



# WE ARE CHURCH International

Saturday, 9 August 2025

## Leadership - Management - Power

### Facilitator:

#### Welcome

A warm welcome to all who are here and able to participate in our Eucharist today, and our best wishes to all those who are elsewhere today.

Let us also join with all those who are constructively walking this earth in credible discipleship of Jesus and in their trust in God.

Let us attune ourselves with the following music, which praises the source of all life:

**Song:** Goodness of God:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-f4MUUMWMV4&list=RD-f4MUUMWMV4&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-f4MUUMWMV4&list=RD-f4MUUMWMV4&start_radio=1)

### Facilitator:

#### Introductory thoughts

When we look at our planet today, we see that it is seriously endangered in many ways by us humans: through our exploitation of the earth, through wars and famines, through the way we treat each other, through our economic activities, but also through the behaviour of people in positions of power and leadership, who often cannot resist the temptation to abuse their authority.

While we are keenly aware of this, we should not overlook the fact that, fortunately, countless people dedicate their lives to doing good, showing solidarity with the disadvantaged and promoting life-affirming actions.

In order to find sustainable paths for the future, we need leaders who are truly committed to the good of the community and who serve it. Let us reflect on this today. It makes sense to briefly look at experiences that have already been had and that may provide inspiration for today. But we must also ask ourselves where we should start afresh.

#### Impulse (reader: XXX)

Let us look at some key moments in the history of **kingship among the people of Israel**:

In the Old Testament, 'being king' means a divinely appointed leadership role that comes with great responsibility. The king is to rule in accordance with God's will, lead the people justly, and keep God's commandments. In particular, he must protect the people and ensure order and the well-being of the people. He is also always responsible before God, who is the true Lord of Israel.

#### Impulse (reader: XXX)

In his work 'The Republic' (Politeia), **Plato** emphasises the importance of good leadership by philosopher kings. He argues that only those who possess wisdom, justice and virtue are capable of ruling justly. For him, good leadership is that which is in harmony with truth and justice and promotes the common good.

**Aristotle** also emphasises that good leadership is determined by virtue, wisdom and moderation, so that it is just and for the good of all. (cf. Nicomachean Ethics)

#### Impulse (reader: XXX)

In his famous Rule, **Benedict of Nursia** laid down central principles for leadership and guidance within monastic life. The abbot should be like a father who leads with kindness and humility, and he should exemplify what he expects of his fellow brothers. Many orders for women and men have been guided by this principle, and continue to do so today.

### Impulse (reader: XXX)

**Hildegard of Bingen** understands good leadership to be, above all, leadership that is in harmony with divine order and based on wisdom, compassion and justice. She emphasises that good leadership is not only characterised by power or authority, but by the pursuit of harmony, balance and the common good.

**Teresa of Avila** expresses a similar view: 'True leadership is that which begins in the heart and is characterised by love and humility.'

### Impulse (reader: XXX)

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**, an important German theologian and resistance fighter who was murdered by the Nazis, wrote in his work 'The Cost of Discipleship' (1937): 'Service is the highest form of power.'

By this, Bonhoeffer means that true power does not consist in control or dominance, but in serving others, in imitating Jesus, who exemplifies service to humanity. For Bonhoeffer, following Jesus is a radical devotion in which power is exercised through love, humility and responsibility, not through domination or oppression.

### Impulse (reader: XXX)

The thoughts of **Edith Stein**, also known as **Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross**, originally a Jew, philosopher, who later became a nun and was murdered by the Nazis together with her sister in Auschwitz, whose memorial day is today, can be summarised as follows: that love is the highest form of responsibility, which must serve others. In 1999, she was declared the patron saint of Europe by John Paul II, together with Birgitta of Sweden and Catherine of Siena.

### Impulse (reader: XXX)

Two famous theologians, **Karl Rahner** and **Hans Küng**, both theological advisors at the Second Vatican Council, share the view that power in the Church must always be at the service of the community, that leadership is based on responsibility, and that humility should play a central role. They advocate for a reformed, servant Church in which power is not abused but used for the good of all. Both advocate for greater transparency and the involvement of the faithful in decision-making processes.

