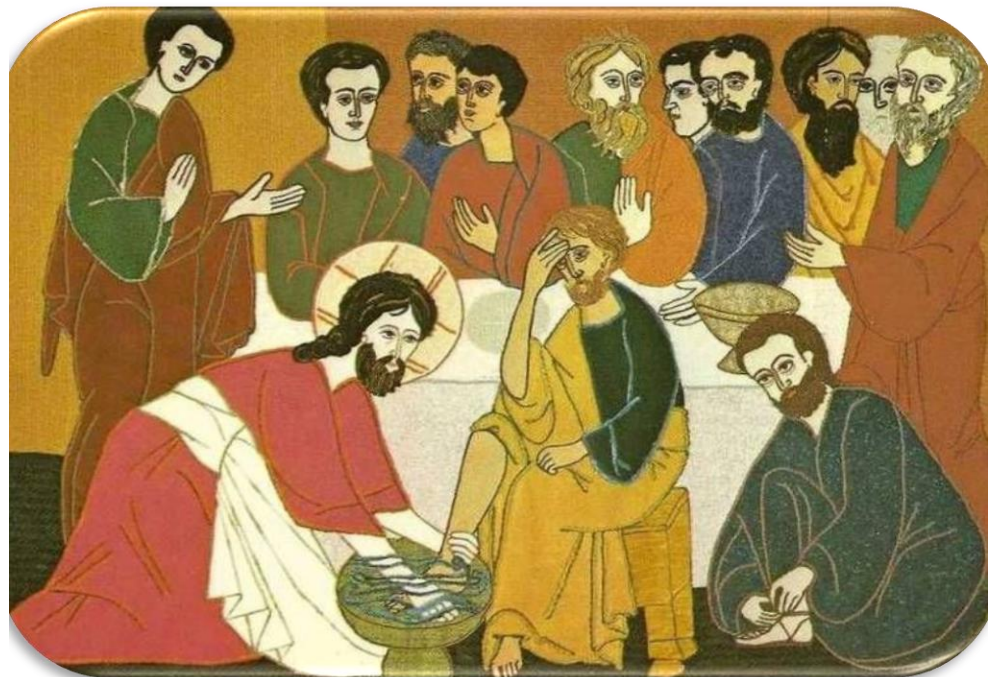




Being a leader within AIC: a mission, a service In the light of the Gospel



Contents

Introduction to the topic	1
1. Spiritual responsibility	1
2. Responsibility of unity	2
3. Responsibility of openness	3
Prayer	4



Introduction to the topic

This first reflection on the topic of leadership invites us to reflect on the following question: how can we understand and live our leadership mission as a **service**?

As member of an ecclesial movement, our leadership naturally has an **evangelical characteristic**. It is to be lived as a **mission of the Church**: we have received it, it does not belong to us, it is for a limited amount of time.

This evangelical basis, the imitation of **Christ the Servant**, who gave the example of washing feet so that we in turn could do the same, allows us to lay down some principles and some concrete guidelines concerning **how to exercise this responsibility**:

- A **spiritual** responsibility, the basis of the mission
- A responsibility of **unity**, the basis of fraternity
- A responsibility of **openness**, in order to move forward

1. Spiritual Responsibility

The basis of our mission, this spiritual responsibility invites us to **nourish ourselves with God's word** so that we continue to learn how to give the best of ourselves, as Jesus did.

“The more you get into the rhythm of regularly meeting Jesus in this way, the more you will hear him whispering to you in the silence.”

Sr Françoise Petit, DC

“Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening” (1 Samuel 3:9)

Praying, listening to the Spirit makes us grow in charity, humility and simplicity. **God shows us the way**, with our talents and our limitations.

*“Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain.”
(Psalm 127).*

Our spiritual growth progressively builds within us a certainty unity of life, strength and serenity from God that allows us to:

- ✓ Build **fairer relationships** with others
- ✓ **Bring out the best** in others
- ✓ Take the **necessary step back** in situations of conflict
- ✓ **Analyze** facts in the **light of the Gospel**
- ✓ **Go deeper** in our way of understanding social, political, ethical and other questions.



