

# Co-responsible Leadership



**INTERDEPENDENCE**



Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary



different ways. ... Each dancer pays attention through vision, reaches meaning through communication, achieves trust, and organizes for innovative learning. As Bhindi and Duignan maintain, such leadership-followerhip is more like a cocreation that emphasizes partnership, empowerment, and an end to maternalism and paternalism. (*Janet Malone, C.N.D.; in Human Development Vol 19 No. 3 Fall 1998*)

#### **A. Personal reflection**

- a. What insights have I received from reading and reflecting on the texts above?
- b. What questions does it raise for me?
- c. How does it match my personal experience?
- d. In what areas does it challenge me?

#### **IV. THE WAY OF CONVERSION**

- a. What bold action, if undertaken in your community, province, the Congregation could make a significant difference in the life of the community, province, congregation and in the lives of those who are served?
- b. What can stop me, us from doing this? What are some of my resistances? How can I overcome them? How can the community help me? And how can I help the community?

## **INTERDEPENDENCE**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The challenge of this time in history characterized by globalization, complexity, rapid change, etc. is to develop ways of establishing interconnections, networks, relationships of interdependence. Mission is not a solitary affair. Current studies in religious life and our own lived experience in the Congregation show us that the leadership needed for promoting the Reign of God in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must be collaborative, cooperative, coresponsible, i.e., interdependent. Despite the cultural tendencies toward individualism, independence, competition, etc. which exist in the world today, and from which we are not exempt, there is the desire to move forward in a spirit of interdependence. This is seen in the General Chapter's request for the study of this theme in the context of coresponsible leadership.

This booklet invites us to reflect together on an interdependence which goes beyond the need we have for each other (mutual dependence) and which reaches to the deepest levels of our beings, with all our inherent differences, and where our spirits are linked, joined in the search for God and the service of the mission.

Plumbing the depths of the logo for this process we can see interconnections. A Jewish mother who gave her son a few barley loaves (food of the poor) and a couple of fish, people who incited and invited one another, Jesus taken up by the crowds, disciples concern about people's hunger, a little boy willing to share his picnic, etc., these make up the participants. By their actions and needs they are interdependent: hunger for the Word and food, offering, thanking, blessing, breaking, distributing, collecting. This event in a time past is eternally present in Eucharist today. Eucharist is essentially interdependent.

## II. CONTEMPLATE THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

### A. Describe the lived experience

#### 1. Personal reflection

- a. How have you experienced a sense of connection, relatedness and community where you live? in your Province? in the Congregation?
- b. Where do you experience areas of 'disconnection' or alienation e.g. between members of the community? Between superiors and other members? Between different ministry groups? etc.
- c. Have you experienced synergy? Describe it.

#### 2. Community sharing

- a. Share the most significant example from your personal reflection?
- b. When has the community felt most connected? most disconnected?

### B. Analysis of the lived experience

#### 1. Personal Reflection

- a. What factors (spiritual, psychological, social) contribute to your sense of connectedness, communion?
- b. What factors (spiritual, psychological, social) contribute to your sense of alienation, disconnectedness?

#### 2. Community sharing

- a. Each one shares from her personal reflection.
- b. How is interdependence evidenced in our daily life? Our ministry?

empowering relational base.

... "The leader... is seen as a source of vitality and vision, ... . Indeed, ... leadership is in essence a visioning in which leaders and followers together shape the future according to the "big picture" of what the group is all about.

Bhindi and Duignan highlight this focus on the big picture with a story about three stone cutters who were asked about their work. The first one said he was paid to cut stones; the second said his job was to use special techniques to shape the stones; the third simply said, "I build cathedrals." The leader's role as a source of vitality and vision for the group is all about building cathedrals. "Leaders," Wheatly notes, "are being encouraged to include stakeholders, to invoke followership, to empower others." Today, with our awareness of a quantum universe and of the paramount necessity of interconnectedness, interdependence, and relationships, leadership is no different. ...

With its emphasis on relationships of mutual respect, the new leadership means dreaming dreams, encouraging others' dreams, and inviting the actualization of both groups and its members. "The dance of the universe extends to all the relationships we have," Wheatley writes. "Knowing the steps ahead of time is not important; being willing to engage with the music and move freely onto the dance floor is what's key." From this perspective, leadership is a challenge and an invitation to both leadership and followership. It is scary because it requires risk taking, yet exhilarating because it deals with the raw energy of potential.

... In a quantum world of relationships and interconnections, as Wheatly contends, "it is impossible to expect any plan or idea to be real if employees [followers] do not have the opportunity to personally interact with it. Therefore we cannot *talk* people into reality because there is no reality to describe if they haven't been there. It is the participation process that generates the reality to which they make their commitment."

... Leaders and followers influence each other so that the type of dance ultimately chosen, as well as the tempo and rhythm, come from both parties. It is in such openness of participation that the steps of the dance unfold; they are not preplanned but take their shape and form from the whole. The dance takes on a new meaning now... of [our] being carried along by the rhythm and beat of the music," O'Murchu writes. "Pray, who is the dancer and who the dance? Often it is more a case of we being danced rather than we controlling our movements and moods."

Leadership and followership are both about influencing—each in

given to a profound listening to the Spirit speaking through each person and through varying needs and local situations. At every level they ensure effective participation in seeking the common good.

