



MESSAGE AT THE INAUGURATION OF IGNATIAN LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME (TOT) ISI, BENGALURU

Ignatian Leadership Programme (ILP) is the brain child of Fr General. He delegated the responsibility of this programme to his delegate for Apostolic Planning, Fr Dardis and he conceptualized the programme.

ILP is founded on two key concepts: Ignatius and the leadership. The significant source of Ignatian perspective is his Spiritual Exercises. It is in the Spiritual Exercises one finds his basic concepts: finding God in all things, discernment, Magis, gift of imagination, journaling, etc. The Ignatian Leadership Programme is built on the Spiritual Exercises and the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus.

ILP is an effort to share Ignatian heritage with the Ignatian family: Jesuits and the collaborators, and gradually with others. Incidentally, we are in the Ignatian Year, during which we contemplate the conversion of St Ignatius. The focus of the conversion Ignatius is not he but God. We recall how God engineered this process in the life of St Ignatius and to open ourselves so that God may initiate a similar process in us. What deepened the process of conversion in St Ignatius was his focus. He focussed within, the world of his interior movements and deciphered their source and purpose and found a method of seeking and finding God's will. It is the reason of his conversion and foundation of the Ignatian Leadership.

The ILP does not imply that you are unaware of this and that you are not leaders. As children of God, who reflect the image and likeness of God are leaders and the ILP is to harness your knowledge of Ignatian heritage, and hone your leadership. ILP just gives you another perspective, a different attitude, skill and a way of proceeding to your leadership.

Dear friends, any programme, including the ILP becomes a success if you, participants, pick up the skills, become trainers and usher in a culture of leadership. I am sure, you will invest your energy and time, talents and capacities well and go out as ambassadors of Ignatian leadership, agents of change. I wish you all success. As Ignatius told St Francis Xavier, I will also tell you the same thing: go and set the world on fire.

Nowadays there is a shift in leadership, movement from vertical to horizontal structures, from a control to an empowerment strategy, from centralization to decentralisation of authority, from the all-powerful to the vulnerable, the vertical to the horizontal etc.

One of the common aspects in all theories is that leadership today needs to be sharing a common goal, mission, vision or direction. The role of any leader is to guide people towards a shared vision and to help them achieve the corresponding Mission or goals.

Leaders create an organization to realize their dream and to take forward their vision. Hence, there is a vision and direction to an organization and which has to percolate down and reach all. It has a specific mission which is communicated clearly to members as a source of inspiration and motivation to commit themselves to action. Hence, a *mission statement* has become indispensable for today's organizations.

Ignatius had a combination of vision and mission. He repeats a phrase constantly "according to our mission". It is his common goal. For Ignatius mission is central and hence, everything in the Society - the governance structures, the decisions, the apostolic discernment processes, the selection of candidates, the formation - is guided by the mission. Mission for Ignatius is to love and serve the Lord in all things.

Wish you all the best.

Leadership and Management: There are two roles: management and leadership, and often they are assumed to be synonymous. In fact, however, they are two distinct executive functions. Not all leaders are managers and not all managers are leaders. The managerial role has evolved mostly in response to the organizational needs for stability, rationality, systematisation and power distribution. Leadership denotes another type of characteristic behaviour like risk-taking, personal power, inspiration, and so on. Managers give attention to how things get done in contrast to the leaders' focus on what the events and decisions mean to the participants.

Ignatius certainly practised both leadership and management roles. He had a vision, a direction, a mission, an objective to promote in view of apostolic effectiveness. At the same time, he presented efficient strategies, means and methods, structures and resources adapted to attain the intended goals. In the following paras I will try to view the edifice of Ignatian leadership in and through the modern prism. In other words, you will find following themes: Ignatian leadership - situational, transformational, servant, his organizational structure, culture and metaphor, different mechanisms like empowerment, accountability, training and development, democracy, etc. and a few elements which Ignatian leadership needs incorporate from the contemporary society.

