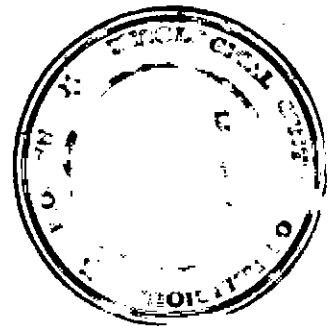


INSTITUTE OF SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGIOUS FORMATION

TANGAZA COLLEGE

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

**DISCERNING LEADERSHIP QUALITIES
AT THE NOVITIATE OF THE HOLY
ROSARY SISTERS WITH REFERENCE TO
JESUS AND BISHOP JOSEPH SHANAHAN
AS MODELS**



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TUTOR: REV. FR. DOMINIC IZZO OP

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This is a long essay submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for a diploma in the Institute of Spirituality and Religious Formation

**19th March 2001
Nairobi Kenya**

STUDENT DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material used herein has not been submitted for Academic Credit to any other Institution. All sources have been cited in full.

Signed 
SR. ANTHONIA O. EZEIBEKWE

DEDICATION

Gratefully dedicated to empowering leaders who devotedly accompany those in formation to genuine freedom and experience of a loving God.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work is a reality because of the encouragement and support of many people. I therefore wish to thank most sincerely everyone who assisted me in any way.

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GOD BLESS AND REWARD ALL OF YOU ABUNDANTLY!

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INTRODUCTION

Change is a fact of life and so the increasing awareness of the shift from the traditional view of authority to empowering leadership is a contributing factor to my choice of topic. Briefly, the traditional view of authority was based on the assumption that people were powerless and deeply flawed. These deficits could only be remedied by a few great authoritarian figures. Authority was then seen “as the power or right to give command, enforce obedience, take action or make final decision.”¹ This notion of authority encouraged a lot of restrictions and control. The results were lack of freedom, immaturity and irresponsibility among others. However, the term ‘leadership’ is now being used in a way that is becoming characteristic of our time and symbolic of the shift that we are experiencing. Helen Doolan notes, the contemporary focus on leadership indicates a shift in emphasis from power, position and authority to a relative situational quality and a participative involvement on the part of all.”² Therefore, a leader is a person who calls, points out the way and invites others to follow in freedom. This is why Anthony D’Souza describes Christian leadership thus: it

- * seeks to be of service, rather than to dominate.
- * encourages and inspires.
- * respects, rather than exploit others’ personalities.
- * reflects, prays and acts on Jesus Christ’s words “Whoever wishes to be first among you, shall be your servant, even as the son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Matt. 20:27).”³

Therefore the central role of Christian leadership is an expression of *diakonia* or service, the service of listening and persuasion, not exploitation on account of one’s position. The author of epistle to Peter says, “Do not lord it over those assigned to you, but be an

¹ John McKenzie, Authority in the Church (New York: Sheed and Wood, 1966), p. 5.

² Helen Doolan, Leadership in Paul (Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989), p.13.

³ Anthony D’Souza, Leadership (Bombay: Paulist Press, 1989), p. 13.

example to the flock (1 Pet 5:3).” So leadership commends itself most of all by sincere, active and authentic love that arises from an understanding of the whole people. The leader then enables them to mobilize their resources in order to achieve goals mutually held by both the leader and the people.

My choice of topic is also greatly influenced by the uniqueness of the formative ministry in the Novitiate. At the heart of formation in the Holy Rosary Novitiate is a leadership that thinks well and clear about those in formation. The formator as a leader sees herself in the process of leading the young women who in turn will lead others. If this is so, then there is need for her to be acquainted with the leadership qualities of our great models- Jesus and Bishop Joseph Shanahan. What were their legacies? Is it possible to lead after their minds and hearts? What then are the essential qualities of a leader in, the Holy Rosary Novitiate today? We shall reflect on and discuss these questions in the course of this work. The aim is essentially to help me and others to be integrated leaders.

Chapter one explores the historical background of Bishop Joseph Shanahan , his missionary endeavour in Nigeria. He was the heroic figure who accepted to be the special instrument of God in the founding of the Holy Rosary Sisters. Chapter two delineates the elements in Bishop Shanahan’s Spirituality. These are still relevant to contemporary leaders and so we will also explore Bishop Shanahan’s contributions to the formation of the Holy Rosary Sisters.

Chapter three begins with a reflection on the Holy Rosary Novitiate formation process. It is unique and wholistic. It also aims at formation of future leaders and so the inspiring and empowering leadership qualities of Jesus and Bishop Shanahan as models will be explored. Their life-giving leadership qualities made them to do something beautiful for God and humanity. Therefore they are indeed sounding board for understanding leadership in the Holy Rosary Novitiate. The formator as a leader

contributes immensely to the wholistic formation of the young women. Therefore, Chapter four will explore the leadership qualities that are necessary to help her to accompany those in formation. Her leadership qualities will allow for genuine freedom, openness, personal dialogue, maturity and responsibility. The leader herself derives strength, wisdom and patience from her constant communion with the Lord because unless the Lord builds the house, in vain do its builders labour (Ps.126/127).

Finally, this work does not claim to exhaust this topic. It is only an attempt to highlight the uniqueness of the Holy Rosary Novitiate formation and the essential qualities of the leader in the formative ministry based on our models, Jesus and Bishop Shanahan. There could be more researches on the inspiring styles of leadership. This could elicit new insights for contemporary leaders in the continuation of the ministry of Jesus Christ. The way has been opened, the work of the spirit continues!!

CHAPTER ONE

BISHOP JOSEPH SHANAHAN AND THE HOLY ROSARY SISTERS

This chapter will explore the background of Bishop Joseph Shanahan and his missionary activities in Nigeria, which led to the founding of the Holy Rosary Sisters. He was born into a simple but devout Catholic family in Ireland. He became a Holy Ghost priest and was sent to Nigeria where he worked tirelessly to bring people to deeper faith in Jesus Christ. His relentless efforts to give equal opportunities to both men and women led to the founding of the Holy Rosary Sisters whose charism is expressed in promotion of human dignity everywhere.

1.1. Bishop Joseph Shanahan: Birth and Childhood

It is most appropriate that we should begin discerning leadership qualities in Holy Rosary Novitiate by reflecting on the life of Bishop Joseph Shanahan, 'the bud that the Lord has planted' (Isa 60:21). Joseph Shanahan was born on the 4th of June 1871 in Glankeen, County Tipperary, Ireland. His parents were Daniel and Margaret (Nee Walsh) Shanahan. They were poor but devoted Catholics. So the seed of the Catholic faith was sown in young Joseph very early in life. John Jordan notes, "on the Sunday after his birth, the little Shanahan was carried in his nurse's arms to the small chapel of Borrisoleigh...there he received the Divine life in his tiny soul through the reception of the sacrament of Baptism...Christened Joseph.... He was to be the means of bringing that (Divine) Life to untold thousands in ...Africa."⁴

Patrick Walsh, Margaret's younger brother lived with Shanahan's family. He later

⁴ John Jordan, *Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria* (Dublin: Elo Press Ltd., 1971), p. 1.

joined the Holy Ghost Congregation in France and took the name Brother Adelm Walsh. He played a significant part in inspiring the young Joseph to be a missionary. Very early in life, Joseph developed the desire to be a missionary priest and as God would have it, his uncle, Brother Adelm Walsh, helped him to get a free education in Holy Ghost College in Beauvais, France. So in 1886, at the age of fifteen, young Joseph left home (Ireland) for France to begin the long journey to the priesthood.

1.1.1. Student and Priesthood

Education in France was not easy. There was the cultural gap between him and the other students who were French speakers. He felt lonely. However, being a bright student, he learnt French quickly and became at home with others. Desmond Forristal observes, "he was liked for his easy going nature, and perhaps a little feared as well. He was tall for his age, strong and well-built, and there was a streak of determination about him. He was emphatically not someone to be trifled with."⁵ On 29th June 1890, he was received into the Holy Ghost Congregation and clothed in its habit. The eleven years in France greatly influenced the young Joseph. According to John Jordan:

he found himself being gradually initiated in a way of life that was very different from anything he would have found in Ireland.... He went to France a high-souled boy, as yet unformed. He returned after the conclusion of his philosophical and university studies a grown man of twenty-five...still a high-souled and filled with the missionary idealism of his boyhood, but now having in addition the charming elegance of French manners, the clear conception of French religious thought, and the adventurous temper of French apostolic zeal.⁶

In 1897, young Joseph went back to Ireland to continue his study in theology. When it was time to write an application to the Superior General for first vows, he used the occasion to repeat his wish to become a missionary. "I beg of you My Lord, not to forget

⁵ Desmond Forristal, *The Second Burial of Bishop Shanahan* (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 1990), pp. 18-19.

⁶ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

how great is my desire to go to Africa and die beside my brothers.... However, it will be as the good God wills."⁷ The profession ceremony took place in the college church in Rockwell at Easter 1898.

He completed his course in theology in 1900 and was ordained a priest on 22nd April, the same year in Blackrock College Chapel. He waited patiently to be assigned to Africa. However, the time had not yet come. Instead, he was reassigned to Rockwell as a full time teacher of Languages and Mathematics. In addition, he was to take the post of Dean of Discipline for the 215 boys in the College. John Jordan notes, "it was a keen disappointment to a man who yearned to put himself at the service of abandoned souls in Africa to be tied to the uninspiring round of daily duties in a College."⁸ However, he accepted the appointment and got on with the work with great spiritual earnestness. The following year, after annual retreat in Blackrock, he made his final vows in the College Chapel. In summer, 1902, he received the news he has been praying for from the Mother House in Paris. He was to go as a missionary to Southern Nigeria! He accepted this whole- heartedly and all travel arrangements were made. On 13th Nov. 1902, Shanahan landed in Onitsha –Southern Nigeria.

