

Leadership



This is that time of year when there are days that it feels like you need the furnace running and other days when you feel like you need the air conditioner running. Last night I woke up in a sweat because it was so stuffy and hot. I tossed and turned for a long time, driving my wife out of bed in the process, until finally I decided to get up and go watch a little television. Lo and behold, what was on? It was the canonization Mass for Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II.

I think maybe I was supposed to watch this because I've been thinking about *leadership* lately. As principal of the school, I am considered by some to be its leader, and I want to do a good job. I'm also in a study group with other school administrators in which we have read studies and discussed how to make leaders out of teachers and staff members. And of course, we want our students to grow into positive leaders.

And so listening to Pope Francis's homily at 4:00 this morning, I thought I heard him refer to Saint John XXIII or Saint John Paul II as a *servant leader*. Granted, I was a bit groggy, but that's what I thought I heard. That made me think of the lesson Jesus taught his apostles on Holy Thursday when he washed their feet, and how He came *not to be served, but to serve*.

It was a good reminder to me that the type of leadership that Jesus Christ taught is that in which other people's highest priority needs are being met. It is focused on the growth and well-being of others, rather than the accumulation of power. The best way to test whether we are exercising this concept of servant leadership is to ask the question: *Are those being served growing as persons, or in our case, as disciples of Christ?* If the answer is yes, then we are doing our jobs as leaders. But, if we don't know the answer, or if the answer is no, then we need to rethink what type of leaders we are.

Servant leadership isn't easy. It is hard work. It isn't just one person at the top with everyone else following orders. It might start with one person helping several other people grow and thrive, but then to continue, those people have to help several others, and those people must help still others. This is the model that Jesus instituted some 2,000 years ago. If we want to be great leaders, we should probably study the gospels. A servant leader shares power and puts the needs of others before the accumulation of power.

Since we are getting to that time of year when we recognize student leaders with awards and honors, it might be a good time for us teachers to remind ourselves what real leadership looks like. After all, we had a pretty good Teacher.

Yours in Christ,
Jim Makey, Principal