
Commitment, generosity and service: The experience of a marist leader

“In today’s parlance we would say that Jesus was an ethical leader.
He didn’t preach one thing and then do something different.
He modelled the very behaviour he spoke about”.

(Marist Voices, chap.5 - Br. Peter Carroll)

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I am a graduate in Fine Arts. I began my work as a teacher in Marist schools in 1995, at the Marist Santa María School in Collado Villalba, Madrid. Since then, I have taken on different responsibilities in the complex; I have seen it evolve and change, and I have grown with it as a teacher, as an individual and as a Marist leader. During the last few years, I have had the privilege of participating in various types of formation in the Province of Ibérica and in Europe, meeting very interesting people from other Provinces and countries, with situations and needs very different from my own. This has made me aware of Marist presence in the world and the place we occupy in that. For the last nine years, I have been responsible for the overall direction of the complex, intimately experiencing the richness and the challenges of educating children, adolescents and young people from a Marist perspective. Currently, my mission in the community focuses on the development, accompaniment and care of people through my role in the Human Resources Team of the Province of Ibérica.

Reading Chapter 5 of the book “Marist Voices” on a personal level and drawing on my experience as a leader, I feel the need to highlight some challenging questions and ideas from the text.

Conflict is an inherent part of living together. We live in a society with little stability, in which the pace of life is very fast, with a lot of inequality, misunderstanding between cultures, uncertainty about the future... All this affects our young people directly and makes it all the more necessary to have in our educational communities examples of respect, accessibility and sound relationships. Jesus calls us to be an example for the educational community, to be agents of healing in the conflicts of everyday life, with our students and with our colleagues, establishing a relationship of trust and respect between us. Acknowledging our failures and frailties makes us more understanding and empathetic towards others, and enables us to facilitate the repair of harm both in

ourselves and in our communities. We need to cultivate education in relationships, showing our commitment to the reality of the people around us, trying to understand their different situations, putting ourselves in their place and responding to their needs with creativity and sensitivity.

It is essential to provide a safe, inclusive and stimulating classroom environment in which students can grow in all dimensions: academic, emotional, spiritual and social, demonstrating our commitment to their well-being and their development as well-rounded and caring individuals.

The need for leaders who inspire hope for a better world, compassion for the weakest and unity in their work-teams becomes even more crucial in our environment. In these years as a head teacher, I have had to intervene in many conflicts, between students, between families and the school, or between colleagues. These are not easy times for a leader, but the resolution of the conflict and the recovery of harmony has always been based on good mediation, and on many occasions it has been necessary to repair the damage done.

On the other hand, in the words of Brother Peter Carroll, Jesus is the ultimate model of an accessible and approachable leader. To be inspired by his example means being present to others, listening actively, and acting with compassion and generosity. A Marist leader is willing to roll up his or her sleeves and work for the common good, seeking solutions to problems, not avoiding or justifying them but always putting the needs of others first. This idea seems to me to be transformative and indispensable for real and effective teamwork.

Finally, the idea of forgiveness as an essential element in the healing process is fundamental. Forgiveness frees us from the burden of resentment and revenge and allows us to move towards reconciliation and peace. Forgiveness, as part of the repair of harm done, is fundamental, as it helps us heal wounds, rebuild relationships and strengthen community on a basis of empathy and mutual understanding.

In this context, a brief reflection is necessary: a Marist servant leader has an essential responsibility in the accompaniment of children, adolescents and young people. This role is crucial





because it provides the emotional, moral and educational support necessary for their integral development. In today's society, the presence of a leader who practises personal, respectful and empathetic accompaniment can significantly transform the lives of young people. For this reason, the doors of our offices are always open to anyone who needs to be listened to, be it a student, a family, a teacher, a Brother... Recognising that each person has their own story and their own needs, and stopping what you are doing to listen to the needs of the other, is an act of generosity that defines us as Marist leaders.

From this perspective, the Marist servant leader becomes a true travelling companion for our students, walking alongside them, sharing their stumbles, their joys and the challenges of everyday life. This personal relationship is fundamental to establishing bonds of trust, allowing us to understand their needs and aspirations, and to offer them the support and guidance they need to reach their full potential, to find their path in life, to feel unique and respected.

In summary, Marist servant leadership is an invitation to live with commitment, passion and dedication to serve others, especially those most in need, following the example of Saint Marcellin Champagnat. This leadership focuses on fostering an environment of respect, accessibility and empathy, creating an educational community where each person feels valued and supported in their integral development. The mission of a Marist leader is not only to guide, but also to accompany, understand and serve with generosity, working to build a more just and caring world.



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