1.1.2. Father Shanahan's Missionary Life in Nigeria

The first efforts to evangelize Southern Nigeria were made in 1885 by the Holy Ghost Fathers. The pioneer missionaries were Fathers Lutz, Horne and two brothers, John and Hermas. Soon afterwards, all the four started showing signs of sickness. One of the brothers died of severe attack of Malaria in less than two months after their arrival.

⁷ Forristal, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁸ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

Desmond Forristal notes, "it was a pattern that was to repeat itself with sad regularity during the years that followed. New missionaries continued to come from France and were carried off by malaria, dysentery, sleeping sickness, yellow fever or some other ailment within months of their arrival."⁹ Father Lutz himself returned to France because of ill-health and died there in 1895 at the prime age of forty-two.

In 1900 Father Leon Alexandre Lejeune was appointed superior of the mission and Prefect Apostolic of Southern Nigeria. He welcomed Father Shanahan as he landed in Onitsha Wharf in 1902. Rose Uchem writes, "it was with a similar spirit of sacrifice that Shanahan himself came out to Onitsha in 1902, ready to lay down his life in the spirit of the Holy Ghost Congregation, which urged its members to have preference for 'the most abandoned souls on earth.'"¹⁰

Father Lejeune decided that the huts the priests and brothers lived were not conducive for their health. He chose to use bricks to build a suitable house for them. He felt the young priest, Shanahan, had just arrived in time and his physique suited the job of brick making. So he initiated Father Shanahan into his missionary work with brick making. As soon as the mission house was built in 1903, Father Shanahan was sent off to open a new mission station in the village of Ogboli-Onitsha Inland town. He went off without any hesitation.

Life in Ogboli was not easy initially for a white young priest Shanahan. This was his first experience of missionary work. He did not know anybody there and had no

⁹ Forristal, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

¹⁰ Rose Uchem, "The Man-Bishop Joseph Shanahan" In The Legacy of Bishop Joseph Shanahan to Nigeria (Nigeria: SNAAP Press, 1995), p. 7.

knowledge of the local language – Igbo. However, he learnt the language. Children were more helpful than the adults. They taught him Igbo and he taught them English. Thus, the first school started. Their parents soon were also attracted to this white man who was a priest, a teacher, as well as a doctor. There was an attack of Spleen Disease in the village and Father Shanahan ministered to the body as well as the soul. As a result, “he became more and more endeared to the people after having shared in their adversity. No doubt this epidemic gave him the opportunity to come closer to the people and to understand them more intimately.”¹¹

Father Shanahan became fluent in Igbo language and spoke to the people about God. He listened to their stories about their faith too. They had a lot in common. Desmond Forristal affirms, “the Ibos (Igbos) he discovered were a deeply religious people... Shanahan was struck by the similarities between their faith and his own. Their Chukwu was the same God whom he worshipped and preached.... The Ibos seemed to have an *anima naturaliter Christiana*, a naturally Christian soul.”¹² Shanahan saw and related to the people in a different way from how other missionaries saw them. For Shanahan, the religion of the Igbos was not something evil to be destroyed but something good to be purified and refined. He learnt a lot from the people of Ogboli. He writes:

I thank God everlastingly for having let me know, the innate goodness and attractiveness of the African soul. That soul aspires to God, to all Goodness, by some inborn tendency, and the missionary has but to foster the tendency. The African, once you understand and love him (her) in

¹¹ Celestine Obi, “The Missionary Contributions of Bishop Joseph Shanahan CSSp. 1902-1932” In A Hundred Years of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1985 (Onitsha: African Publishers Ltd, 1985), p. 114.

¹² Forristal op. cit., p. 51.

Christ, is a treasury of goodness and loveliness. Only those who have lived with him (her) and spoke to him (her) of God from the depths of their own souls know that."¹³

Shanahan spent a year and half in Ogboli and was transferred to Dekina-Northern Nigeria. Dekina was predominantly Moslems and apparently hostile to Christianity. Edith Dynan summarises his stay there: he experienced real hardship as there were isolation, hunger and failure."¹⁴ Early in 1905, Father Lejeune came to Dekina to say goodbye to Father Shanahan and returned to France, on account of cancer of the throat. He died soon after that but before he died, he recommended Shanahan as his suitable successor in these words "that Irish man has the soul of an apostle."¹⁵ So on 25 September 1905, there was decree for formal appointment of Joseph Shanahan as the Prefect Apostolic of Southern Nigeria. Shanahan closed the mission at Dekina and came to Onitsha to face the challenges of this new leadership.

1.1.3. Schools for Evangelization

The new prefecture was an area about twice the size of Shanahan's country Ireland. To evangelize all this land, Father Shanahan had only eleven priests, nine brothers and ten sisters. He prayed and thought about the situation. He remembered his experiences in Ogboli, how children responded to school. He became more convinced that school was the answer to the conversion of the Igbos. Rose Uchem, says, "under his leadership, the Church grew rapidly with a vast network of schools serving as centres of evangelization all over the prefecture."¹⁶ He appointed teacher-catechists whom he cared for and respected in every mission station. Edith Dynan reiterates:

that was the starting point of many arduous missionary journeys that followed over the next decades until every village was reached and has its school.

¹³ Shanahan, "Those Early Days" In Holy Ghost Missionary Annals, July-August 1936.

¹⁴ Edith Dynan, A Brief Biography of Bishop Joseph Shanahan (Nigeria: SNAAP Press, 1996), p. 13.

¹⁵ Holy Ghost Fathers, Short Life of Bishop Shanahan (Onitsha: Africana Publishers Ltd., 1980), p.23.

¹⁶ Uchem, op.cit., p. 8.

Today, there is a church and parish with an indigenous priest in all these villages and millions of people owe their early education to the village schools.”¹⁷

Evangelisation through the schools became remarkable. Many young and old were being baptised. On 6 June 1920, Father Shanahan was consecrated bishop in Maynooth Ireland. He chose the prayer of the blind man in the gospel, *Domine ut Videam*, “Lord that I may see (Mark 10:51)” as his episcopal motto. On 15 December he came back to Nigeria for a magnificent reception from the Christians.

1.1.4. Shanahan and women

Among the numerous changes and contributions made by Shanahan, the upliftment of women through education is worthy of mention here. The missionary efforts made towards the education of women of Southern Nigeria contributed very significantly to the present stage of women development in Nigeria. Prior to Shanahan’s era, formal education for girls was not considered important. However, Shanahan saw the need to change the status of women. Maria Osuagwu observes “... he focused on building schools for boys and girls... there the rudiments of the Three Rs (Readings, Writing and Arithmetic) were taught as well as Christian education.”¹⁸ Soon, he realized the need of women missionaries forming women and this led to the birth of the Holy Rosary Sisters. Father Shanahan believed in the saying ‘when you educate a woman, you educate a nation’. Today, many Nigerian women not only teach good Christian education by their lives but they also devote their time and energy into different ministries in the Church through various organizations. Rosemary Okoye rightly says, “the success of any parish depends to a large extent on the activities of various Catholic women, realizing that Christ looks up to them for the accomplishment of the royal

¹⁷ Dynan, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹⁸ Maria Osuagwu, “Bishop Shanahan: Initiator of the Revolution of Life for Women through Education” In: *The Legacy of Bishop Shanahan to Nigeria* (Nigeria: SNAAP Press, 1995), p. 43.

priesthood.”¹⁹ Religious life was not neglected. Shanahan believed Nigerian women had the potential to live consecrated life and helped in preparing them for it. Many joined different congregations both indigenous and international. After thirty years of intense missionary labour, Shanahan’s health became bad. He was forced to retire in Ireland against his will and Archbishop Heery succeeded him in 1932. He was later invited to Kenya in 1939 where he stayed until he died on Christmas day 1943.

Shanahan had truly a very charismatic personality. He left an indelible impression on the minds of people who met him. Rose Uchem says, “those who knew Bishop Shanahan, like John Jordan CSSp, ranked him with St. Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles and St. Patrick, the apostle of Ireland.”²⁰ Today there is so much talk about evangelization and here is a man through whom God accomplished so much. Perhaps, we have no better human model for inspiration than Bishop Joseph Shanahan our founder!

1.2. Bishop Joseph Shanahan: the Founder

The year 1920 was a great turning point in Shanahan's life. He began the year with more attempts to secure sisters for Nigeria. In Foxford, he met Sister Mary Charles Walker an Irish Sister of Charity. In the course of their interaction, she expressed her wish to go to Nigeria. However, her congregation refused to take on a Nigerian mission. This was a great disappointment to Sister Mary Charles but she saw it as no more than a temporary set back. She began to investigate the possibility of going to Nigeria on her own, if no one else would go with her. Meanwhile, in the Spring of 1920, Shanahan went

¹⁹ Rosemary Okoye, “Catholic Women: Their Importance and Impact on the Church and the Nigerian Society” *The Torch* 96, 1991, p. 19.

²⁰ Uchem, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

to Paris to seek missionary priests and nuns for his Prefecture. There, he decided to go to the town of Lisieux in Normandy and pray at the grave of a young Carmelite nun, Sister Therese of the Child Jesus. He asked Therese to place the cause of Nigeria before the Lord. He left Lisieux strengthened and consoled.

On 17 April, 1920 the official announcement of Shanahan as Bishop came from Rome. He went to Ireland for the preparation and consecration. While the preparation was going on, he was looking for missionaries or volunteers for the Nigerian mission. He met Marie Martin who volunteered to work in Nigeria after her midwifery course. Shanahan's consecration as Bishop took place in the chapel in Blackrock College on 6 June 1920.

In September, Shanahan traveled to Rome and had audience with Pope Benedict XV who had succeeded Pius X. The Pope listened with great satisfaction to Shanahan's account of the Nigerian mission and sent his blessing to the missionaries and to all Christian people. On 15 December, Bishop Shanahan arrived in Nigeria with ten priests to work in his new Vicariate. He got grand reception in Onitsha after which he threw himself once more to his work.

