A Different Way of Looking at Franciscan Servant Leadership

National Fraternity Chapter
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Tools

1. Scripture
2. Official Documents of the OFS
4. NAFRA and CIOFS Websites
5. NEC and Other Regional Ministers
6. Long, long, long list of Leadership Books
Most High, Glorious God!

(1) enlighten the darkness of my heart,
(2) give me right faith,
(3) certain hope, and
(4) perfect charity,
(5) wisdom and
(6) understanding, Lord,
(7) that I may carry out your holy and true command.
Most High, Glorious God,

Give me zeal for moral fortitude and righteousness.
enlighten the darkness of my heart

"When a man envies his brother [or sister] the good that God says or does through him, it is like committing a sin of blasphemy, because he is really envying God, who is the only source of every good."

(Admon. 8 St. Francis of Assisi)
A Pharisee and a tax collector went to the temple area to pray.

The Pharisee prayed, thanking God that he was not like the rest of humanity—greedy, dishonest, adulterous—or even like this tax collector. The Pharisee fasts and tithes.

But the tax collector—at a distance with his eyes lowered prayed:
“O God, be merciful to me a sinner.”

Who went home justified? Jesus said:
“…everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.

Luke 18:9-14
"The people who trigger us to feel negative emotion are messengers. They are messengers for the unhealed parts of our being."
We should be careful not to over-estimate our personal righteousness. Substance rather than image is the path to the heart of God.

Who we are—too often—determines how we perceive others’ actions and sometimes with disastrous results.
Right Faith: Trait 2 of a Franciscan Spiritual Leader

Most High, Glorious God!

Help me develop a deeper understanding of Jesus through his message of faith and salvation and how to apply faith in my capacity as a Franciscan Servant Leader.
And the Lord gave me such FAITH ... that I would pray with simplicity in this way and say: **We adore You, Lord Jesus Christ** —in all Your churches throughout the whole world— **and we bless You** because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

**[the emphasis is on Christ]**
Jesus consoling Martha and Mary on the death of Lazarus—

Jesus told [them], “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

Do you believe this?” [Do you have faith in me?] [Martha] said to him, “Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world.”

John 11:25-27
FAITH is a supernatural gift that invites us into the hidden mysteries of God’s own divine life.

- Faith assures us salvation John 6:47
- Faith will heal us [at least spiritually] Mark 10:52
- Faith paves the way to forgiveness of sin. Mark 2:5

Faith extends beyond Christ—to the Christ in others—we must have faith in others to do what they have been called to do.
Certain Hope: Trait 3 of a Franciscan Spiritual Leader

Most High, Glorious God!

Help us to persevere in HOPE believing you will always provide all that we need to form us into wise and loving Christian Franciscan Leaders.
All Saints Day Homily

“The feasts of All Saints and All Souls are ‘days of hope,’ Pope Francis said. The virtue of ‘hope is like a bit of leaven that enlarges your soul. There are difficult moments in life, but with hope you go forward and keep your eyes on what awaits us.

Today is a day of hope; our brothers and sisters [the saints] are in the presence of God, and we, too, will be there in the Lord's arms if we follow the path of Jesus."

St. Paul tells us that HOPE has a name. Hope is Christ.
For in this **HOPE** we were saved. Hope that **IS** seen is NOT hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do **NOT** see, we wait for it with patience.

**Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is the assurance of things **HOPED** for, the conviction of things **not** seen.

**Romans 8:24-25**
Hope is a life force that keeps us going. Hope helps us to deal with life’s problems. Lack of hope can lead to burnout:

- Shirking responsibilities
- Becoming exhausted and overwhelmed
- Becoming negative and cynical

But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 40:31
Perfect Charity: Trait 4 of a Franciscan Spiritual Leader

Most High, Glorious God! Infuse every inch of my being with fraternal love.

Jesus Washes the Disciples’ Feet
FOLLOWING FRANCIS in perfect charity:

The Beginning of Francis’ Life of Penance and Love

… for when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers.---
And the Lord Himself led me among them. ---
And *I showed mercy [perfect charity]* to them ---
and when I left them, ---
what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body.
IMITATING JESUS in perfect Charity:

“A new command I give you: Love one another.

As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 13:34-35

Jesus and the Woman Accused of Adultery
Without love for our sisters and brothers, we will have failed as spiritual leaders even if we look successful.