- **General Chapters**

With the laity of the Congregation, we want to establish a close relationship based on trust, co-responsibility, and mutual respect. The identity of our SS.CC. vocation and Mission requires this communion with one another. The Congregation considers itself as a family of religious men and women and laity with its proper charism in interdependence for the common Mission. (*Joint decision of the General Chapters of the Brothers and Sisters in 2000.*)

#### **4. A Contemporary Vision of Interdependent Leadership**

##### **“Religious Life Tomorrow”** (Excerpt)

... We know that the deliberate, untiring act of building the circle of friends, fostering the interconnections of human compassion, and interweaving high-energy networks of relationships forms our mandate for the future. Community itself becomes part of the foundation—part of the illumination, if you will, of the living covenant between human beings and the world matrix in which we live and work. It is a particular gift that we religious are obliged to offer to our world. We have much to contribute to this mandate. The good of our planet and of all that is created, the preservation of life, is dependent on the commitment to fashioning a global communion committed to interdependence, healthy inner-directedness, mutuality and authority, a strong focus on the mission of the gospel, and a willingness to author the next generation. (*Donna J. Markham, O.P.; in Human Development Vol. 18 No 2. Summer 1997.*)

##### **“The Dance of Leadership”** (Excerpt)

Leadership is the force within a congregation that ignites the spiritual and psychic energies of the members to follow their dreams for the reign of God. Because it is contextual and interdependent, leadership does not occur without followership. Leadership involves the ability to intuit the group’s vision and, in the words of Richard A. McCormick ..., “the capacity to influence the behavior of others toward some goal or objective.” Yet in order to affect others, leaders must have a strong and

### **III. ENLIGHTENMENT**

#### **A. References**

##### **1. The Word of God**

###### **Ecclesiastes 4, 9-10,12**

Two are better than one: they get a good wage for their labor. If the one falls, the other will lift up his companion. Woe to the solitary man! For if he should fall, he has no one to lift him up. ...Where a lone man may be overcome, two together can resist. A three-ply cord is not easily broken.

###### **Acts 2, 44-47**

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people.

###### **1Cor 12, 12**

The body is one and has many members, but all the members, many though they are, are one body; and so it is with Christ.

###### **Eph 2, 19-22**

So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone. Through him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord; in him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

##### **2. Documents of the Church**

- **Vita Consecrata**

**50.** Finally, it is reassuring to mention that, at the Synod, not only were there many interventions on the doctrine of communion, but great

satisfaction was expressed for the experience of dialogue conducted in a climate of mutual trust and openness between the bishops and the men and women religious present. This led to a desire that "this spiritual experience of communion and cooperation be extended to the whole Church," even after the Synod. It is my hope too that all will grow in the understanding and spirituality of communion.

**53.** I encourage institutes of consecrated life to work together, especially in those countries where particularly difficult situations increase the temptation for them to withdraw into themselves, to the detriment of the consecrated life itself and of the Church. Rather, these institutes should help one another in trying to discern God's plan in this troubled moment of history, in order better to respond to it with appropriate works of the apostolate.

**55.** These new experiences of communion and cooperation should be encouraged for various reasons. They can in fact give rise to the spread of a fruitful spirituality beyond the confines of the institute, which will then be in a position to ensure the continuity in the Church of the services typical of the institute. Another positive consequence will be to facilitate more intense cooperation between consecrated persons and the laity in view of the institute's mission.

### **3. Congregational Documents**

- **The Good Mother**

"Try to keep everything in peace, charity, union, good will and this mutual support which speaks of the good spirit and forbearance of Superiors." (*To Justine Charret Jan. 26, 1821; in Cahier 10bis p. 24*)

"My dear Sister, be convinced of the sincerity and desire I have that the gentle and strong link which unites us should only serve to be strengthened and that, together, we correspond fully to the will of God for us." (*To a Sister of the Exterior Society; in Cahier 10bis p. 118*)

- **The Good Father**

"Kindly remember me to your neighbors, the brothers. I feel more and more that I am intimately united to them. My happiness depends on their

success and above all on their virtue. Indeed, persons in my position experience the strength that comes from such support, and when it is based on the Cornerstone, I no longer have difficulty believing that St. Paul would willingly have been anathema for his brethren. The symbol of the pelican does not sufficiently express the relationship which exists in reality among persons whose bonds are rooted in an inexhaustible source. I am always at peace within and am always ready to serve you," (*Letter of Good Father to Sr. Ludovine August 4, 1804; in Cahier 10 #201*)

- **Gabriel de la Barre**

"The Society of the Heart of Jesus represents in some way the harmony and blessed union of the saints in paradise... The saints of every age, of every condition, are known and are loved only in God and for God... Such ought to be the charity that unites the Associates among themselves... The diversity of age, of status, of means among all the members of the Society represent, it seems to me, that marvelous diversity which enhances all the works of the Creator and whose accord in the dwelling of the blessed will be such a charming unity." (*"A Response to My Brother"; in A Charism in the Church p. 230*)

- **Constitutions**

**55.** Aware that every community is part of a larger reality, we foster relationships with other communities: those of the province, the Congregation, the Church, and the world. These relationships enrich the experience of the community and help us to accomplish better our apostolic ministry. In this way our community becomes a sign and witness of unity in a divided society.

**105.** All of us are co-responsible to seek God's will and to collaborate in accomplishing our vocation and mission. The good of the whole Body is served by the different gifts of the Spirit. Certain Sisters are entrusted with the service of authority. They animate, give orientations and make decisions concerning goals to be reached. Above all, their ministry fosters communion and unity so that we all form one heart and one soul.

**106.** Those entrusted with the service of authority are called to exercise it in a spirit of faith and openness. Attentive to the Spirit, they encourage the co-responsibility of the Sisters. Government structures are at the service of life and fidelity in mission. They are flexible, so that priority is