All this time, Shanahan was increasingly worried about the women and girls. There was only one girls' school and a few girls being taught by a male teacher. All his efforts to recruit new sisters seemed doomed to failure. However, Marie Martin had finished her midwifery course and was still interested in going to Nigeria. She also met a medical student, Agnes Ryan who had the same interest. Bishop Shanahan made the necessary arrangements and the two women arrived in Calabar on 14 June 1921. What a joy to Bishop Shanahan and the other missionaries! They started teaching immediately.

There was still need for more people. The idea of setting up a religious congregation came again strongly to Bishop Shanahan's mind. He sent the Book of Rules

of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary to Marie Martin as a possible model for the projected congregation. Meanwhile Agnes Ryan left for Ireland because of ill health. In 1922, Bishop Shanahan drew up the Constitution of the new congregation. He held series of meetings on the varandah of the priests' house in Calabar to discuss the possibility of setting up his sisterhood for the work in the Lord's large vineyard. There were four people in that group – Shanahan, the inspirer and father figure, Leen the clear-minded theologian, Ronayne, the gifted and sensitive director of souls and Marie Martin, whose practicality and common sense made sure that even when their heads were in the clouds their feet stayed on the ground.

In July 1923, Bishop Shanahan went to Rome to get approval for the new sisterhood from the new Pope Pius XI who succeeded Benedict XV. The Pope fully supported the initiative and gave it his blessing and encouragement. Brigid Ryan notes, Bishop Shanahan "left the Vatican feeling the richest man in the world, because he had the papal blessing he went forth to attack in a new and organized manner the problem of the Ibo women."²¹ The Pope suggested that Bishop Shanahan should get some members of an established religious order to form the first members of his new missionary sisterhood so that they would be well grounded in the principles and practices of religious life. The Dominican nuns at Cabra offered to help. Three of their sisters agreed to help as long as their services were needed. Bishop Shanahan contacted all the lay volunteers who had worked and or were still working in his vicariate. Seven showed willingness to join the new congregation. Bishop Finegan of Kilmore generously welcomed the new missionary foundation in his diocese and thus was established the

²¹ Ryan, *op. cit.* Vol. 11, p. 46.

Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of our Lady of the Holy Rosary, at Killeshandra in Ireland, on 7 March, 1924. The first novices made their first profession on 24 February 1927 and five were sent to Nigeria on 24 January 1928, and were magnificently welcomed by the awaiting Christians. A most welcomed relief!

What a complete joy to Bishop Shanahan! After Nigeria, this sisterhood was dearest to his heart. He poured out the treasures of his great soul on this congregation. In many of his letters, he revealed his inmost thoughts and aspirations to the sisters. All his life he regarded his relationship with the sisters as a special grace bestowed on him by God's personal love:

from the moment the Holy Father's '*fiat*' was pronounced I became conscious of its quasi- sacramental effect. From that moment I carried you all, living now as God's consecrated spouses, in my soul, conscious that I was united to you by a special bond of spiritual paternity. Hence my profound spiritual love for each one of you- for the whole Congregation.... You are for me the most powerful of all appeals to keep walking heavenwards-to keep in and with God.²²

Today the Holy Rosary Sisters are working in thirteen countries of the world on the continents of Africa, Europe and North America. We move with the signs of the time as we work with the refugees, those living with AIDS, the deprived in hospitals/clinics, in education, pastoral and catechetical.

1.3. The Charism of the Holy Rosary Sisters

It is for the good of the Church that institutes have their own proper character and functions. Therefore the spirit and aims of each founder should be faithfully accepted and retained as indeed should each institute's sound traditions, for all these constitute the patrimony of the institute.

(Perfectae Caritatis, No. 2b)

The word charism is a spiritual gift, graciously given by God to a person for the good of

²² Ryan, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 121.

others. In St. Paul's theology, it is a gratuitous gift from God to individual "for a work in ministry, for building up the body of Christ," i.e. the Church (Eph 4:12, 1 Cor 14:26). Therefore "charism originates with the Spirit working directly in the baptized." Having received charisms from the Holy Spirit, each Christian has the responsibility to render some service in the Church.

The spirit of courage and boldness in preaching the gospel so evident in St. Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, was also in Bishop Shanahan. This drove him to preach the gospel with great courage and perseverance in a distance land and in a strange culture. Edith Dynan confirms, the coolness of the early morning soon gave way to the scorching tropical sun. Bathed in perspiration and covered with dust, with tired limbs and aching feet, they would end the day's work But the new Monsignor was consumed with the desire to bring the divine life to as many as possible and did not count the cost."²³ In the course of his ministry in Nigeria Bishop Shanahan saw the need for strong Nigerian Christian families. He discovered that only men were benefiting from education. He determined to remedy this and so established schools for both women and men throughout his prefecture. He founded the Holy Rosary Sisters to be women filled with the spirit of Christ and a sense of mission. The main purpose would be to inspire and educate the women of Southern Nigeria, to raise their status and to help them become more aware of their dignity. He saw this as the greatest need of the time.

Today we share in the charism of Bishop Shanahan by our willingness to be sent and to go beyond the boundaries of our countries and cultures and to participate in all kinds of ministries- education, healing, pastoral. Like Bishop Shanahan, we try to respond to the most urgent needs of the people and the local church. Today, the Holy

²³ Dynan, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

Rosary Sisters are in many countries of the world- Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Zambia, Philadelphia, Mexico, Brazil, Ireland, and England. Our charism is essentially a missionary one with specific focus on the needs of women, their position within the society and the local Church.

In living out our charism, we draw strength from the presence of God within us who reveals himself to us in all aspects of our apostolic life. We are very much in communion with our founder because he promised to pray for the congregation that it may ever retain its spirit of simplicity, favour, charity, profound humility, joyfulness.

We have in this Chapter discussed the background of the great founder of the Holy Rosary Sisters, Bishop Joseph Shanahan. He had a simple and humble beginning. His home upbringing and his seminary life in France prepared him for his missionary endeavours in Nigeria and the birth of the Holy Rosary Sisters. The next chapter will explore his spirituality as seen in his personal life and his letters and his contributions to the formation of the young Holy Rosary Sisters.

CHAPTER TWO

BISHOP JOSEPH SHANAHAN AND HIS SPIRITUALITY

In the previous Chapter, we discussed the historical background of Bishop Joseph Shanahan and the reason for the founding of the Holy Rosary Sisters. Today a lot of people are becoming more interested in being led by the Holy Spirit in the particular tradition into which their founders or foundresses have launched them. Therefore, in this section, we shall reflect on Bishop Shanahan's spirituality – how did he live out his relationship with God and how did he influence the formation of the sisters?

2.1. Bishop Shanahan's Spirituality as seen from his letters/personal life

Bishop Shanahan never articulated in a *systematic* way, how he saw himself and how he saw the religious missionary life, yet he revealed his true self and his true values in private letters and addresses when he wrote or spoke out of the abundance of his heart. He lived out his episcopal motto, 'Lord that I may See.' To see the world with the eyes of the Lord is one of the most precious gifts that resulted from a life of interior union with the indwelling Spirit. When we 'see' in the right perspective, we will be able to do the will of God always. The elements of the spirituality of Bishop Shanahan that we will reflect on, will bring alive the manifestations of his core being – hopes and dreams, joys and sorrows – the totality of his person.

2.1.1. Christocentric

Bishop Shanahan was devoted to contemplating Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. He often spent long hours in the night adoring and contemplating the divine presence.

Desmond Forristal affirms:

he liked to pray late at night in the Church or in the little chapel in the priests' house, often until long past midnight. One morning Father (later Bishop) Hagan told Sister Philomena how the previous evening all the priests had said night prayer together and then gone to bed, leaving Shanahan still in the Chapel. About 2.00 a.m. Hagan woke up and saw a light reflected in the corridor. He got up and went to the chapel to switch it off. Shanahan was still there. "I was going to say something to him he told her. Then I saw his face, you should have seen it. It was beautiful. It has a glowing expression. I couldn't hear anything but he seemed to be talking to someone. I stayed there for about two hours and then I couldn't stay awake any longer and went to bed. Next morning, I was drooping but he was as fresh as a daisy."²⁴

This quotation expresses clearly the basic hint about Bishop Shanahan's spirituality. It is against this background that one can understand why Shanahan said and did things. He looked upon Jesus in prayer, he contemplated him in the Eucharist. He allowed the efficacy of these mysteries to effect him. Thus empowered, he went out to work for Christ, to co-operate with him. He continually stressed the importance of deeper relationship between Christ and the missionary. Writing to Sister Malachy as the day of her religious profession approached, he says:

it is to co-operate with Christ in this most divine works on earth that he has called you to what you are to be on the 29th - His own consecrated spouse and missionary Is it any wonder you are happy and that happiness overflows from your own soul on to the souls of those who come in contact with you... your life is to be lived henceforth in an infinitely more intimate union with Christ than heretofore. And your happiness will have the privilege of sharing it, with... multitudes of souls especially in Africa."²⁵

Therefore the Christian way of life is seen as a sharing in the mysteries of Christ by following his examples, to live in close union with him and to work for God's glory in close co-operation with Jesus, who was totally consecrated to establishing God's glory.

²⁴ Forristal. *op. cit.*, p. 233.

²⁵ Brigid Ryan, Bishop Shanahan and His Missionary Family Vol. 11, (Ireland: Leinster Leader Ltd., 1977). p. 124.