**Love changes everything**, determines what we do with our day and all our choices and decisions.

It is through the eyes of love that we see Jesus in every member of the OFS, even when they are being difficult.

Sometimes we must care first about the person before enforcing the rules and regulations, praying for wisdom. *(Do you agree or disagree?)* Think: Woman caught in adultery.
True Wisdom comes from the touch of God.

Most High, Glorious God!
Help me to make good and wise judgments based on prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit
And after the Lord gave me some brothers, no one showed me what I had to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel.

Testament 14
And Jesus said, “I have told you this while I am with you.

The Advocate, the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that [I] told you.”

John 14:25
Wisdom allows us to make wise use of our time. Trivia can hold a leader hostage and waste energy. St. Francis and Jesus understood that wisdom is obtained in a balanced life of prayer and action – engagement and withdrawal.

Wisdom is based on truth; not on knowledge [although knowledge plays a part in wisdom]. Wisdom is a virtue that comes from God and should be sought in prayer.
Help me to be patient with what is unfinished in myself and in others.

Understanding: Trait 6 of a Franciscan Spiritual Leader

Most High, Glorious God!

Jesus goes AWOL in the Temple
Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is patience and humility, there is neither anger nor disturbance.”

Saint Francis of Assisi

The Admonitions XXVII: Virtue puts vice to flight.
Jesus, speaks to his discouraged companion on the road, calling them “foolish” and “slow of heart” not to have understood what the prophets foretold. Beginning with Moses, Jesus interprets the Scriptures about him for them.

(We know the end of this story, but they don’t.) His companions beg him to stay and eat with them. And in the blessing and breaking of the bread, they recognized Him, whereupon Jesus disappears. **Understanding dawns**, and they return to Jerusalem.

Luke 24:25-32
Understanding is the best use of **spiritual** knowledge.

It comes from **exercising the virtues** such as patience and humility.

It is the ability to **discern the truth** in making choices and decisions.

Along with wisdom, understanding should be **sought in prayer**.
Carrying Out God’s Will: Trait 7 of a Franciscan Spiritual Leader

Most High, glorious God,

Stay by my side Lord so that my devotion and service to you will never waver.
FOLLOWING FRANCIS

[carrying out God’s holy and true command]

Therefore, let us desire nothing else, let us want nothing else, let nothing else please us and cause us delight except our

- Creator,
- Redeemer and
- Savior,
- the only true God,

Who is the fullness of good, all good, every good, the true and supreme good.
The Incarnation:
And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.

John testified to him and cried out, saying, “This was he of whom I said, ‘The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.’” …

No one has ever seen God. Only the Son, who is at the Father’s side, has revealed him.

John 1:14-15
The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:16–20
TAKE AWAY

Listening in prayer is key to discerning God’s will, and Scripture will support God’s will.

Seek guidance from others: spiritual assistants, a personal spiritual director, members of the council, former leaders, etc.

Seek guidance through OFS documents.

Be aware of our gifts AND our limitations—through soul-searching.

Seek God’s will in opportunities and circumstances; in needs and desires.
The Essence of Franciscan Spiritual Leadership

So What Must a Leader Do?

1. Above all, love your people, especially when their actions toward you are unlovable (not to be confused with being a doormat)

2. Be willing to take risks and develop a thicker skin (see #1)

3. Commit to working tirelessly, at times without tangible gratitude or reward

4. Be a servant leader—Be Jesus to those you serve.
The Essence of Franciscan Spiritual Leadership

So What Does a Leader Need?

Relational Components (External)

1. Restorative Prayer
2. Supportive Relationships
3. Respect for and Trust in Others
The Essence of Franciscan Spiritual Leadership

More Needs

Internal Components

1. Joy which Resists Discouragement
2. Character, Courage, and a Plan (Vision)
3. Focus and Passion
Question 1:

Describe the key actions and behaviors of persons that you have experienced as your best leaders.

a. Can you name a person who has had a tremendous impact on you as a person leading others? Why and how did this person impact your life?
Discussion Questions

Questions 2 and 3

(2) From your experience in leadership, what advice would you give someone being elected for the first time?

(3) What is the biggest challenge facing you today as a leader?
Question 4

How do you interpret the statement “Leadership is relationship?”

a. How do you encourage others in your region to communicate?
This slide has nothing to do with my presentation

But you must admit they are leaders!