Situational Leadership (SL): Leadership is not abstract. It is the child of a context. Its source and purpose are the context. Hence, it is called situational leadership.

In reading the Constitutions one is impressed by the repetitive use of the phrase "according to the subjects, places, conditions and times." When giving the guidelines to Superiors about the criteria for making decisions, Ignatius adds similar phrases. While enunciating absolute truths regarding the ways of proceeding, he allows for great flexibility in respecting contingencies inherent in reality. Hence, Ignatian leadership is situational.

Transformational leadership (TL): The popular concept of leadership today is TL. It is the set of abilities that make the leader to recognize the need for change, to create a vision to guide that change, and to execute that change effectively. Transformational leadership includes four interrelated components: charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and consideration to effect a change.

Ignatius' desire and dream to change his times and place prompted him to take action by bringing together a group of dedicated men. He gave them the vision of Christ's Kingdom, a world of freedom and fellowship, reconciliation and justice. And to ensure the concrete and effective implementation of that vision, he wrote the Constitutions elaborating the details on governance in the Society. However, he did not waver from his personal concern for each individual. 'Cura personalis' the care of the person, was his tool to effect a change in a person.

Servant leadership: One of the leadership models today is servant leadership. The servant leaders are givers, not takers. They do not hold on to a position or title. They listen and learn from those they lead. They make themselves available. The servant leaders want to serve. So, serving and supporting, rather than commanding and controlling, are the watchwords for the new leaders.

Ignatian spirituality is a spirituality of service. Already in the Principle and Foundation of the Exercises, Ignatius states that we are created to *serve* God our Lord. For Ignatius, love is expressed in service.

Organizational Structures: Every organization has a structure. Often it is vertical. Nowadays, companies break down traditional boundaries to create lean, adaptive and flexible organizations. Horizontal networks and inter-functional teams function alongside, and sometimes even replacing, functional, hierarchical organizational structures.

Ignatian organization is hierarchical. However, the hierarchical structures do not replace the members' inner freedom, motivation and commitment. Nor do they suppress initiative, creativity or incentives for new projects. The real test for fidelity to our charism is to be found in an authentic discernment.

Organizational Culture (OC): Leadership is not for I, me and myself. It is to create an organization and usher in an OC. It is to cultivate a philosophy with a set of key values and belief systems, attitudes and behaviours. It is the character or personality of an organization. It is the sense of identity - certain ways of being and doing things.

The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius provide a foundation or a perspective to build a culture of Ignatian organization, the Society of Jesus. It is primarily a Christo-centric vision. The Constitutions supply a body to that vision. In other words, the Jesuit spirituality is the soul and the Constitutions, “our way of proceeding”, is the body, which fosters the organizational culture of the Society. However, the Jesuit culture goes beyond the written code of values and norms. It is primarily discernment.

Organizational Metaphors: Each organization has an image. Some call it a machine, an organism, a brain, a culture, a system, an instrument etc. As a matter of fact, Ignatius takes up the organic metaphor, that of the body, which he uses throughout the whole of the Constitutions. The body is living and growing. It is rigid yet flexible.

Globalization: Leaders think big. Living in a global village makes one aware of the international dimension of one’s organization. The challenge today is to be attentive to global homogeneity and global heterogeneity: where things are the same and where things are not the same, especially the cultural differences. The global perspective demands that we adapt the authority structures, decision-making processes and operating procedures to the context.

Ignatius already had a global perspective. His vision was that of an international apostolic organisation to respond to the call of the King. Universal dimension was very much present in his mind when formulating the criteria for the admission of the candidate, formation and the choice of ministries. For him “the more universal the good is, the more is it divine”

Ignatian Strategies

Empowerment: Empowerment has become one of the “buzz words” today. Ultimately, the role of a good leader is to empower people. Empowerment is not limited to sharing information but also partnering or sharing in decision-making. It is to make one handle power. Hence, a leader needs to create conditions to train, coach so that the employees can take their responsibility.