2.1.2. Zeal for God's Glory

Bishop Shanahan's spirituality was visibly apostolic. He was available in ministry to the extent of spending much energy in trekking to visit his flock in remote areas. When the first five Holy Rosary Sisters arrived in Nigeria in 1928, Bishop Shanahan wrote to Mother Xavier in Killeshandra:

...the members of missionary societies are first of all apostles. That is where their peculiar grace lies. If they do not concentrate on the apostolate and give it first place in all their works, they will deteriorate in grace and in fruit. God will never see a congregation short of anything if it accepts the grace peculiar to it. During the short days of our life let us work for eternity, for Jesus Christ and the souls for whom he is hungering.²⁶

Bishop Shanahan was zealous for God's glory like Jesus himself and this found expression in many circumstances of his life. To work for the glory of God is to radiate this manifestation of God's goodness among women and men that they may appreciate it and praise him for it. This is the object of missionary activity. It begins in his love and ends in his glory. The missionaries in Christ are the instruments in bringing God's love to all people, thus inspiring faith in them to the glory of God. Through opening themselves to the spirit in this way, both the missionaries and their people find salvation.

2.1.3. The Divinization of Human Beings

Bishop Shanahan saw in people the light of God. Writing to the first seven Holy Rosary Postulants, Bishop Shanahan says, "I love to think of the day when as missionary sisters you will be, in the hands of Jesus Christ, the loved and living consecrated instruments of his mercy and love for the planting, maintaining and developing of divine life in the souls of multitudes in Africa."²⁷ In speaking of his

²⁶ Brigid Ryan, Bishop Shanahan and His Missionary Family Vol. 1. (Ireland: Leinster Ltd., 1967), p. 79.

²⁷ Ryan, op. cit., Vol. 1. p. 57.

early missionary days when he had to baptize and attend to the Igbos who were dying of the Spleen Disease, Bishop Shanahan exclaims, "Ah what a joy it was to give the highest of all lives - the Divine Life to those poor creatures....Great joy to them and great joy, too to the Missionary- the spiritual father whose function it was to transmit the divine life to them."²⁸ His unique missionary method of evangelizing through the multiplication of mission schools is based on this theology of divine life. While opening the first Catholic school for girls in Onitsha in 1928, Bishop Shanahan says,

it is the children of Nigeria who are really responsible for...the unbelievable rapidity with which God's Church has branched and blossomed in a few short years. These children going into their ... homes, full of the life of God and carrying with them his intimate presence and all the radiance of the supernatural.... God worked the miracle through these tiny apostles.²⁹

It is quite remarkable that in Bishop Shanahan's own life, this divine life was experiential. He felt it so consciously sometimes it was described as radiating through his body. A few days before his death Father Giltenan visited him in Maia Garbery Hospital in Nairobi and witnessed an inspiring sight, "His whole face became indescribably beautiful with awe and wonder in a glowing expression of love. He seemed to be listening attentively...after he came to himself and spoke to Father Giltenan 'Did you not see them...our holy mother and her divine son. . they will come for me...soon.'³⁰ On Christmas day, 1943, at about 7.30 a.m., the matron of Maia Hospital came on duty. "She found the Bishop lying quietly, apparently asleep. There was a bright light shining on his face. She went to switch off the light over the bed in case it might waken him and found to her surprise that the light was not turned

²⁸ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

²⁹ Ryan, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 83.

³⁰ Philomena Fox, *Lord that I may see* (Ireland: H.R.S., 1969), p. 45.

on. She looked at his face again. He was not sleeping but dead."³¹ Christ and his mother did indeed come for him!

2.2.4. Divinized Heart

Spirituality involves an element of seeing the world with a divinized heart that motivates and leads to action. Bishop Shanahan saw the world with the eyes of love. In his letter to Sister Margaret Mary, he says, "...the whole world changes and becomes so beautiful when seen and loved with eyes and heart animated with a soul where God dwells."³² One of Bishop Shanahan's outstanding characteristics was his deep affectionate nature and the uninhabited expression of it in his letters and relationship with people. This must surely stem from his habit of seeing everything and everyone in God who is love. He says:

the work of the missionary is to make known to people the great love Jesus has for them. To know one is so greatly loved is the deepest source of happiness and peace. Like God we must love the undeserving. 'Love always he writes, 'not because someone deserves love, but because the more someone does not deserve love, the more that someone needs love... See in each person, the infinity of the image of God. Carry Christ with you always and everywhere, bless everyone and everything.'³³

Jesus was known as the friend of tax collectors and sinners. In his life and preaching, he showed the indiscriminating generosity of our God particularly to those unworthy of it. We as children of God and sisters and brothers of Jesus are called to practice this goodness beyond strict justice, to treat our fellow women and men as God treats us.

Bishop Shanahan preached this teaching by words and deeds!

³¹ Rosarri Comer, *Memories and Letters*, (Ireland: H.R.S., 1970), p. 20.

³²Ryan, *op. cit.*, Vol. 11, p. 220.

³³ Fox, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

2.1.5. Forgiveness

Forgiveness "is so important that it is the only one which the Lord Jesus returns and which he develops explicitly in the Sermon on the Mount."³⁴ Bishop Shanahan believed in having a forgiving spirit and forgiveness is significant element in his spirituality. Desmond Forristal notes:

a man whom he had educated in the mission school and who had secured an important government position as a result... had repaid him by spreading the vilest slanders about him, even writing to the Superior General, asking for his dismissal. This man was involved in large -scale dishonesty and corruption and came for help... Shanahan received him with his usual courtesy and made no mention of past wrongs. His dishonesty had been discovered and he needed the large sum of 400 pounds immediately. Without it, he faced imprisonment and ruin. Shanahan asked Sr. Philomena (his secretary) to give the man a cheque for the full amount, which she did, with great reluctance. It is a necessary charity, he told her. God has never yet let me down.³⁵

Indeed, God did not let him down, a few days after that a cheque for two thousand pounds came from Holy Childhood Society in Rome. Bishop Shanahan exclaimed, "How good God is"!

He was such a personality, prayerful, big-hearted, sensitive, understanding, forgiving. Tony Geoghegan concludes:

such was one of the greatest missionaries of all times, not unworthy to be ranked with his apostolic models... St. Paul and St. Patrick. It is only right that when the missionary movement seems to be losing momentum in the face of the immense changes of the recent times in the world, in the Church and in theology, we should turn to this giant of the recent past for inspiration and encouragement, for what we can learn from him concerns the deep well-springs of missionary spirit, zeal and attitude, that are fundamental to missionary endeavour at any time and in any culture.³⁶

³⁴ The Catechism of the Catholic Church (Kenya: Pauline Publication Africa, 1994), p. 647.

³⁵ Forristal, *op.cit.*, pp. 231-232.

³⁶ Tony Geoghegan, Missionary Spirituality of Bishop Shanahan (Dublin: Three Candles Ltd. 1974), p. 26.

In a world torn by all kinds of oppression, the missionary spirit of Bishop Shanahan in its dynamic self gift for the liberation of the marginalized continues to be a call for searching our relevant ways of being inserted in ministry. And "so we will be true to Christ. We too will go to the ends of the earth for him. We will live and toil and suffer and die through and for love of him."³⁷ What then are the fruits of the Spirit Bishop Shanahan lived out and wanted the sisters to imbibe?

2.2. The Contributions of Bishop Shanahan to the Formation of the Sisters

The spirit of Bishop Shanahan is very much alive among the members of the congregation he founded Michael Cahill advises, you "must not hesitate to develop 'seeds sown by bishop Shanahan and to explicitate what he stood for."³⁸ His letters trace the ideal of the true missionary sister of our Lady of the Holy Rosary. They inspire and challenge the leader in the Novitiate as she accompanies the young women to allow themselves to be formed by Christ who calls them out of love.

2.2.1. Interior Attitude

When the first seven postulants were received in Killeshandra (Ireland) in 1924, Bishop Shanahan explained to them the purpose of religious life and what is needed:

the life you are preparing to undertake is one that makes exceptional demands. there is needed a soul of profound spirituality with a clear vision of its great purpose. The missionary has to impart divine truth and divine life to beings the furthest on earth... and make them Christians....³⁹

³⁷ Ryan, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 62.

³⁸ Michael Cahill, I Know a Man in Christ: The Bible, Bishop Shanahan and Missionary Spirituality Today (Ireland: Three Candles Ltd., 1980), p. 51.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

Therefore religious life is a lifestyle that allows for consecrating oneself to God in the following of Christ and at the service of the Church's mission. However, the young women cannot give what they do not have. So Holy Rosary religious formation process prepares them for this life of wholeness. It provides opportunities for the human and spiritual development. Life of prayer was the bedrock of Bishop Shanahan's spirituality. This life of deeper relationship with God helped him to reach out to people in love. He contemplated God in nature, in the events of his own life, in persons that came in contact with him. He encouraged his spiritual daughters to be faithful to the Eucharist and have filial attachment to Mary, the mother of our saviour. He spoke often of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament as the friend who is always there and whose presence is balm in times of stress and confusion. His was a contemplative spirit which found expression in active service to people. He says, "a missionary cannot sanctify others unless she herself is filled with the spirit of Christ. Hence, she must 'put on Christ'"⁴⁰ The present century thirsts for authenticity. Therefore, the call to religious life is a call to intimate relationship with Christ. The whole formation process is geared toward achieving this. Opportunities are given for prayers, (both personal and communal) Eucharistic celebrations, adoration, praying the Rosary, reflection, retreat, recollection, spiritual direction, etc. The life in the community and ministry also help the young women to integrate prayer and activity. They are challenged to grow in their relationship with God through life experiences.

⁴⁰ Ibid..

2.2.2. Missionary Zeal

Bishop Shanahan was noted for his zeal in the salvation of souls. He volunteered for the Nigerian mission specifically to help 'the abandoned souls' to come to Christ. He was aware of the hardships involved and possible death but he gave his fiat. He arrived and set out to evangelize in spite of the sufferings involved. He was very hopeful and his ministry was successful though not without pitfalls. He encouraged the sisters not to give up in the face of hardships but to persevere. He emphasized, "I will continue to pray for the congregation that it may ever retain its spirit of ...earnest hard work and intense loving zeal for the realization of God's greater glory in your own souls and in every soul that comes in contact with you."⁴¹ In the pre-candidacy and candidacy, the young women are helped to understand the missionary dimension of our charism. As novices, many of them go outside their countries for apostolic experiences, working mostly with women and the marginalized. They are usually conscious that missionary service needs to be animated by love. "the work of evangelization presupposes in the evangelizer an ever increasing love for those whom he (she) is evangelising."⁴² An important sign of love is the proclamation of the Gospel values without reservation as Bishop Shanahan did. He says, "the principal work of the missionary was to be instrument of God in bringing men, women, and children a share in God's own life."⁴³ There would be hardships, but Christ is ever present with us and so we shall emerge victorious. Today our sisters are in the continents of Africa, Europe and North America, ministering to God's people, promoting their dignity and equality.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁴² Paul VI. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Washington DC: US Catholic Conference, 1995), No. 79.

