

Wellness and Spirituality for Leaders of Religious Institutes

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What is the spirituality of religious leadership? We will explore the nuances of understanding and cultivating a leadership spirituality. Unpack the challenge to cultivate and embrace a charism-specific leadership style as an essential reality of practicing healthy leadership in Religious Communities.

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Theology of Charism: An Individual Perspective

In a discussion on the prophetic dimensions of religious life, Archbishop Augustine Di Noia, O.P., distinguished two kinds of grace given to consecrated men and women:

- *gratia gratum faciens* (sanctifying grace)
- *gratia gratis data* (charism)

Sanctifying grace confers holiness on the individual, while **charism** is a social grace freely granted for helping others to come to God.

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Theology of Charism: An Individual Perspective

How does one individual help another to come to God?

1. Christocentric Model:
 - Configuration to Christ
 - Evangelical Counsels
2. Trinitarian Model

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Theology of Charism: An Individual Perspective

Configuration to Christ:

“The ongoing configuration to Christ comes about according to the charism and provisions of the institute to which the religious belongs. Each has its own spirit, character, purpose, and tradition, and it is in accordance with these that the religious grow in their union with Christ.” (EE, n. 46)

“Although these different categories are a manifestation of the one mystery of Christ, the lay faithful have as their specific but not exclusive characteristic, activity in the world; the clergy, ministry; consecrated men and women, special conformity to Christ, chaste, poor and obedient.” (VC, n. 31)

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Theology of Charism: An Individual Perspective

“As a way of showing forth the Church's holiness, *it is to be recognized that the consecrated life, which mirrors Christ's own way of life, has an objective superiority.* Precisely for this reason, it is an especially rich manifestation of Gospel values and a more complete expression of the Church's purpose, which is the sanctification of humanity. The consecrated life proclaims and in a certain way anticipates the future age, when the fullness of the Kingdom of heaven, already present in its first fruits and in mystery, will be achieved, and when the children of the resurrection will take neither wife nor husband, but will be like the angels of God (cf. Mt 22:30).” (VC, 32.)

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Theology of Charism: An Individual Perspective

Configuration to Christ:

- His values
- His life
- In communion
- Anticipation of the Kingdom
- Evangelical counsels were the form of the life of Christ
 - total self-gift
 - "exhaust" what we are capable of giving (Von Balthasar)
- To give witness to some specific aspect of His Mystery

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Theology of Charism: A Communal Perspective

The distinctive character of every Institute

"There are many Religious Institutes in the Church, each differing one from the other according to its proper character (cf. *PC* 7, 8, 9, 10). Each, however, contributes its own vocation as a gift raised up by the Spirit through the work of *outstanding men and women* (cf. *LG* 45; *PC* 1; 2), and authentically approved by the sacred hierarchy." (*MR*, n. 11)

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Theology of Charism: A Communal Perspective

The distinctive character of every Institute

“The very charism of the Founders (*Evang. nunt.* 11) appears as an “*experience of the Spirit*,” transmitted to their disciples to be lived, safeguarded, deepened and constantly developed by them, in harmony with the Body of Christ continually in the process of growth. “It is for this reason that the distinctive character of various religious institutes is preserved and fostered by the Church” (*LG* 44; cf. *CD* 33; 35, 1; 35, 2; etc.). This *distinctive character* also involves a particular style of sanctification and of apostolate, which creates its particular tradition, with the result that one can readily perceive its objective elements.” (*MR*, n. 11)

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Theology of Charism: A Communal Perspective

The distinctive character of every Institute

“ The distinguishing mark of the religious institute is found in the way in which these values of Christ are visibly expressed. For this reason, the content of the vows in each institute, as expressed in its constitutions, must be clear and unambiguous....Implicit in the commitment to the institute which the vows include is the pledge to live a common life in communion with the brothers or sisters of the community. The religious undertakes to live in fidelity to the nature, purpose, spirit and character of the institute as expressed in its constitutions, proper law, and sound traditions. “ (*EE*, n. 16)

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Theology of Charism: A Communal Perspective

A Communal Gift

“It is therefore necessary to promote an institute's charismatic identity, especially to avoid a kind of *genericism*, which is a true threat to the vitality of a religious community.” (FLIC, n. 46)

“A community is formative to the extent that it permits each one of its numbers to grow in fidelity to the Lord according to the charism of his or her institute....To accomplish this, the members must be clear among themselves on why the community exists, and on its basic objectives.” (PI, n. 27)

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Theology of Charism: A Communal Perspective

