**LEADERSHIP IS SERVICE**

How appropriate it was that Jesus Christ should learn leadership through suffering and service. The Letter to the Hebrews stresses this point (Heb 2:10). Jesus spent himself for the good of others, even though it hurt him and led to his death. It was God’s will to raise him up as a model leader.

Lack of leadership is a common complaint, but it's strange how we locate the problem out there with the official leaders - the fraternity Council, the fraternity Minister, the Spiritual Assistant -, never right here with us. Calling attention to abuses is important, but our own solid efforts to advance the common interests are essential. The salvation of our National Fraternity is not the exclusive task of a few who have been ordained or who have been elected to offices. It will be the result of the painstaking efforts of each of us.

Too often, we clamp the responsibility for leadership on the shoulders of our official leaders, and we proceed bitterly to criticise them. But our fraternity's vision, stability, and security demand a complete change of heart, from the highest office‑bearer to the most recent inquirer. No longer, “What's in it for me?”, but “How can I give better service?”

Leadership on every level is never an occasion for pride, prestige or personal gain. Leadership is a call to service.

Jesus said this: “You know that among the pagans their so‑called rulers lord it over them and their great men make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you. No, anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all. For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:42‑45).

Complaints have their part to play. They should spur both those in office and everyone else to examine the quality of their own service and improve it. But for every person pointing out inadequacies, we need ten working on needed changes.

Leaders emerge according to an individual's ability to contribute to the needs of the group. Leadership happens when a person takes intelligent action at the right moment to meet some need, whether it be urgent or slight. Leaders are not born; they make themselves, with Gods help.

We have our elected leaders, and in addition a fluid arrangement of informal leadership among the fraternity members. How true it is that we get the leaders we deserve, because the kind of leadership we have is the sort that we ourselves create. The key to leadership is in no one’s hands but our own, and the sense of feeling leaderless comes largely from within oneself.

We hear often that leadership brings responsibility. It is also true that assuming our responsibility makes us leaders in our own sphere. If we want to enjoy good leadership, we must first accept our personal responsibility.

Jesus Christ emerged as a leader while doing his God‑given task of saving people, freeing them from their inability to love others and God. He did his job at great cost to himself; he did God's will; he even laid down his life. In this way, he saved us. He is responsible for leading us all to our salvation and glory.

To be capable of loving is our salvation and glory. Jesus' last will sums up everything: Love one another as I have loved you.” Give yourselves, deny yourselves, spend yourselves for the good of one another, serve others, assume your responsibility and in doing these things as Jesus has done them for you, you will lead others and save them.

If we don’t know how to give ourselves, we are lost. If we don’t know how to deny ourselves, we can’t love either God or others. Self‑giving is the basis of love, leadership and service. Our lives gain meaning only through serving and loving. Life is made for self‑offering: the total offering of ourselves to Christ and to his people. We freely take on ourselves the madness of the cross of Christ, the mortal suffering that the love of our fellows asks of us: all the self‑denial, cares, humiliations, failures and ingratitude that service of others brings with it; because we are convinced that we have a personal responsibility to the members of our fraternity and our Church, to others outside the Church, and to God.

This is our task as Catholics and Franciscans: quietly and convincingly, to assume our personal responsibility. We need no great fanfare, no big scene. Just do what needs to be done, calmly and joyfully, secure in our conviction that God has given us a job to do.

We can never afford to sit there, bitterly criticizing our official leaders and their inability to lead us. Leadership is something that each person must develop within himself or herself.