⁴³ Geoghegan, op. cit., p. 7.

2.2.3. Generosity

Large heartedness was one of the outstanding qualities of Bishop Joseph Shanahan. His habitual awareness of God's presence made him to give freely what he was gifted with, both material and spiritual. His spiritual journey consisted of love that had become second nature. His priestly calling found fulfillment in the unconditioned self-gift he made of himself. Speaking to the sisters in Nigeria, Bishop Shanahan says, "Be perfectly human...be fully a woman. Do not be afraid of your little heart, it is made to be used....You cannot say you love God and remain aloof from your neighbour."⁴⁴ Therefore the Holy Rosary formation process helps the young women to cherish and continue to improve on this virtue. We are called to have burning love for all people. Pope John Paul II emphasizes, "the missionary is a person of charity. In order to proclaim to all his (her) brothers and sisters that they are loved by God and are capable of loving, he (she) must show love towards all, giving his (her) life for his (her) neighbour."⁴⁵ A missionary is a sign of God's love in the world. We need to live lives of self-sacrifice, self-forgetfulness. This, is the Gospel we preach, this is Christ!

2.2.4. Forgiveness

Pope John Paul II states, "two gestures are characteristics of Jesus' mission; healing and forgiveness."⁴⁶ These two traits should also characterize every follower of Jesus and be the hallmark of any Christian community. Bishop Shanahan knew the joys and difficulties in living in communities with different personalities. He experienced misunderstanding himself and was able to grow out of the experiences.

⁴⁴ Fox, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁴⁵ John Paul II, *The Mission of the Church Redemptoris Missio* (Nairobi: St. Paul Publications, 1990), No. 89

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, No 14.

He then encouraged the sisters to forgive and continue to care for one another:

in life, there will always be misunderstandings. We are all human. We hurt each other by mere nothings. But, no matter what happens: always forgive, always forgive; always forgive. That is the Christ like thing. Betrayal of friendship is hard to bear; or coldness or indifference or infidelity from those we have loved and trusted. But we must always forgive as Christ forgives.⁴⁷

In a world of broken trust, community is sustained by forgiveness. There is a call and a responsibility to forgive, to seek reconciliation with self, with God and with others. The formation process encourages dialogue, listening, empathy and reconciliation. The young women reflect on the love of God in spite of their weaknesses. When they realize how much God has forgiven them, they are challenged to forgive.

In conclusion, we have in this chapter explored the spirituality of our founder Bishop Joseph Shanahan. His deep-relationship with the person of Christ made him to be fully human and have love for all creation. His spirituality is still very relevant today. The Holy Rosary Sisters are encouraged to imbibe that during formation and continue to nourish it as formation is a life long process. The next chapter will explore the formation of Holy Rosary Sisters who are leaders of tomorrow focusing on Jesus and Bishop Shanahan as their models.

⁴⁷ Ryan, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 144-142.

CHAPTER THREE

FORMATION OF HOLY ROSARY SISTERS AS LEADERS: TWO MODELS

In Chapter Two, we reflected on the spirituality of Bishop Joseph Shanahan and how this is still cherished and being inculcated in the formation of Holy Rosary Sisters. Here, we will discuss the leadership qualities of Jesus and Bishop Joseph Shanahan our founder whose spirits the sisters imbibe during their formative years. However, before we do that, we will like to discuss the Holy Rosary Novitiate formation process.

3.1. Holy Rosary Novitiate Formation Process

Novitiate

Here the purpose is to help the person with the guidance of the director to respond to the call of Christ. These necessarily require:

- an atmosphere of quiet suitable for prayer and reflection.
- the experience of our way of life, of the spirit and spirituality of the congregation within ordinary community living.
- periods of apostolic experience.
- a study of the theology of religious life based on scripture and life experiences.
- An integration of prayer and apostolate all this leading to a movement towards commitment to Christ without reservation.

(Holy Rosary Constitutions, No.55)

The first step in formation work is to create a vibrant formative community, for no authentic Christian formation can take place outside of this context and dynamics. Holy Rosary Novitiate is an international and intercultural community in Nigeria (presently). Our young women from different tribes and countries come for religious formation there for two years according to the spirit of our beloved founder and ancestor Bishop Joseph Shanahan and the mission of the church today. The call to religious life is an invitation to discipleship. The young women are helped to deepen their experiential knowledge of the person of Christ leading to growth according to

his mind and heart. This is of course a life- time process but it must take root during novitiate.

The formation process is relational and wholistic. They are enabled to grow in greater freedom in order that they may internalize the values of the Gospel and be able freely to live them out. So, the Holy Rosary formation process prepares them to be immersed in the lives of the poor, the marginalized especially women, the sick, those in any kind of need.

Patrick Berkery notes, "Education is really the training of the whole individual, socially, economically, culturally, morally and spiritually."⁴⁸ Therefore human and spiritual formation cannot strictly be separated, for the human person is spiritual as well. Cecil McGarry affirms "spiritual values can only take root in well tilled human soil."⁴⁹ However, for the purpose of clarity we shall discuss human and spiritual formation separately.

3.1.1. Human Formation

Religious formation is first and foremost, God's action of love in the person. It is God who initiates the call to which the person responds. Therefore, it is God who forms the person. The human formators are merely God's instruments in this challenging ministry Cecil McGarry emphasizes, "the primary objective of the formation process is to prepare people for the total consecration of themselves to God in the following of

⁴⁸ Patrick Berkery, Restructuring Religious Life: A Plan for Renewal (New York: Alba House, 1968), p 169.

⁴⁹ Cecil McGarry, "Formation of the Agents of Evangelization for the Realities of Africa Today: Its Urgency and Importance" African Ecclesial Review 41 (4, 5, 6), 1999, p. 203.

Christ at the service of the church's mission."⁵⁰ So, the young women's whole lives must be open to the action of the Holy Spirit and in conformity to the Lord Jesus in his total self-giving. They are helped to know themselves and what it means to be human persons. They are helped to form a strong sense of self-identity as human persons and as Christians. This will enable them to make freely motivated Christian choices and decisions.

They are taught how human growth takes place, some conflicts and unsatisfied desires that exist at the deeper level of our being and how we can acknowledge and deal with them, rather than project them onto others in inappropriate behaviour. They also learn ability to communicate with others in simplicity and truth, to confront others when necessary, to deal reasonably with conflict and to accept others as they are. Growth takes place through daily experiences. The call to the consecrated life is a call to live in community with others who share the same life, vision, goals, charism and purpose. So community life is the source of support, inspiration, encouragement and challenge for the young women. But this is possible because Christ who calls us to live in community, provides for each of us, gifts which are for the building up of all because to "each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good (1 Cor 12:7)." The formation process takes into account, the uniqueness of each individual and the unique way in which God works in each person's life. The young women thus formed in freedom, are mature, capable of taking personal responsibility for their actions.

⁵⁰ Cecil McGarry, ed., The Consecrated Life (Nairobi: Pauline Publications, 1996), p. 36.

3.1.2. Spiritual Formation

Today, we are living in a world where immense changes are affecting almost every aspect of what we do. The expanding secularism and materialism and the lack of consensus on what are true human values call for a deep spiritual formation. So the leader helps to create conducive atmosphere which takes account the integral development of the whole person to enable her to love God with her whole heart, soul, mind, body and might (Deut 6:5) and her neighbour as herself (Lev 19:18; Matt 22:37-39). The young woman realizes the need for transformation in order to respond to that love. This is when the stage of 'dying' becomes predominant. In biblical language, God takes the young woman by the hand to "lead her into wilderness and speak to her heart (Hosea 2:16)" so as to heal her and bring her back to life (Hosea 14:5-7). Letting oneself be led by the Holy Spirit calls for a certain degree of solitude and a great deal of inner space and journey. Sylvain emphasizes

The spirit of silence should be encouraged in ... novitiate and houses of formation to help the young who are the products of a materialistic world to overcome the loud music and noisy culture. They must be trained to create space for silence because this is an important condition for one to be in contact with God. Silence is a prerequisite for a prayerful lifestyle. It is in silence that God reveals His mysteries to His people.⁵¹

There can be no formative journey without prayer. Patricia Spillane emphasizes, "if the goal of formation is to internalize an authentic relationship with Jesus and his plan for us, that goal can never be realized without specific times of intimacy with him, as well as a disposition of mind and heart that affects all times."⁵² The Holy Rosary Novitiate formative community provides conducive atmosphere for prayer with a big

⁵¹ Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa, "Formation of Men Religious As Agents of Evangelization for the Church As-Family of God *In African Ecclesial Review* 4 (4, 5, 6), 1999, p. 287.

⁵² Patricia Spillane, "Refounding and The Formative Journey" *Religious Life: Rebirth through Conversion* USA: Alba House, 1990), p. 109.

chapel and a small oratory occupying central places. A life of total self- consecration to God requires constant communication with God through prayer. Besides community prayer, the young women are encouraged to take initiative for personal prayer to nourish their spiritual life. Time is also set aside for monthly recollection and annual retreat. There is also an opportunity for spiritual direction.

The young women are encouraged to develop living convictions not through instructions per se but mostly through experiences. This generates personal convictions necessary to be a follower of Christ in a world so influenced by secularism and materialism. The Novitiate formation is then a process of growth which the young women commit themselves, are encouraged to question and take initiative and be responsible for the life and mission of the Church, each according to her particular gifts.