**Leonardo Boff** developed a new model for the Church: charisma as an organisational principle. The mission of those who hold leadership positions is to integrate, to care for unity and harmony among the various charisma-oriented ministries, and to provide care. There is no longer any place for a two-class mentality. The organisational model could 'shape a whole new style of living according to the Gospel: in small groups that together form a large network' in which everyone is involved.

### Impulse (reader: XXX)

**Studies in the field of leadership** research show that empathetic, participatory and servant leadership styles are significantly more successful and lead to higher employee motivation, satisfaction and team cohesion.

### Impulse (reader: XXX)

**Gospel according to Mark 10:42-45:** "42Jesus called them together and said to them, 'You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the nations lord it over them, and their leaders abuse their authority over them. 43But it shall not be so among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, 44and whoever wants to be first must be a slave to all. 45For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'"

**Letter to the Ephesians 4:11-13:** 11And he gave them women and men, some as messengers, others as prophets and prophetesses, and to others he gave the task of proclaiming, leading and teaching. 12He gave these gifts to equip the saints for effective service, for the building up of the body of Christ, 13until we all attain unity in faith and knowledge of God's Son, until we all are perfect beings and encounter the full measure of Christ's fullness.

(Bible texts from the Bible in Just Language)

**Facilitator:**

With a view to shaping our future together, we could now share with each other: how would I like to be led and guided, and how would I want to exercise leadership that serves people, not least in a sustainable church community?

**Sharing of thoughts**

**Song:** The kingdom of god is justice and peace

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0cDP05Civo&list=RDQ0cDP05Civo&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0cDP05Civo&list=RDQ0cDP05Civo&start_radio=1)

**Reader: XXX**

**Our requests and our remembrance**

We feel connected to the people of this earth in the many challenges that exist, but also in our perception of beauty and uplifting things.

- Let us think of the countless victims of the many armed conflicts, of exploitation and violence, and the many who pay for this with their lives.

**All: Motherly and fatherly God, stand by the victims and strengthen us to move those responsible to act peacefully.**

- Let us pray for those who take on leadership and management roles and are thus entrusted with power.

**All: Motherly and fatherly God, strengthen them in their sense of responsibility, so that they may not abuse their power and that their actions may be for the good of those for whom they are responsible.**

- Our thoughts go out to all those who are burdened by illness and health restrictions. Today, we are thinking especially of our friend Virginia and all the other sick people we know.

**All: Motherly and fatherly God, let all feel your presence in times of suffering and give them hope through our companionship.**

- These days, many young people gathered in Rome for the Holy Year. Many other people are also travelling there this year.

**All: Motherly and fatherly God, grant the many pilgrims the stamina to continue working for a better earth after such journeys and to use their lives for the good of humanity through good networking.**

- Many people long for change in the churches so that Jesus' message can continue to be the basis of life for future generations.

**All: Motherly and fatherly God, continue to give courage to those who are committed to a credible Christianity, so that Your spirit of hope for the future may be felt and benefit all people.**

Living God, with You our lives have a solid foundation.

We thank You for the many beautiful moments in life and for Your guidance in difficult times.

We hope and trust in You. Amen.

**Reader: XXX**

**Communion**

In our meals with our brothers and sisters in faith, we are part of the long tradition of meals through which Jesus approached people, sought them out in their life situations and shared their lives with them. Through his meals, he shows God's connection to our everyday life situations. God shares life with us; God is right there in the midst of everything that happens throughout history. Thus, commemorative meals become a sign of our connection with God, with Jesus, with people. He who has called himself the "I am here" since ancient times is always there, even in our times and now. This is a reason for joy and for celebrating together in gratitude, because we are always supported and caught up in God's love.

