness and a strong sense of connectedness. From these and marching with my personal experience of servant Leadership as a Marist Brother, I have the honour to invite every Marist Leader to embrace a new horizon of servant leadership in her style which I have discerned to name it as, “The Life-Giving leadership style of Mother Mary”.



Mother Mary, as model of life-giving Leadership Style

Every receives a special call in to a post of responsibility for the sake of a special mission which is entrusted to the individual to herald for a given period of time. This is designed for the sake of a higher realization of a particular goal, meaning and purpose and by implication always has a redeeming end of self, of a people, of a system and of a community at large.

Life-giving leaders are charged with a disposition to become deeply human and profoundly connected to themselves, to others, to the natural environment around them, to the choice of life the leadership position has for them and to their transpersonal God. As we progress, we shall see how mother Mary stands out clearly as a model of Life-giving Leadership style and invites our Marist Leaders to embrace this style as a very important approach to servant and prophetic leadership style:

Leadership that embraces the leadership position Values for a new redefinition of self, meaning and purpose.

Everyone called into any leadership position is often called from “one natural-environment” and entrusted to another “particular leadership position-environment”. A consciousness of this reality can only come from someone who journeys consciously in life and not from someone who journeys asleep in life. This therefore invites the individual in to making a choice to be present to this new process of becoming for the sake of the leadership position. When we look at the

life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, right from the moment of annunciation in Luke 1:26-38, we see how mother Mary gets in to this process of becoming and moves from her “subjective-environmental values systems” to embracing the “particular leadership position-environmental values”.

Faced with her new calling to become the mother of the son of God (leadership position), mother Mary allowed herself to be confronted by the reality of the Human standard of evaluation of events/qualifications and finally leaps into the arena of faith. This enables her to collaborate with the Holy Spirit and to make herself available to this special Leadership position. On her part, she takes a very important step towards self-preparation by embarking on self-work, self-processing or self-therapy, so as to confront all forms of her inner conflicts, insecurity, and her conditions of inner worth.

By so doing, she moves towards consciously defeating all forms of in-built human tendencies of ego-identification, ego-referral, ego-inflation and ego-deflation for the sake of the life-giving values to be born in her new leadership position as the mother of the son of God. This therefore becomes an ardent call to our Marist Leaders to constantly make conscious efforts to remain in touch with their human vulnerability and happily confront the “non-life-giving subjective values” in their makeup so as to embrace the life-giving position values for the sake of service to humanity.

Leadership that builds on and embraces a human touch in every task of service

Mother Mary comes again to inspire us that in this special embrace of servant leadership style, a life-giving leader is called to reach out in service with a human touch in our interpersonal human relationship so as collaborate with others for the realisation of the reason for our being and doing. This streams from the fact that, as soon as mother Mary embraces her resolute faith in the Leadership position to become the mother of the son of God, she immediately realizes that in every successful and life-giving human undertaking we need other human beings in the journey.

Luke 1:39-56 presents to us the immediate decision mother Mary took to leave her zone of comfort and to set out as an evangelical and life-giving Leader to express the human touch of her spiritual encounter, to the kinswoman Elizabeth at the hill country of Judea. In her, we see an embrace of Love, care, sacrifice, encouragement, understanding and deep Psycho-Spiritual connection. She drops too much of expectations in the life of others and learns how to ponder on every presenting events in life.

She does not react precipitous to whatever comes her way but weighs its implications, with a careful thought and reflection to be certain that her proposed action is indeed rooted in the Holy Spirit. Her consciousness of this human touch stems from the consciousness of the leadership position she carries because every leadership position comes with a special package for the leadership position to carry along.

Remaining attune to this special package makes a particular leader the bearer and promoter of the Leadership position. She now interacts with others attune to the Word of God- as she listens and puts in to practice (Mk 3:35), she remained connected to her son and his deeds (John 2:5) and above all, she remains always open to the power of the Holy spirit (Luke 1:35). As Marist Leaders, we are invited to embrace this style of leadership style with the Human touch so as to create circles of trust, love, growth and care of self and others.