What is most important in spiritual formation is that the young women have a deep experience of Jesus Christ as Loving Saviour, the one who walks with them every day and by whom they are totally accepted and unconditionally loved. Such an experience provides sufficient motivation for all the sacrifices that will be called for in living a full Christian life and making choices that reflect Gospel values.

In conclusion, we must realize that religious formation is a complex ministry- but so is the blooming of a rose, which will not happen any faster if we wish for more sunlight on a cloudy day. In God's good time, the rose will bloom and in God's good time, the stories of our lives will come to fullness. In the words of Patrick McDonald "Spiritual development is a dynamic process that is never really finished... God hidden and loving is present in all human processes, guiding,

directing and bringing us to union through the normal everyday events of living.”⁵³

We can now explore the leadership qualities of Jesus and Bishop Shanahan which both those in formation and their leader are encouraged to imbibe.

3.2. Jesus: a Leader

“Whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant” (Mark 10:43).

The leadership model which can be drawn from the teachings and life of Jesus is a rich source of inspiration for leaders today. While each leader is unique and carries out his or her responsibilities in ways that reflect personality, training and culture, the basic characteristics, which are revealed in Jesus are still very relevant

3.2.1. Authentic relationship with God

What differentiates Jesus as a leader is his all-abiding and fundamental belief in God’s love. His constant message is that God’s love is transforming provided we respond in three ways: by loving God as the source of life and hope, by loving ourselves as an expression of God’s personal and free gift to us and by loving others as revelations of God and his goodness. As a leader, Jesus took us into the heart of God. He did this by living an utterly human life, open to God in all ways. Everything Jesus did was based on his relationship with God. He says, “my food is to do the will of the One who sent me and to bring his work to completion (John 4:34).” He proclaimed the reign of God, to invite all people into the same authentic relationship with God that he himself enjoyed. Throughout his life, Jesus taught the message of love, his words and actions constantly reinforcing each other. His final charge to his followers was that they should go out to the whole world to reveal the Good News.

⁵³ Patrick McDonald, “Bedrock Elements of Spiritual Growth” Human Development 17 (1), 1996, p. 39.

3.2.2. Jesus Leadership: Mutual Service

Jesus' leadership was servant leadership. His view of God's kingdom was that of a community of members serving one another – *mutual service*. Oswald Sanders clarifies, "Jesus did not have in mind more *acts of service* for those can be performed from the very dubious motives. He meant the *spirit of servant*, which he expressed when he claimed, "I am among you as one that serves (Luke 22:27)." ⁵⁴

The relationship between love and service is made obvious when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. This action teaches a practical lesson of great importance. Jesus knew that "the Father had given all things into his hands (John 13:3)." In other words, he was aware that he was exalted above all things. "You call me 'teacher' and 'lord' and you say so well, for that is what I am (John 13:13)." And it is in this consciousness of his universal sovereignty that he took the position of the person who is at the very bottom of the social ladder that is the slave. Elie Muakasa notes, "It is as Lord and Master that he washes the feet of his disciples. His leadership places him at the service not only of the Father but also of the Apostles whom he governs and educates." ⁵⁵ In his exceedingly great love for his disciples, he wanted to leave them this example. This tells us how important it was for Jesus that his disciples understand their calling to be servants. Isaac Zokoue concludes, "Jesus was not Master in order to command, nor to dominate, nor to have his own way but to train his disciples to serve." ⁵⁶ Therefore, Christian leaders need to "know they are leading, yes

⁵⁴ Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 22.

⁵⁵ Elie Muakasa. "Becoming a Leader," Unpublished Lecture, 1999, p. 9.

⁵⁶ Issac Zokoue, "Education for Servant Leadership in Africa," *In African Journal of Evangelical Theology* 9(1) 1990, p. 8.

but in the spirit of service.”⁵⁷ According to Janet Malone, “Jesus’ life is an example of the essence of service that is respectful, caring, mutual and reciprocal....Jesus modeled servant leadership as a reciprocal servant leadership – fellowship based on equality, mutuality and respect.”⁵⁸

Jesus spent all his time with his disciples, walked long distances with them and ate with them. Although he was their teacher, leader or ‘master,’ he did not want them to see how much above them he really was. Servant power is ‘power with,’ where energy is co-created in mutuality and relatedness. This is in contrast to ‘power over’ which is manipulative and controlling. Leaders need to respect those they lead.

3.2.3. Healing and Compassion

Jesus proclaimed the reign of God in action. He acted to help people and spoke to set them free. He mingled with the sick and cured them. Matthew sums it up twice by saying that Jesus went around all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and curing every disease and illness among the people (Matt. 4:23; 9:35). It is important that Jesus acted and spoke in this practical fashion. In this way, he provided the humanly recognizable face of God’s presence among us. Jesus led us, as a wise teacher through situations in which we can experience how God desires to relate to us. The most important thing is “Jesus whole hearted attention to the most forgotten of the people, while he was about the business of saving the world is among the most powerful lessons he gives us about leadership.”⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Fritz Lobinger, Serving and Leading the Christian Community (South Africa: Lumko Institute 1992), p. 17.

⁵⁸ Janet Malone, “The Dance of Leadership,” Human Development 9 (3), 1998, p. 46.

⁵⁹ Michelle Connolly, “The Leadership of Jesus,” In The Bible Today 34 (2) 1996, p. 79.

3.2.4. Jesus was a Patient Listener

Jesus had so much patience with his disciples' slow understanding. "You of little faith.... Do you not yet understand? (Matt 16:8-9; Mark 8:21)" He helped them day after day to grasp the Good News. After initial enthusiasm and success, the disciples showed that they did not understand. They began to dispute with Jesus and ultimately betrayed him while promising undying loyalty. His chosen 'rock,' Peter, publicly denied him under the scrutinies of a scullery maid while Jesus was on trial for his life. The one who betrayed him for money committed suicide (Matt 27:3) unable to trust or to endure the forgiveness that Jesus' whole life was about.

Jesus was with people, sharing their feelings, patiently attending to their stories, hearing their pain, their hopes and their joy. His whole life was characterized by compassionate responses to those who experienced pain of mind, body or soul. "And when he saw the crowds, he was filled with tenderness for them (Matt 9:36)."

3.2.5. Jesus was a Creator of Vision

Jesus offered a goal in life and indicated the direction for getting there. The beatitudes are such a vision. They speak to a new world where pain and suffering are acknowledged and integrated into people's lives as means of achieving wholeness and union with God (Matt 5: 1-12).

3.2.6. Jesus was Empowering

He gave people the responsibility to extend God's kingdom. After washing the feet of the apostles, Jesus told them, "You then, should wash one another's feet. I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you (John 13:14-15)." He also says to the apostles, "I call you friends because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. I chose you, and appointed you to go out and bear fruit (John 15:15-16)."

3.2.7. Jesus was Vulnerable

He was not reluctant to share his fears with his apostles and to ask for their support. Mark writes that as Jesus went into the garden with them to pray, distress and anguish came over him and he said to them. “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch (14:34).” Having admitted his vulnerability he prayed, only to learn that their support was not forthcoming. They fell asleep.

In conclusion, Jesus led by examples as well as words. He was authentic, available, practical, compassionate and forgiving. He listened to people and responded to what he heard, created and communicated a vision and empowered people to implement that vision. Through these, he offered inspiration as a leader. His relationship with his disciples was full of gentleness and humanness. His objective was to build them up, to edify them. The characteristics of an effective leader are seen in these qualities. We could not do better than follow the examples of the supreme Teacher and Exemplar of leadership. Christian leadership is essentially living as Jesus did. However, this model is not confining or tightly prescriptive. It allows for personal adaptation to specific roles and situations.

3.3. Bishop Joseph Shanahan: A Leader

Bishop Joseph Shanahan had deep-rooted relationship with God. This helped him to develop inspiring leadership qualities. Here, we will examine those empowering qualities of Jesus which he emulated, and which helped him to stimulate people to become involved in achieving goals mutually held.

3.3.1. Bishop Shanahan had deeper relationship with God.

Everything that Jesus did emanated from his relationship with God, so was Bishop Shanahan. As noted earlier, faith was his outstanding spiritual quality. With

deeply rooted faith in God, Bishop Shanahan saw God truly and actively present in every event and circumstance of his life. His very appearance portrayed that he dwelt in a world of grace. He cherished the people he lived and worked with. He worked for their transformation. His entire life echoed the reflection of St. Paul in Romans Chapter 8 (life in the spirit). He not only preached it but as St. James has it in his letter (2:14-18) – a life of faith is manifested in one's actions. Bishop Shanahan asked God to accept the sacrifice of the missionaries and his and in return for a great Church to stand one day over the bones of these missionaries and his in Nigeria. A man of faith believed and so it is today!

3.3.2. He had Magnanimous Heart

Like Jesus Bishop Shanahan gave himself so tirelessly to the work entrusted to him. He shared people's troubles and hope. He loved the people he interacted with in the course of his life and apostolate and they loved him in return. It was this intense love for human beings that made him to realize the need for the education of men as well as women in Nigeria. Jacob Ojukwu remarks, "he has a heart that accepted people. He did not avoid them and they came to him readily. He was a man for everybody."⁶⁰

He was kind to people including his 'fellow missionaries' (as he loved to call his priests) in their sickness and generous to them in their needs. He built brick houses for them and saw that they ate nourishing food. He insisted on a daily dose of quinine to combat malaria. He encouraged vegetable gardens, coffee plantations and fruit trees. "Sick and dying men cannot preach the Gospel. We want live ones for that,"⁶¹

⁶⁰ Dynan, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁶¹ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

he says. Bishop Shanahan's love for human beings extended to a respect for people's culture. He says to the missionaries:

be both sympathetic and understanding to African people, especially the women, meet the people of Africa with courtesy and respect, never do for them the things they can do for themselves, Teach, demonstrate and encourage them to develop, but let them develop in their own way. Do not usurp or supplant them in anything... While leading others to Christ and the true Christian spirit that Christ is bringing to them through you, be always careful to respect their ...customs as an expression of the human spirit.⁶²

This respect for people and their culture is one of the teachings of Second Vatican Council today. So Bishop Shanahan was well ahead of the people of his time.

