

ELECTION THOUGHTS TO PONDER IN PRAYER

As you consider the solemnity of the action in which you will be soon participating, be sure to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in electing those who will serve, animate, and guide our fraternity for the next three years. Reflect upon and take to heart the words attributed to St. Bonaventure, describing the six qualities of a spiritual leader:

Zeal for Righteousness: The moral sensitivity to anything unjust in him/herself or others. It highlights the importance of purity.

Compassion: This should be demonstrated to those who are facing both physical and spiritual weaknesses. In other words, everyone! Today, this aspect would be described as being a servant to those who are in need.

Patience: Leaders are in critical need of patience due to at least three reasons: 1) leadership is demanding work; 2) there is little apparent return for all the efforts the leader makes; 3) and many who are on the receiving end may not show appreciation.

Good example: Leaders are models that other people look to and follow their example, therefore make it good! The leader is no better than the followers and needs to show maturity and humility. The operative word in this process is servant: Servant Leader.

Those who allow their names to be placed in nomination for any council position must remember that their election to that position will require their total commitment and availability to their brothers and sisters for the next 3 years.

Good judgment and discernment: These qualities guide the leader in knowing both what to do and how to do it. In relationship the servant leader should encourage the spiritual and moral growth of all members of the fraternity and remember to delegate responsibilities as needed to not become buried under the heavy load of administration.

Devotion to God: While listed last, this is the most important quality because everything else depends upon it. A close, personal relationship with God guides us in all our leadership responsibilities.

THREE ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF FRANCISCAN SERVANT LEADERSHIP

1. The call or commission is initiated by God;
2. The response or commitment for 3 years is wholehearted and:
3. The leader has or is open to receiving the vision necessary to serve in a servant leadership capacity.

...Commitment is the pivotal element... commitment comes from a free will choice... not only a choice but a promise – a choice in the present concerning a promise for the future. ... The act of committing sets us free to love God and one another... When we commit to serve ... we surrender freedom, individualism and control. The purer the intention to serve, the clearer God's plan, the vision becomes. (*Handbook for Secular Franciscan Leadership. Page 8*)