Leadership that embraces all the presenting mysteries of life

To embrace the school of the mother Mary in her style of leadership, every Marist Leader need to always realize that every leadership position is a package of mysteries which invites the leader to be present to every mystery that unfolds because one is in that position. The life of mother Mary is marked by full participation in the joyful, luminous, Sorrowful and glorious mysteries as the mother of Jesus Christ. She attends to all these with so much responsibility without settling on whom to carry the blame; but rather as an evangelical & life-giving leader, remained as a source of encouragement.

This is the kind of leadership that constantly seeks to listen and discern the will of God in every life mystery: Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart (Luke 2:19). She must have allowed herself moments of quiet reflection, contemplation, wonder and awe at the greater mystery of which she found herself often only an unknowing part. These moments of contemplation also deepened her relationship with God: “The Lord is with you. ... You have found favour with God” (Luke 1:28, 30).

In her model of evangelical & life-giving presents: she communicates listening as a component of life-giving leaders and pondering/thinking through life events, as a necessity for the leadership position-values. She communicates hopeful and supportive presence in the mysteries of life in her sensitivity to the needs of those around her: “They have no wine” (John 2:3). She communicates a life of sensitivity “Do whatever he tells you: (John 2:3-5).

She communicates the importance of developing shock absorbers in our inner core to face life challenges with compassion and faith in every leader. We see her deeply troubled (Luke 1:29): there was no room for them... (Luke 2:7); ... and sorrow like sharp sword will break your heart (Luke 2:35); the missing of the boy Jesus (Luke 2:44-51; standing under the cross was his mother (John 19:25).

She doesn't allow any of these to crushed her but she rather sees all these as a means for the realization of mission values in the embrace of this special life-giving servant leadership. "Bless-ed is she who believed" (Luke 1:45). This gives a strong disposition to evangelical & life-giving Leadership style.

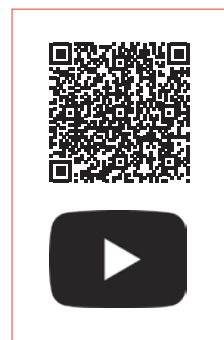
Leadership that embraces a life of Integrity

A life of integrity stands out as a sound quality of every life-giving leader as brought to us by mother Mary. In her life-giving style of leadership, she communicates a life of integrity marked by honesty, transparency, genuineness and accountability so that the servant leader can become the light for others in service. Through her disposition, the word of God becomes flesh and dwells among us (John 1:14) and the true nature of God is made visible through her. In fact, as an evangelical & life-giving leader, she became the bearer of God and a means for His realisation through service of humanity.

In her life of honesty, she communicates her truest self to the Angel of God: "How can this happen when I am still a virgin" (Luke 1:34). Through her life of transparency, the light of God is able to shine through her to illuminate our darkness and darkness cannot put it away (John 1:5). In her genuineness, she always makes a choice of being present and avails herself to the will of God for its realization: "Here I am, the servant of the Lord" (Luke 1:38). In her accountability, she sings her magnificat with so much confidence that she lives all her life in accountability to this song of praise as she embraces as a life-giving leadership (Luke 1:46-55).

Conclusion

The life of the mother Mary is so profound that anyone who makes a conscious move towards creating a space of encounter with her gets marvels at her school in every human life structures that are evangelical or life giving. Anyone attending to any post of service as a leader can therefore become enriched by her life of self-processing and faith, her self-giving and sensitivity, shock absorbing and compassionate encouragement, her human touch and full presence in the mysteries of life and above all her life of integrity that encompasses the qualities of an Evangelical & Life-giving Leader in the Blessed Virgin Mary. For our life to become more life-giving governed by Values, we are invited to embrace the Evangelical & Life-giving leadership style of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Good Mother.



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