3.3.3. He was a Creator of Vision

Bishop Shanahan had lots of initiatives. For instance, in 1905, when he was appointed Prefect- Apostolic of Southern Nigeria, the early missionaries made little progress among the people. He found himself in charge of a mission that seemed to have no future. He reflected on the situation and concluded that his predecessors had mainly ministered to the adult population especially those suffering from diseases or social disabilities. So he decided to introduce Christianity into every home and children became the bearers of the Gospel message. As earlier mentioned, school became instrument in carrying out this plan. He also introduced the idea of teacher- catechist, which was quite a new idea in apostolic enterprises in those days. Religion was introduced to the people through education. He founded a training college for would-be teachers and formed the students not only in academic but as co-operators with the missionaries. With schools, there was progress in Catholic faith. The first indigenous seminary in Igbariam in Southern Nigeria was established through his

⁶² Ibid., p. 25.

initiative. Leen notes, "Dr. Shanahan, like all who have the quality of leadership, had the faculty of being able to pick out from those in contact with him, the men (people) most apt to co-operate with him in his undertakings. He could moreover, inspire them with his own idealism and impart to them his own enthusiasm."⁶³

3.3.4. He was a Listener

Bishop Shanahan like Jesus was also a listening person. When he came to Nigeria, he did not impose his idea of God. He listened to the people's image and experience of God. He learnt a lot from his encounter with them. Desmond Forristal notes, "Shanahan was struck by the similarities between their faith and his own. Their Chukwu was the same God whom he worshipped and preached....The sacrifices they offered through their priest for their own sins and the sins of the dead were a foreshadowing of the sacrifice of the Mass."⁶⁴ In the course of his ministry, he saw the plight of the women, listened to their stories and founded the Holy Rosary Sisters to raise their dignity through education.

3.3.5. He was Empowering

Although Bishop Shanahan was quite gentle, he empowered people as Jesus did. He did not believe in the 'weak little woman' attitude. He empowered the sisters, to work hard and to take their rightful position. He says, "little girls were all right up to a point- past seventeen they should become women as the mother of God was a woman, fearless, compassionate and understanding. Think of Mary traveling across the countryside to visit her cousin Elizabeth in a time of need-fearless."⁶⁵

⁶³ Edward Leen. "An Appreciation" In Brigid Ryan, ed., Bishop Shanahan and His Missionary Family Vol. I. (Ireland: Leinster Leader Ltd., 1977), p. 40.

⁶⁴ Forristal, op. cit., p. 51.

⁶⁵ Fox, op. cit., p. 12.

Bishop Shanahan therefore wanted the sisters to be courageous and to empower others especially women and the marginalized.

3.3.6. He was Vulnerable.

Bishop Shanahan was open, simple and vulnerable like Jesus. He acknowledged his weakness when he says, "at first I concentrated on my own piece of work but gradually God purified my soul, as much as could be done with a poor sinner, and now I have learned to look on things with the mind of Christ."⁶⁶ This is a remarkable statement. If we hear it from someone else, we would consider it presumptuous and proud, but from a man of humility like Shanahan, we hear simplicity and sincerity. Bishop Shanahan had defects as all people have. These defects sprang from his qualities-generosity, impulsiveness and strongly emotional temperament. These brought him into conflicts with people of smaller minds. However, these defects did not put him into anything mean or ungenerous. His virtue of humility helped him to be an outstanding character.

Anyone who met or knew Bishop spoke spontaneously of his unique personality, his graciousness, exquisite refinement, engaging manner, serene smile and his affectionate nature. The joy of being in his presence captivated all who encountered him at any time. He looked what he was, a prince of the Church, a priest of the Most High God, a great apostle and a great Bishop!

In this Chapter, we discussed the Novitiate formation process of the Holy Rosary Sisters, which is quite wholistic. After that, we explored the inspiring and empowering leadership qualities of Jesus and Bishop Shanahan as part of what those in formation imbibe. The next chapter will explore qualities needed in the leader in the Novitiate.

⁶⁶ Ryan, *op.cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 143

CHAPTER FOUR

QUALITIES OF A LEADER IN THE HOLY ROSARY NOVITIATE

In Chapter Three, we discussed the Holy Rosary formation process and the inspiring and empowering models of leadership in the persons of Jesus and Bishop Shanahan. The liberating and inspiring qualities of Jesus and Bishop Joseph Shanahan are worthy of emulation. Today's leaders are called to empower people through service. In this Chapter, we will explore the qualities that are necessary in the leader to actualize the vision of the congregation.

Modern man (woman) listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he (she) does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.
(Pope Paul VI *Evangelii Nuntiandi* No. 41)

The leader in the Holy Rosary Novitiate is the visible representative of Christ in the community with the role of accompanying each young woman to the Easter Experience and the empowering for mission. Helen Nwalye suggests:

formators must ... be people who are fully alive, i.e., mature women who have learnt to accept themselves, to be themselves, to give themselves in service and to have a strong sense of belonging to their religious institute. They must have a deep personal faith in Jesus Christ. They need to be women of integrity who are ready to stand up for Gospel values.⁶⁷

Therefore the way an individual in leadership carries out his or her roles has profound impact on people both within and outside the group. That is why M. Bleich sees leadership as "the use of personal characteristics or qualities to influence others."⁶⁸ Assuming congruity between what one says and what one does is paramount to authentic and effective leadership. Jesus is the indispensable model for Christian

⁶⁷ Helen Nwalye, "Formation of Women Religious as Agents of Evangelization for the Church-As-Family of God." In *African Ecclesial Review* 41 (4, 5, 6), 1999, p. 271.

⁶⁸ M. Bleich, "Managing and Leading." In P. Wisc, ed., *Leading and Managing in Nursing*. (St. Louis: Mosby, 1999), p. 3.

leaders. He revealed God's love and abiding presence in the community. His teachings and his life speak to all believers who serve as leaders. In him they see the focus, characteristics and behaviour that are needed to build God's kingdom. Therefore, the critical role of the designated leader in Holy Rosary Novitiate is to carry on Jesus' mission, to promulgate the reality of divine love and to manifest its active and ongoing presence in the lives of the young women and in the wider world. She is given the privilege of walking with them on their personal and spiritual journeys. She must therefore walk accordingly. She needs to serve. She models the kind of behaviour she wants the young women to imbibe. Her guidance must be characterized by understanding, to help them make firm and faithful the commitment to continue the journey already begun. Then what qualities will enable her to achieve the above stance?

4.1. Personal Relationship with Christ

Faith is an indispensable quality for a person in formative ministry. She will continue to nurture a deep personal relationship with the Lord. Then, she will consciously attempt to model her leadership on the Christ she has personally encountered. Personal authenticity finds its source in an intimate relationship with the Lord born of contemplative prayer and asceticism. Gerald Arbuckle says:

true leadership occurs only when one has learnt the art of followership that is, the journeying inwards with the Lord to acknowledge one's own sinfulness, prejudices and fear. In this world it is a journey that can never end. Followership is primarily a way of being face-to-face with the Lord in faith, admitting our powerlessness and our desperate need for the Lord's grace, sensitive to his on-going forgiveness and compassion.⁶⁹

Jesus while walking on the earth was in constant communion with God and so proclaimed a God who loves and invites all to that relationship. Outstanding leaders,

⁶⁹ Gerald Arbuckle, Re-founding the Church: Dissent for Leadership (USA: Orbis Books, 1993), p. 120.

including Bishop Shanahan our founder, are rooted in God and grounded in their awareness of God's presence in all, especially the poor. Bishop Shanahan encouraged the sisters to develop a deeper union with God. Therefore, the leader in our Novitiate following in the footsteps of Jesus and Bishop Shanahan, and indeed other saints, deepens her personal relationship with Christ. In prayer, God gives her all that is needed for effective ministry. She then helps the young women to grow "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph.4:13)." As that happens, they are moved to personal acts of love, reflecting the model Jesus revealed.

4.1.2. Empathy/Compassion: The Heart of Leadership

For effective formative ministry or indeed any ministry, leaders must be relational, fully human and fully alive. In fact, the quality that reveals the depth of their commitment to model their lives on Jesus is compassion. Compassion is love in action. Jesus focused on people, hearing their questions, sharing their pains and responding compassionately with both words and actions. Love is the foundation for all he did. Bishop Shanahan was a compassionate person too. He saw people with divinized eyes. He was present to them and shared their pains. .

The young women in formation are called to the fullness of life in Christ and believe that the Novitiate community is a powerful vehicle for realizing both their spiritual and psychological growth. Therefore, through the development of supportive environment, the leader helps them to identify their needs. Through people-sensitive approaches, she personally and compassionately responds to their needs. Her responsiveness is open and generous, borne out of truly sharing the pain others are experiencing. She values the uniqueness and goodness of each of the young women.

She treats them with respect, and dignity. She shows concern, care and love in her relationship with them. In general, her life is characterized by generous service.

4.1.3. Ability to achieve Creative Vision

The leader in the Novitiate will have the ability to help the young women to achieve the vision of the congregation. “The ideal of the congregation is to produce the apostolic life of Christ in faithfulness to the charism of our founder who was a man of intense missionary zeal for the realization of God’s great glory” (Constitution No. 2). Jesus had a vision of the kingdom of God where all people will live in peace and serve one another. That was why his leadership was that of service in love. In the same vein, when Bishop Shanahan saw the deplorable condition of the Southern Nigerian women, it was contradictory to the vision of the kingdom of God that Jesus proclaimed. So he built schools for them so that they would model Christian humanhood, and no longer feel second class citizens. Therefore, in the Novitiate, the leader will be able to help the young women to become what they are supposed to be under Christ and be committed to justice and liberation of the oppressed and those in the margins of life and society.

