

DIRECTED READING #15
THE LEADER'S KEY QUESTION:
AM I RAISING UP POTENTIAL LEADERS?

Introduction

Leadership in the charism is crucial to the future of our schools. This special form of leadership needs to be cultivated not only in the school's administration but also among other staff members who have the initiative and the ability to exert a positive influence among their peers.

Father André Coindre identified and encouraged the development of leaders in his nascent community. Even when exercised from afar through correspondence, his leadership was effective. Father Coindre identified needs and responded decisively. He appointed and mentored directors and formators and cultivated "pledge-holders" who were a network of financial support.

Two other effective leaders in the early Institute were Brothers Xavier and Polycarp. Brother Xavier's leadership style was rough and ready. Its weakness was found in his solitary approach. Nevertheless, he successfully restored the financial health of the Institute at a crucial juncture in its history. Brother Polycarp's style was more refined and pastoral but just as bold. He saw the need to move the Institute beyond the boundaries of France and identified leaders to carry the mission to America.

As the current stewards of the educational charism in our schools, we look to models in our history and also to contemporary expertise. This directed reading challenges the participant to explore the cultivation of leadership in the local setting and to correlate the selection with the essential elements of the educational charism.

Through this experience, the participant will:

- understand the need to develop potential leaders;
- understand the need to mentor future mentors;
- understand the need to differentiate between good organization and good leadership.

Reading

- *Developing the Leaders Around You*, by John C. Maxwell, pp. 1-15, "The Leader's Key Question: Am I Raising Up Potential Leaders?"

Suggestions for Journal Reflection

1. Do my present school leaders understand the importance of fostering quality future leadership? If so, how? If not, what are they doing to prepare for future school leadership?
2. What organizational structures in your school support the development of its future leaders? What has been your participation in such structures? How have they helped you to develop your leadership skills?
3. How is leadership in the charism fostered in your school? Whether formal or informal, how can this be strengthened?
4. Maxwell makes 5 significant assertions regarding organizational leadership:
 - acquiring and keeping good people is a leader's most important task;
 - an organization's growth potential is directly related to its personnel potential;
 - potential leaders help to carry the load;
 - it takes a leader to know a leader and grow a leader;
 - there is no success without a successor.

As a potential leader of a school, which of these principles challenges you most? What can you do to address this challenge?

Options for Additional Reading / Reflection

- The Educational Charism of the United States Provinces of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart
- *Brother Polycarp Workbook 2*, "Missionary Enterprise in America", Pages 55 – 58.
- The Memoirs of Brother Xavier
- *The Rule of Life*, Article 12

Prayer

*Heart of Christ,
You have called us to the evangelization of young people
in the spirit of the founding charism of André Coindre.
Direct us in our leadership roles so that like Brother Polycarp,
Brother Xavier and our other predecessors we may make
love the center of our lives
and the inspiration of our mission as educational leaders.
Help us to raise up other leaders in the charism
to carry on our tradition in the formation of youth.
May we have the grace to instill in them the courage and confidence
needed to make the best response to the Spirit's call
in promoting the natural and supernatural growth of all.
Above all, let us model an unselfish and dedicated concern
that reflects your compassion and love for us.*

Amen.

(based on The Rule of Life)