



VIRTUE CORNER

Leadership is influence, nothing less and nothing more. The deeper the influence a person has over others, and the more people someone influences (directly or indirectly), the greater the level of leadership. If the influence moves people towards virtue and happiness, its quality is good; if it moves people towards selfishness and vice, its quality is bad. Leadership, in short, consists of influence.

Some people exercise influence because their personality is naturally magnetic. Others, like actors or athletes, occupy social positions that give them influence. Politicians, executives, and intellectuals exercise influence both because of their position and their expertise. Parents influence their children by the natural bonds of family. All these cases deal with leadership, because they deal with influence.

To become a more effective leader, therefore, requires two things: 1) increasing the scope of your influence (the amount of people you influence and the depth to which you influence them), and; 2) increasing the quality of your influence – making it move others closer to the fulfillment of God’s plan for their lives.

History has shown, over and over again, that selfish people have gained and exercised detrimental influence largely because unselfish people didn’t gain and exercise advantageous influence. Original sin was the serpent’s influence over Eve and Eve’s poor influence over Adam or Adam’s lack of positive influence over Eve. Thus the old saying, “All it takes for evil to win is for good men to do nothing.”

The body’s immune system exercises definitive influence over the integrity of the entire organism, neutralizing corrosive and potentially deadly invaders. Authentic Christians are like the immune system for mankind; when they slack off in their efforts to evangelize culture, moral sicknesses spread, throwing the world into chaos and souls into spiritual ignorance and possibly hell.

Yet, to exercise influence for its own sake could be driven by pride and vanity. But if we do so with the purest of intentions, as servant leaders, then influencing can be a gift and an act of humility. Purity of intention is key as is an attitude of service! Therefore, those Christians who have been gifted with natural qualities or social positions that increase their leadership potential have a special opportunity and obligation to influence culture for Christ.

“When someone is given a great deal, a great deal will be demanded of that person; when someone is entrusted with a great deal, of that person even more will be expected.”

— Gospel of Luke 12:48



GOSPEL REFLECTION (30 MIN)

“The Greatest Commandment”

Matthew 5:13-16

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time."

Questions for Discussion:

1. Context. The first passage comes from the Sermon on the Mount at the beginning of Christ's mission. He is preaching his doctrine which leans on the Old Testament Law but enhances and expands it. His disciples are to be salt and light for others. What are the characteristics of how salt and light influence?
2. What are the areas of your life where you are called to be salt and light? How purposeful are you in that mission?
3. Jesus uses a negative motivation. If salt and light don't do their job, they are pretty useless. It reminds us of the saying "if you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" What evidence against you as a Christian leader would there be from the last month?
4. Do we believe that sharing our faith is one of the best gifts we can offer someone? Is sharing Lumen and what it can bring to someone's life a gift I offer as intentionally as I offer my business, stories about my kids, my last vacation?
5. We all heard this song growing up, "They'll know we are Christians by our love"; could you say this is true about yourself in your place of work? Do you love better than your work associates? Do you stand out for your humility?
6. In the spirit of Pope Francis, how are you "getting your hands dirty" in helping the poor and marginalized? Are you trying to get your wife and kids involved in this effort?

Lay people also fulfill their prophetic mission by evangelization, that is, the proclamation of Christ by word and the testimony of life. For evangelization acquires a specific property and peculiar efficacy because it is accomplished in the ordinary circumstances of the world... This witness of life, however, is not the sole element in the apostolate; the true apostle is on the lookout for occasions of announcing Christ by word, either to unbelievers... or to the faithful.
(Catechism of the Catholic Church #905)





CASE DISCUSSION (30 MIN)

2 ways to go about it. Read the Case and discuss afterwards how it can apply to your leadership, parenting style. Or ask a member to voluntarily offer their challenges in practicing humility at home, in the work place or in their lumen action (volunteer work). The circle can offer some personal experiences on how they have confronted and resolved similar difficulties.

Or the example of the Early Christians and how they exercised their influence by way of “testimony” is shown in the 2nd century text called the epistle of Diognetus.

For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life.

They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all others; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death, and restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonored, and yet in their very dishonor are glorified. They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honor; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life; they are assailed by the Jews as foreigners, and are persecuted by the Greeks; yet those who hate them are unable to assign any reason for their hatred.

To sum up all in one word – what the soul is in the body, that are Christians in the world. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body, and Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, yet is not of the body; and Christians dwell in the world, yet are not of the world. The invisible soul is guarded by the visible body, and Christians are known indeed to be in the world, but their godliness remains invisible. The flesh hates the soul, and wars against it, though itself suffering no injury, because it is prevented from enjoying pleasures; the world also hates the Christians, though in nowise injured, because they abjure pleasures.

1. How am I “the soul” in the world by the way I influence and give life?
2. The fundamental element of being a Christian is not in the externals, but in the attitude and heart with which I work. How do I cultivate and live these fundamental Christian attitudes?
3. Am I intentionally and actively helping influence others towards Christ?
4. Am I ashamed to step out or do I do so proudly, confidently, regularly and actively?



Self-Assessment and Key Takeaways (10 min)

Core Values Assessment. Spend 10 minutes in silence assessing positive and negative examples of how you have demonstrated humility in your relationship with others and God. What times have you most often had this attitude and in what circumstances do you tend to lose it? The below quadrant can help in jotting down some of

What struck me in this circle and how I might apply it to my THINKING. What CRITICAL ISSUES am I facing? What is the biggest CHALLENGES with these issues I face and what OPPORTUNITIES does it present.

Prayer:

Family:

Business:

Lumen Action:

What ACTION STEPS can I take now or long term? Develop a concrete resolution for how you can improve in your efforts to exercise Christian charity in you interactions with others during the next month. Your resolution should be a specific action or activity that is easily measured.



Resources:

<https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/Influence>

<https://www.openbible.info/topics/influence>

Catch phrases for sharing the Gospel Influence

- Give God what's right -- not what's left.
- Man's way leads to a hopeless end -- God's way leads to an endless hope.
- A lot of kneeling will keep you in good standing.
- Don't put a question mark where God puts a period.
- When praying, don't give God instructions - just report for duty.
- We don't change God's message -- His message changes us.
- Plan ahead -- It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.
- Most people want to serve God, but only in an advisory position.
- Suffering from truth decay? Brush up on your Bible.
- Exercise daily -- walk with the Lord.
- Never give the devil a ride -- he will always want to drive.
- Give Satan an inch & he'll be a ruler.
- Be ye fishers of men -- you catch them & He'll clean them.
- God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.

The Wisdom of the Ages on Influence

All great leaders have one thing in common: they connect with people. (John Maxwell)

Do good to your friends to keep them, to your enemies to win them. (Benjamin Franklin)

Neither a wise man nor a brave man lies down on the tracks of history to wait for the train of the future to run over him. (Dwight D Eisenhower)

A spoonful of honey will catch more flies than a gallon of vinegar. (Benjamin Franklin)

Am I not destroying my enemies when I make friends of them? (Abraham Lincoln)

A leader leads by example, whether he intends to or not. (Author unknown)

You do not lead by hitting people over the head. That's assault, not leadership. (Dwight D. Eisenhower)

People teach what they know, but they reproduce what they are. (John Maxwell)

When people become confident in the leader, they become confident in the vision. (John Maxwell)

Unhappy the land that is in need of heroes. (Bertolt Brecht)

The spirit of man is more important than mere physical strength, and the spiritual fiber of a nation than its wealth. (Dwight D Eisenhower)