4.1.4. Listening Heart

Both the desire and the ability to listen is the foundation for effective Holy Rosary formative ministry. It reveals the leader’s wanting to learn and grow through understanding the wisdom the young women in formation offer. Listening also involves thinking well and clearly of them. It implies dialogue and respectful exchange at the adult-to-adult level. Pope Paul VI advises, “Before speaking we must take great care to listen not only to what people say but more especially to what they have in their hearts to say. Only then will we understand them and respect them, even

as far as possible, agree with them....”⁷⁰ Jesus listened attentively and compassionately to the needs of others. He listened to the wisdom of the Cannanite woman and was transformed in the process (Matt 15:21-26). Bishop Shanahan was also a listening person. He saw the plight of the women of Southern Nigeria and founded the congregation to help them and to show examples of Christian womanhood. Therefore, the leader in Holy Rosary Novitiate needs to have a symbol of a rabbit (large ears) like the chief of the Manja People of the Central African Republic. With that she would be able to sort through all she might hear and get the best thinking. Therefore, listening gives the leader access to the young women's needs, hopes, weaknesses and strengths. Listening is an absolute prerequisite for effective leadership, because it is the primary mechanism for building relationships.

4.1.5. Ability to Empower

Effective leaders know their own gifts as well as their personal limitations. In addition, they are aware of the magnitude of gifts present in others- convinced that each person is both gifted as a potential leader. Jesus empowered his disciples to lead in the spirit of service. Bishop Joseph Shanahan empowered the sisters, priests, catechists, women, men, and all who came in contact with him. The leader in Holy Rosary Novitiate accepts as one of her major responsibilities, supporting each and every member of the community especially the young women to discover, develop and use the distinctive gifts given to them so that they are able to foster within themselves their own potential for change. She empowers them “to become more active themselves, more creative in the control of their own lives through interacting with others in trust and mutuality” and to develop more confident to lead.”⁷¹ To

⁷⁰ Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam*, 1958-1981 (Ralcigh, NeoCatechumenate: Pierian Press, 1981), p. 153.

⁷¹ Arbuckle, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

awaken them to their vocation is to help them to become aware of their gifts and how they can be put to the service of the reign of God in the world.

4.1.6. Weakness

In popular thought and practice, weakness is something to be overcome or mastered. However, it seems a necessary quality for someone called to lead especially in formative ministry. Weakness as a quality here makes the leader to stand in constant awareness of her imperfection, pain and sin. Henri Nouwen calls it ability:

to recognize man's (woman's) craving for love in our own heart and his (her) cruelty in our own impulses, to see our hope for forgiveness in our friend's eyes and our refusal in his (her) bitter mouth. When they kill, we know that we could have done it; when they give life, we know that we can do the same.⁷²

The leader in the Novitiate needs to be constantly aware that she is in the same predicament as the vulnerable young women she is accompanying. She may operate on the assumption that she must be eminently well adjusted in all steps ahead of them. She may believe that to admit weakness is to jeopardize credibility. Admitting that one has not reached a desired goal might be considered a confession of weakness, but without it, there could be no effective formative ministry. Therese Hoening affirms, "the very areas in which we feel least competent may well be the avenues through which God can touch another and draw him (her) through us to himself."⁷³

Jesus was truly and fully human. He showed vulnerability at the garden and asked for support from his apostles (Mark 14:34). Bishop Shanahan was noted for his quick temper. Therefore acknowledgement of weakness is necessary for a leader in

⁷² Henri Nouwen, "Tomorrow's Leader," *Commonweal*, 1976, p. 292.

⁷³ Therese Hoening, "The Necessity of Weakness for Christian Leadership" *Review for Religious* 39(1), 1980, p. 21.

the Holy Rosary Novitiate because it marks her solidarity with all that is human and paves the way for authentic encounter in ministry. She can help the confused, guilt-stricken and restless young woman not because she has successfully dealt with each condition, but because she struggles with confusion, guilt and restlessness in her own life. Weaknesses serve as occasions to recognize and realize the power of God in our lives and to let that power transform the lives of others.

4.17. Team-spirit

Effective leaders do not work in isolation. They are inclusive rather than exclusive in approach. They are willing to listen to and collaborate with those whose views and styles may differ from their own. Being collaborative taps into the gifts of many people, fosters creativity and achieves greater results. Jesus worked with the Twelve and seventy-two others respectively (Matt 9: 1-2, 10:1) and probably many more. This yielded immense harvest. Bishop Shanahan also worked with many people- priests, sisters, brothers, catechists, women, men and especially children whom he called 'tiny apostles.' It was the support he got after the famous 'Calabar Verandah' meeting with his co-workers that gave birth to the Congregation.

In Holy Rosary Novitiate, the leadership is a team. There is much collaboration, co-operation and team-spirit in the formative ministry. The young women in formation are not left out. They participate in the affairs of the community. In this sense, leadership may be exercised by any of the community members at anytime. Leadership function does not belong to the designated leader alone. In fact, a significant mark of leadership for the designated leader is the freedom with which she encourages others to exercise leadership. In this way, she facilitates the maturity and responsibility of the members of the community.

4.1.8. Ability to handle conflicts

Conflict seems to make up the major part of our history. Christianity is a religion of reconciliation. Jesus handled and still handles the conflict between God and human beings. Bishop Shanahan experienced a lot of conflicts in his dealings with his congregation, his priests and even the sisters he founded. His strength was the way he handled them. With the mind of Christ, he was able to understand and to forgive.

Therefore, the leader in the Novitiate needs to know how to handle and manage conflicts. There could be petty jealousies, identity crisis and other cultural or personality differences, which may cause conflicts. These have potentials because they highlight problems that require attention. These might strengthen relationship when they are recognized and handled adequately. Thus the leader needs to be able to resolve conflicts constructively.

4.1.9. Humour

This is a gift of God that needs to be cultivated and nurtured. A good leader has positive outlook to daily experiences. Humour can be of untold value in the leader in the Novitiate both for what it does for her and for the use it can be in her ministry. She is supposed to be a realist who accepts herself, her failures and also recognizes that the world is not all that perfect, so no need to be discouraged or depressed. Sometimes in the Novitiate, there could be unnamed tension. The leader should be able to create safe and relaxed atmosphere with her sense of humour. She needs not to be too serious with trifle matters. Clean wholesome humour will relax tension and relieve a difficult situation more than anything else.

In this Chapter we have explored the essential qualities of the leader in this unique ministry. The effectiveness of empowering leadership in the Holy Rosary Novitiate is largely the ability to judge what will be appropriate in a particular

situation. The journey to effective Christian leadership in the Novitiate is following the inspiring models-Jesus and Bishop Shanahan. Their spirit must prevail and that calls for human skills of caring and concern. And like Christ, she will use all that is truly human to manifest the divine!

CONCLUSION

The concept, leadership, has come into prominent use in our day. It is quite an issue in today's formative ministry as it seeks to restore the bonds of communion, which have been lost historically. Robert Harvanak observes, "the shift from authority to leadership within Catholicism was perhaps evident in the Second Vatican Council: the Council was called to be *pastoral* rather than dogmatic.... More significant is the use of the images of shepherd and servant to portray the exercise of leadership... and the language of guiding and leading to describe the functions of the leader."⁷⁴ Therefore Christian leadership involves mutual co-operation between the leader and the members of the group. Being a leader can also mean being a follower if the situation arises.

Christ is our leader and by following him we would not walk in darkness (John 8:12). Therefore leadership in the Holy Rosary Novitiate is radically a gift and a work of the Holy Spirit. Human wisdom, natural vitality, personal gifts and talents do not fully equip one to lead, even though they can help. The strength of the leader comes from the power and presence of God made active in her life. Christian leadership is based both on the goodness of the person and on the willingness of that person to be open to the transforming love of God.

Self sacrifice is part of the price to be paid daily by the leader in the Novitiate. This is because leadership here is modeled on the life of the One who gave himself a sacrifice for the whole world and left us an example that we should follow his steps. Therefore, a lot of demand would be made on her time, talents, wisdom and knowledge. Willingness to renounce personal preferences, to sacrifice legitimate and natural desires for the sake of God's kingdom, will characterize the leader in the

⁷⁴ Robert Harvanak, "The Expectations of Leadership," *The Way* 15(4), 1974, p. 21.

Lord's vineyard (Novitiate). Again from its very nature, leadership in general is a lonely one and more so in formative ministry with the demands of sensitivity and confidentiality. Therefore even though the leader in the Holy Rosary Novitiate tries to be very friendly with all people, there are areas of life in which she must be prepared to tread a lonely path. Human nature craves company and it is only natural to wish to share with others the heavy burdens of responsibility and care. It is often heart breaking to have to make decisions that affect the lives of loved ones and to make them almost alone. This is one of the heaviest prices to pay, but it must be paid.

However, since leadership in the Novitiate is a response to the call of the Lord, its effectiveness evolves. Some of the ability comes as a result of experience, some by learning from mistakes, by profiting from the experience and mistakes of others, from personal insights and learning simple people oriented skills. Its ultimate effectiveness will be based on the Lord's promise to Moses and to us, "I will be with you (Exod 3:12)." The same promise was renewed in a special way by Christ to his disciples, "I am with you all days until the final end of the present time (Matt 28:20)." With this unflinching support, the leader can say with St Paul "we are (I am) afflicted in every way but not constrained; perplexed but not driven to despair; persecuted but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus so that the life of Jesus, may also be manifested in our (my) body (2 Cor 4:8-10)." The quest is a search for wholeness. Through solitude and reflection, through listening and relationship with others, through failure and successes, the leader in the Novitiate ultimately discovers her distinctive path to leadership.

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