Ignatius practised empowerment in his governing style. He trusted his men and willingly delegated authority. Through his personal example and accompaniment, he prepared and formed his followers to assume important leadership responsibilities. Many of them became shining stars in the Church and in the world.

Accountability: accountability and authority are basic ingredients of an effective leadership. There is vertical accountability at various levels between leaders in organisations and their employees, and horizontal accountability among the employees themselves.

Ignatius takes accountability seriously into consideration and gives concrete norms about governance in the Society. He clearly spells out accountability at the various levels – individual, community, province or region, and the whole Society. Thus, the individual Jesuit’s accountability to his local community superior or Director of works, that of the superior to the provincial, and the provincial to the General and the General to the general congregation. Besides this vertical accountability there is also a certain type of horizontal accountability in the Society, which is called the union of minds and hearts, through fraternal correction.

Training and Development: One of the important realizations today is the need of training of personnel. So, organizations invest money, time and energy in providing intensive training for their members at all levels. The goal is to have an effect not only on the quantity of the productivity but also on the quality of the performance.

Ignatius dedicated long sections in the Constitutions on how to select a candidate, how to form him. Especially in his time, he was aware of the lack of sufficient preparation and formation given to priests. For Ignatius, formation is seen as a preparation for mission and hence it should be geared towards fostering apostolic effectiveness both individually for each Jesuit and collectively for the whole Society.

Communication: The important tool of any leader is communication. One needs appropriate and effective means of communication. Technology is certainly a boon in this area. However, great leaders combine both formal and informal technology and personal communication to build their organization.

In the time of Ignatius, it was not so easy to communicate as the means of communication were limited and lacked speed and efficiency. Yet he insisted on his followers to stay in touch by sharing information and experiences. He explicitly mentioned this point in the Constitutions as a special means for the union of minds and hearts.

Democracy: Democracy is one of the important leadership styles. It includes forms of active participation and consultation in the process of making a choice.

Democracy is found in the Society in a personal and communal discernment process. Fr General has all powers but he is not the king. The GC is above him. Related to this notion of democracy, there is another Ignatian idea of representing. One can represent to the superior one's thoughts which go contrary to an order received, and even approaching the higher superiors.

All this does not mean that Ignatian leadership has everything. It needs to be relevant. To be relevant it needs to open one's eyes to the new reality. See the context, learn and grow. What are some of the areas an Ignatian leader needs to keep in mind?

Creativity: There is an accelerating change in organizations today. To change organizations there should be changed leadership. This is called creative leadership, persons capable of inventing new and original ways of seeing reality, creating new energy and life into the organization. Effective leaders have the vision required to see things differently from others. In order to be creative, the future leader may have to become proactive and not just reactive, an agent of change, not only incremental but especially transformational change. This demands a new and different way of dealing with issues and problems which go against the traditional, stereotype ways. I think Ignatian leadership needs to integrate creativity in his or her leadership style.

Collegiality: Leadership is never a prerogative of one single person. Leadership today is plural, team-based, collegial. Leaders of the future will have to involve others and elicit their participation, because tasks will be too complex and information too wide. Such leaders will share power and control according to people's knowledge and skills, in order to permit and encourage the leadership to flourish throughout the organization.

Continuous Learning: In the organizations, skills are developed in acquiring, transferring, and building knowledge which enables the organization to continuously experiment, improve, and increase its capability. All employees are involved in identifying and solving problems. Ignatian leadership needs to be ever growing.

Conclusion: Dear friends, these are a few reflections on Ignatian leadership I wished to share with you with the hope that it may prove to be a starting point of your own discussions and sharing on this all-important topic. Remember you are here to be trainers. Hence, grow and branch out. Let me wish you a fruitful time, and once again express my thanks to Fathers Arun, Joye, Nelson and Siji.

I have a dream. Given our number and expertise we need to make a difference in the Church and the world. I am sure, we think alike. Let us make a difference within and around us. Thank you and God bless you.

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