So we remember with the words of St. Paul:

‘For I received from our Deliverer what I passed on to you, namely: On the night he was betrayed, the one to whom we belong, Jesus, took bread. He said the blessing, broke the bread and said, “This is my body for you; do this in remembrance of me.”’

After the meal was over, he took the cup and said, ‘The new covenant is established by my blood in this cup. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For whenever you eat this bread and drink from the cup, you proclaim the death of the Saviour until he comes.

(1 Corinthians 11:23-26 from: Bible in Just Language)

### Consumption of the gifts

meanwhile music: „**The Servant Song**“ by Richard Gillard

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIhhxhPOwfc&list=RDSIhhxhPOwfc&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIhhxhPOwfc&list=RDSIhhxhPOwfc&start_radio=1)

### Reader: XXX

#### Prayer after the meal

God of unobtrusive accompaniment, we may discover your presence anew when, strengthened by the meal, we set out on our various paths in the footsteps of Jesus. Grant us open eyes and the willingness to contribute where we can.

### Facilitator:

We live in times where, unfortunately, many people believe that conflicts cannot be resolved peacefully, but only through violence. Let us instead focus on thoughts of peace, of shalom, which means a good life for everyone on this earth and not just the absence of war.

### Song: **Make a channel of your peace:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYz14jEoaeU&list=RDfYz14jEoaeU&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYz14jEoaeU&list=RDfYz14jEoaeU&start_radio=1)

### Facilitator:

Every gathering is the beginning of a new parting, in order to continue on the path of our own lives. Strengthened by our view of God as the foundation of our lives and by the fellowship of sharing a meal, we now move on, accompanied by an Irish blessing, which we will hear at the end.

### Song: **May the road rise up to meet you**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hA1F0uOuMFs&list=RDhA1F0uOuMFs&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hA1F0uOuMFs&list=RDhA1F0uOuMFs&start_radio=1)

### Notes and sources:

- to impulse **kingship among the people of Israel**: cf. 1 Sam 16,13; 5. Mose 17, 18-20; Sir 10,4; 2. Sam 12
- to impulse **Benedict of Nursia**: cf. Regula Benedicti, especially chapter 2 and 31
- to impulse **Hildegard of Bingen** (1098-1179): cf. Scivias, De Operatione Dei; **Teresa of Avila** (1515-1582): from their writings, e.g. ‘The Way of Perfection’
- to impulse **Edith Stein** (1891-1942): See her works: ‘The Vocation of Women,’ ‘The Death of the Cross,’ ‘On the Problem of Empathy,’ ‘The Soul in Man,’ her letters.

- to impulse **Rahner und Küng, Boff**: cf. - Karl Rahner, Basic theological terms (1962);
  - Hans Küng, The Church in today's society (1971); The Church in Crisis (1972); Believing means acting (1984); The Church in today's world (1997); Power and powerlessness. On the limits of power in the Church and society (2004);
  - **Leonardo Boff**, Igreja: Carisma e Poder. Ensaios de Ecclesiologia Militante. (1981) German: Church. Charisma and Power, (1985); He refers, among other things, to 1 Corinthians 12:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Romans 12:8; 1 Corinthians 16:16; Philippians 1:1, It is about functional services and charisms of leadership, chairmanship, care, government, not sacred power.;
- to impulse **leadership studies**: Eisenberger, R., Jones, J. R., Stinglhamber, F., Shanock, L., & Randall, A. T. (2002). *Flow experiences at work: The role of supervisor and peer support*. Journal of Applied Psychology, 87(4), 754–763.;  
 Vroom, V. H., & Jago, A. G. (2007). *The role of the situation in leadership*. American Psychologist, 62(1), 17–24.; Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. Paulist Press.
- to impulse **Gospel according to Mark** 10, 42-45: parallel passages Mt 20, 25-28; vgl. Mt 23, 11-12; Mt 28, 18-20; Joh 13, 12-17;  
 Further passages in the New Testament on leadership, managerial responsibility and power outside the Gospels: Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20;