A Communal Gift

“To live in community is to live the will of God together, in accordance with the orientation of the charismatic gift received by the founder from God and transmitted to his or her disciples and followers. The renewal of recent years, re-emphasizing the importance of the originating charism by rich theological reflection, has promoted the unity of the community, which is seen as bearer of this same gift from the Spirit, a gift to be shared with the brothers or sisters, and by which it is possible to enrich the Church ‘for the life of the world.’ A deepened understanding of the charism leads to a clearer vision of one's own identity, around which it is easier to build unity and communion.” (FLIC, n. 45)

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Theology of Charism: A Communal Perspective

“...All must be fully convinced that the quest for ever greater conformity to the Lord is the guarantee of any renewal which seeks to remain faithful to an Institute's original inspiration. In this spirit there is a pressing need today for every Institute *to return to the Rule*, since the Rule and Constitutions provide a map for the whole journey of discipleship, in accordance with a specific charism confirmed by the Church.” (VC, n. 37)

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Two Questions

1. How am I called to holiness?
2. How are others led to holiness through my calling?

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A Word on Asceticism

- There are three functions of ascetical practices:
 1. educative or formative;
 2. cathartic or purifying; and
 3. apostolic or in atonement for sins.
- Each function contributes to the development of holiness.

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Amedeo Cencini

- One conforms to the divine mystery by letting it mold gestures, words, thoughts, and desires.
- This is a certain way of being, consisting of behavior, attitudes, sensibility and aspirations, of moral qualities and characteristic virtues, from prayer to the style of interpersonal relations, from predisposition to a certain type of apostolate to the characteristic way of living the consecration itself and of interpreting vows and community life.

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*Amedeo
Cencini*

The *Ratio Formationis* cannot be generic on this: the indefiniteness of such a project creates disaffection towards the charism.

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Spiritual Direction & Asceticism

A spiritual director pays great attention to the formative nature of ascetical practices. Some people may desire to deepen their spiritual life with their own, often romantic, concepts of asceticism. However, ascetical practices should be chosen that help form a person who desires to imitate Christ, to be mature, to live a particular form of holiness, and to love others with a heart that is totally open to the will of God and care for the people.

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Embrace your particular
call to holiness!

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What does this have to do with
Healthy Leadership?

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Dimensions of Burnout

1. Exhaustion: the person feels over-extended, depleted of one's emotional, physical (and spiritual) resources
2. Cynicism: becoming negative, callous, detached
3. Inefficacy: feeling incompetent, lack of achievement and productivity

-Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996

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For religious and clergy,
the danger is
cynicism and burnout.

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If over 42% of priests “feel overwhelmed with the amount of work I have to do,” why do they not score higher on the Burnout Scale?

Rossetti, S. J. & Rhoades, C. J. (2013)

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Predictors of Burnout

- Not having close friends
- Poor self-image
- Dysfunctional background
- Low job satisfaction
- Poor relationship to God
- *Taking time off barely related to burnout*

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Conclusion

Those who liked their work, had a good support system of friends, and a good spiritual life were unlikely to burn out, regardless of how hard they worked.

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Why...

Are our youngest priests suffering most from burnout?

Some possible reasons:

- Adjusting to priesthood
- Surrounded by unsupportive culture
- Becoming pastors at early age
- Bringing more psychological baggage (dysfunctional families, higher rates of childhood mental problems, more divorced families)

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The Service of Authority and Obedience (2008)

Consecrated life is a **witness of the search for God**

- Service of authority: being the sign of unity and the guide in the common search of carrying out the will of God
- The intent and limitations of the document: less individualistic, spirituality of communion
- Obedience and authority always have a relation to Christ – the obedient Servant

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The Service of Authority and Obedience (2008)

13. Some priorities in the service of authority

- In consecrated life authority is first of all a spiritual authority
- Persons in authority are called to guarantee to the community the time for and the quality of prayer
- Persons in authority are called to promote the dignity of the person
- Persons in authority are called to inspire courage and hope in the midst of difficulties

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The Service of Authority and Obedience (2008)

13. Some priorities in the service of authority

- Persons in authority are called to keep the **charism** of their own religious family alive
- Persons in authority are called to keep alive the “**sentire cum ecclesia**”
- Persons in authority are called to accompany the journey of **ongoing formation**

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The Service of Authority and Obedience (2008)

SECOND PART – to construct **fraternal communities**

- Persons in authority at the service of the community, the community at the service of the Reign of God
- For a **spirituality of communion** and a **communitarian holiness**
- The role of persons in authority for the growth of the community: ***listening, creation of an atmosphere favorable to dialogue, sharing and co-responsibility, soliciting the contribution of all for the concerns of all, at the service of the individual and of the community, Community discernment***

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Lessons

1. Less individualistic, spirituality of communion
2. Persons in authority are called to guarantee the time for and the quality of prayer
3. Persons in authority are called to keep the charism of their own religious family alive
4. To construct fraternal communities
5. Community discernment

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QUESTIONS

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