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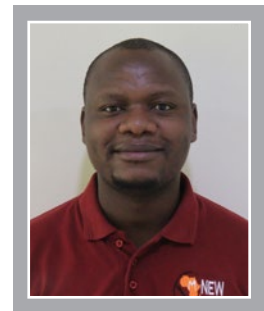
# Servant and prophetic leadership experience and inspiration

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“Marist servant leaders care deeply about the wellbeing and personal and professional growth of those they lead”.

(Marist Voices, chap.6 - Br. Ken McDonald)

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**G**reetings to you my brothers and sisters in Christ. I currently teach catechism to our students, especially those who would want to receive the sacraments of Baptism, First communion or Confirmation. I am also a member of the guidance and counseling department in the school. After having been asked to participate on the program in Servant and Prophetic leadership which was organized by the General Administration of the Marist Brothers, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you brothers and sisters some insights on how we should develop our mission as Marist leaders. This reflection is based on my knowledge and experience of being a participant in the same organized leadership program.

One of the major crises in our society today is the lack of good leaders. We see people fighting for leadership positions. The question is that when people fight for leadership positions, what is really the motive behind? Are they really being driven by the desire to serve others or is it because they want to satisfy their personal desire? As a Marist brother or lay, what kind of a leader are you? What is your own understanding of leadership? When given a leadership role, do you sometimes fill more superior to those you work with? In it when you try to answer these question that you may understand the type of a leader in you.

As Marists, our vocation is a call of love. We are called to be servant leaders. Every time we partake a leadership role, we should be driven by a mere desire to serve others. Let us always remember that the basic motivation of a servant leader is love. We should always be able to put the needs of others first. As Marist we bear the name of Mary therefore we are called to exercise a



Marian leadership. Like Mary who was attentive to the needs of others during the wedding feast at Cana, we too are also called to be attentive to the needs of those whom we work with.

What is important with servant leadership is that it helps in creating strong relationships with those I work with. It is only when there are strong relationships that people are able to live and work together within an atmosphere of love, trust and forgiveness. Bad relationships have destroyed some communities. As a leader, I may need to evaluate myself. Am I a unifier? Am I an instrument of peace among those I work with? When problems arise, what means do I employ to solve them?

My dear brothers and sisters, the world of today needs good leaders. Let us strive to develop a deeper understanding of what leadership is all about. It will be difficult for us to be good leaders if we lack the knowledge of the essence of good leadership. Leadership from my experience entails three major elements which include guidance, inspiration and motivation. Which direction do I want to my members to take and do I inspire or motivate them? It is in asking oneself these questions that I become aware of the kind of a leader I am.

My own experience as a participant in the Servant and Prophetic leadership program has brought me to the realization that the call and purpose of leadership is service with Jesus Christ as a model of servant leader who humbled himself by washing the feet of his disciples. What kind of leadership style am I more oriented to? Like Jesus Christ, do I execute my duties with humility and empathy? Do those I work with find it easy to approach me and if not then what do you think could be the reason behind? As servant leaders it is when we humble ourselves with simplicity that when we are able to draw close to us those whom we work with.

Our mission as Marists in the church is to make Jesus known and loved to the young people



especially the most neglected ones. In order for us to be successful in our mission, we need to first of all understand the emerging needs of the children whom we serve. We need to understand the current needs of the children of today. This will help us to be flexible in reading the signs of time in our bid to meet the needs of the young children who are entrusted to our care.

From my experience as a teacher, I have come to the realization that some of our students come from broken families. Some of them live alone as children because the parents divorced, died or they left for diaspora in search of greener pastures. Such children have no one to whom they can express their issues and concerns. They lack the attention that every child would need from parents as they grow up. These are the same children who I would often approach me to share the problems they experience. At first I would see these students as attention seekers who just want to disturb me for nothing but with time I realized that what they needed was a listening ear. I have had experience of people who came to me to share their problem and after sharing they would testify that they felt relieved simply because they have found someone to talk to. It is not because I provided solutions to their problems but only a listening ear. Fellow Marists of Champagnat, never underestimate the power of listening. Listening is therapeutic and it can heal the psychological wounds that sometimes people suffer deep within. As leaders, let us always strive to be good listeners.

Let me conclude by the words of John Quincy Adams that says, “If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more and become more, you are a leader. As a Marist leader, what difference do you want to make and what kind of leadership do you want to live? With Christ as a model of servant leadership, may our actions help others to grow and develop to become better citizens who can transform the society. Like Mary at Cana, may we always be attentive to the people around us and put their needs first before our own.



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](mailto:fms.cimm@fms.it)