*“A person without prayer has no strength.”
(Saint Vincent, 13th October 1658 – Vol X, No. 103)*

2. Responsibility of Unity

Saint Vincent and Saint Louise understand the importance of being united and living in fraternal communion to better love and serve our brothers and sisters!

It is our responsibility to inspire the groups to create this positive atmosphere.

Here are a few examples of practices to be encouraged:

- ✓ Promote opportunities for informal meetings
- ✓ Motivate members to take an interest in what other groups and countries are doing
- ✓ Share your faith and the Word of God
- ✓ Dare to ask for forgiveness
- ✓ Give grace together for the joys received



*“Live together as having but one heart and one soul so that by this union of spirit you may be a true image of the unity of God (...)
I pray for this to the Holy Spirit (...) that He may be yours likewise and give you profound peace in the midst of contradictions and difficulties, which can only be frequent among the poor.”*

(Saint Vincent, Vol. IV, No. 1389).

3. Responsibility of openness

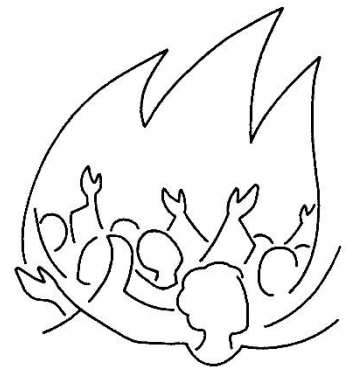
Today, no role of responsibility can be seen as a solitary job, at any level. Decisions are taken **together**.

Saint Vincent and Saint Louise’s way of being and acting shows that they had this intuition. Their collaboration, together and with others, illustrates that they lived by these principles; principles that today we call **co-responsibility, delegation, information, participation**, etc.

In order to live by this essential principles, it is our responsibility to always remain **open, receptive, ready to listen and respectful** towards those who are counting on us to ensure the delivery of the services that have been entrusted to us. It is a question of wanting to build and maintain an **atmosphere of dialogue, trust** and deep **reflection** with regards to our ways of working.

Roles of responsibility also require **detachment** from oneself, from **one’s own ideas** and from **what has always been done**. We must identify with lucidity, all the while being coherent with our charism, what prevents us from moving towards a more creative vision of the future. Opening up our hearts and minds requires the **audacity** and **zeal** that are part of our DNA as members of the Vincentian Family.

*“If love of God is a fire, zeal is its flame;
if love is a sun, zeal is its ray.
Zeal is unconditional in the love of God.”*
(Saint Vincent, Vol. 12, Conferences, No. 211, 22nd August 1659)

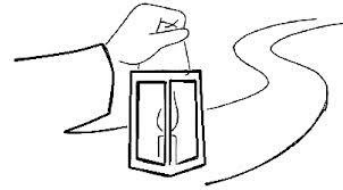


AIC’s suggestions for reflection in groups:

- 1 **Spiritual responsibility:** How do you take the time to resources yourselves, individually and as a group?
- 2 **Responsibility of unity:** How can we create within our group a fraternal environment that promotes unity? How can we be united between groups and at national level? What means do we need to achieve this?
- 3 **Responsibility of openness:**
 - a) How can we move forward in a way that promotes more participation from everyone?
 - b) How can we avoid being locked into habits and maintaining prejudices?
 - c) Have you ever blocked progress? Why? What were your fears? What helped you to overcome them?
 - d) Where am I in the audacious mission of encouraging my group to move in this direction of increased openness?

Prayer: Being a Servant

Being a servant is not a job, it is a gift.
Being a servant who follows Jesus is an offering
of love.
A Servant does not put herself
forward.



She is not the light; she is the hand that lifts the flame.
She does not speak to command but to help.
Her role is to promote well-being, to reduce pain,
To create the right conditions for happiness to be flourish,
To prepare the ground, to sing music she did not create.

Her time no longer belongs to her.
We are not named servants, we are called, we are invited
And we choose to become one in response to that call.

Being a servant is a great risk
Because all that is left is the gift of self.
Lord, you call us to be servants, to be the Gospel
Put your answer in us, make us "servants of love".