Introduction: A Leadership That Is Not of This World

In a time when the words *leadership* and *success* are loaded with power, influence, control, and charisma, the Gospels present us with a radically different proposal: that of leadership according to the Heart of Christ. In contrast to the leadership of the world—which seeks prominence, domination, and to be served—Jesus proposes a leadership based on service, humility, sacrifice, and love. This kind of leadership not only challenges our current mentality but calls us to a deep conversion of heart and to embrace the role of disciples who lead others to the Truth, not to themselves.

This article is an invitation to rediscover Christian leadership as lived and taught by Jesus Christ, by analyzing its theological, historical, and pastoral dimensions, and offering a practical guide for applying it to daily life: in the family, at work, in the Church, and in society.

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1. What Is Leadership in the Evangelical Key?

The word "leadership" does not explicitly appear in the Gospels, but the concept is present in every word, gesture, and decision of Christ. Jesus does not call Himself a "leader," but rather the **Good Shepherd** (cf. Jn 10:11), the **Servant** (cf. Mk 10:45), the **Teacher** (cf. Jn 13:13), the **Lord** (cf. Jn 13:13), and the **King** (cf. Jn 18:37), redefining with each of these terms what it means to guide others.

Evangelical leadership is not a path of ascent to power, but a descent into total self-giving. It is a vocation to serve others—even unto death. That is why Jesus clearly states:

> ***"Whoever wants to be first among you must be your servant"*** *(Mt 20:27).*

Essential Characteristics of Jesus' Leadership:

1. **Service over power**: to lead is to wash others' feet (cf. Jn 13:1-17).
2. **Love as the driving force**: "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:13).
3. **Humility and obedience**: "Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart" (Mt

11:29).
4. **Moral, not imposed, authority**: “He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes” (Mk 1:22).
5. **Spiritual discernment and Kingdom vision**: His gaze was not earthly but eternal.

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2. Key References to Leadership in the Gospels

a. **Jesus, the Good Shepherd (John 10)**

Jesus presents Himself as the Good Shepherd who knows His sheep, calls them by name, and lays down His life for them. He does not dominate, manipulate, or exploit them. He guides with tenderness, compassion, and vigilance. A leader, according to this model, does not possess his community: **he protects it, loves it, serves it, and is willing to die for it**.

b. **The Washing of the Feet (John 13)**

This scandalous gesture—typical of a slave—is a masterclass in leadership. Jesus, fully aware of His divine identity, **chooses to stoop down** to teach that true authority is expressed in service. Anyone who is not willing to wash the feet of others cannot be a leader in God’s logic.

c. **Correcting the Ambitious Apostles (Mark 10:35-45)**

When James and John request the highest places in the Kingdom, Jesus replies firmly:

> *“You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them… But it shall not be so among you. Whoever would be great among you must be your servant” (Mk 10:42-43).*

Jesus dismantles the worldly scheme of power and proposes a new model: **greatness through smallness**.

d. **Leadership on the Cross (Matthew 27:27-54)**

The pinnacle of Christian leadership is the cross. There, naked, humiliated, and apparently defeated, Jesus exercises the highest act of authority: **redeeming humanity through total self-giving**. The cross is not failure; it is the throne of the true King.

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3. Theological Relevance: Jesus, the Servant-King

From a theological perspective, Jesus' leadership is deeply rooted in the figure of the **Suffering Servant of Yahweh** foretold by Isaiah (cf. Is 52–53). This servant does not impose but **bears others' sins, intercedes, suffers, and liberates**. In Christ, this prophecy is fully realized.

Jesus' authority is not instrumental but **sacrificial**. It is not about wielding power, but about configuring one's life to the Love of the Father. Therefore, His leadership is not a technique but an **identity**: He is the obedient Son, the self-giving Shepherd, the Teacher who kneels, the crucified King.

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4. Practical Applications: How Can We Lead Like Christ Today?

a. **In the Family**

- Parents are the spiritual leaders of their children. The model is not authoritarianism, but testimony.
- Educate with firm love, real presence, and generous sacrifice.
- Pray with your children, accompany, listen, and guide without imposing.

b. **In the Church**

- Priests, catechists, coordinators: their leadership is not hierarchical but pastoral.
- Serve in hidden ways, without seeking recognition or titles.
- Be close to the people, know their wounds, and walk with them.

c. **At Work and in Society**

- Be a light amid corruption, lies, and selfishness.
- Lead projects with ethics, truth, and the common good in mind.
- Inspire through example, not just words.

d. **In Personal Spiritual Life**

- Be led first by Christ: follow Him in prayer, sacraments, and discernment.
- Exercise self-control, inner maturity, and life coherence.
- Be a guide for others not out of superiority but through lived humility.

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5. A Practical Guide from Theology and Pastoral Experience

Aspect	Gospel Teaching	Practical Application
Authority	"Whoever wants to be first must be your servant" (Mt 20:27)	Lead from below, not from a pedestal.
Decision-Making	Jesus spent nights in prayer before acting (Lk 6:12)	Make decisions after prayer and discernment.
Correction	"Go, and sin no more" (Jn 8:11)	Correct with charity, without humiliating.
Communication	"He who has ears, let him hear" (Mt 13:9)	Listen more than you speak, communicate with truth and compassion.
Sacrifice	"This is my body, given up for you" (Lk 22:19)	Give time, energy, and heart for others.

6. Current Challenges for Christian Leadership

- **Individualism**: true Christian leaders think in terms of community.
- **Culture of success**: the Gospel proposes the logic of the grain of wheat that dies (cf. Jn 12:24).
- **Crisis of authority**: we need leaders with moral authority, not just institutional power.
- **General distrust**: credibility must be regained through coherent lives.

Conclusion: Christ, the Only Eternal Leadership Model

The leadership of Christ is not just an admirable model—it is a **path for each of us**. Whether you lead a community, a family, a work team, or simply your own soul, you are called to lead like Him: **with gentleness, truth, firmness, and total love**.

> ***"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men"*** *(Mt 4:19).*

Let us follow Christ not only as Savior but as Leader. Only then will we be able to guide others with the light of the Gospel, in a world that urgently needs shepherds who smell like sheep, servants with the heart of a King, and leaders who do not seek their own glory, but the glory of the Father.

Final Prayer

Lord Jesus, Master and Shepherd, teach us to lead like You: without imposing ourselves, without seeking recognition, but giving ourselves in silence and with love. Grant us a servant's heart, a shepherd's gaze, and the firmness of a guide who never strays from the path of the Gospel. Amen.