

Servant Leadership in the Consecrated Life

Mary Jane Aririguzo

Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

The International Union of Superiors General, UISG, held their Plenary Assembly in Rome from 9-13 May 2016. The theme for this plenary assembly was “‘It will not be so among you’: The service of leadership according to the gospel”. The assembly challenged itself with deepening the religious commitment to the service of leadership which has been entrusted to the Leaders by their various religious institutes. One of the presenters at that Plenary Assembly of the UISG, Sr. Mary Pat Garvin, RSM, Ph.D., reflected on “Graced Companionship: A Metaphor for Religious Leadership Today”. Using the biblical reference, “It shall not be so among you” (Mt. 20:26), Pat created the image of Jesus exhorting his disciples about the use of power to serve. She notes that Jesus agitated and disappointed with the type of behaviour of the leaders of the time, used this human situation to teach his disciples saying, “You know how those who exercise authority among the Gentiles lord it over them; their great ones make their importance felt. It shall not be so among you” (Mt. 20:26).¹ This paper argues that servant leadership constitutes the essence of authority in the consecrated life following the footsteps of Christ. We shall reflect on “the Church’s Understanding of Leadership in the Consecrated Life” from the Canonical perspective. Hence, by examining: the concept of servant leadership, the biblical foundation of servant leadership, the canonical manner of leadership in the consecrated life, scope/limit of authority, and the canonical requirement of advice and consent in the leadership role of the Superior with her council, this study demonstrates that servant leadership is central to the identity and position of authority in the consecrated life.²

Keywords: Consecrated Life, Leadership, Service

Introduction

Leadership is the art of guiding, influencing, inspiring, motivating and mobilising people towards achieving their highest potentials as individuals and groups. It involves vision, passion, service and sacrifice, courage, integrity and influence. A leader provides their team with direction, support, and inspiration, helping them work together efficiently and effectively to achieve the desired outcomes. In servant leadership, servant leaders prioritize the needs of their team members and aim to support and empower them to reach their full potential (Ehusani, 2018).

Servant leadership as a concept, articulated originally by Robert K. Greenleaf in the twentieth century, proposes that a true leader is first a servant. It is an altruistic projection and prioritizing of the needs, growth, and well-being of others above personal ambition (Robert, 1977). It is a model of leadership that emphasizes humility, service, and ethical responsibility. Greenleaf further describes a servant leader as one who begins with a natural

Mary Jane Aririguzo, IHM, Department of Canon Law, Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

¹ www.conf_uisg_garvin_2013-en. Accessed on 17 June 2025.

² This paper focuses on Servant Leadership among Women Religious Institutes.

desire to serve. Leadership then emerges as a conscious choice to meet the needs of others (*ibidem*). Thus, Servant leadership focuses on service, relational influence, and the holistic development of individuals (Peter, 2019). It is a model that highlights such characteristics as listening, empathy, stewardship, and community-building. As such, Northouse notes the effectiveness of servant leadership in fostering trust and collaboration in a group (Russell & Stone, 2002).

Chapter 2, Article 1 of Book 2, Part 3 of the Code of Canon Law, dealing with Governance of Institutes, begins with the offices of Superiors which are organs of the ordinary government of Religious Institutes of Consecrated Life at different levels: general, provincial, and local. The Code of Canon Law treats the office of the Superior together with their councils, since they are organs strictly linked with that of the Superiors. They work hand in hand with them. They are to collaborate with the Superiors with their opinion on the legitimacy and merit of the affairs/matter which form part of the ordinary governance of the Institute. The session precedes the part dealing on chapters, which are collegiate Superior, the organs of extraordinary government.

The Nature of the Consecrated Life

Consecrated life is a stable form of living in which the faithful, under the action of the Holy Spirit, follow Christ more closely and dedicate themselves totally to God (cann. 573, 574, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 914-916). Characterized by the profession of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, through vows or other sacred bonds, it is a visible sign of God's love and service to humanity, fostering the perfection of charity (cf. cann. 573, 574). Rooted in Jesus Christ's life and teaching (cf. Matthew 19:21, Luke 9:23), it involves total surrender, self-giving, and radical fellowship. It constitutes "a living memorial of Jesus' way of living" (John Paul II, 1996). Consecrated persons, through prayer, community life, and apostolic service, become signs of God's presence, contributing to the Church's holiness and mission. As a gift to the Church, consecrated life reveals the Kingdom of God and signifies the future heavenly life (*Lumen Gentium*, 44). It is lived through prayer and apostolate, in a stable community, under the leadership of a Superior (cf. can. 618).

Biblical Foundations of Servant Leadership

Servant leadership model is deeply rooted in the Scripture. For instance, Matthew's Gospel portrayed the image of Jesus exhorting his disciples about the use of power to serve. The Gospel notes that Jesus disappointed with the type of behaviour of the leaders of the time, used this human situation to teach his disciples saying, "You know how those who exercise authority among the Gentiles lord it over them; their great ones make their importance felt. It shall not be so among you" (Mt. 20:26). Jesus' teaching, "Whoever wants to be first must be servant of all" (Mk 9:35), radically inverts the leadership style. Jesus provided the perfect example by his life and actions. He declared that he came "not to be served but to serve" (Mk. 10: 45). He washed the feet of his disciples (Jn 13:1-15) demonstrating his humility and service. His death on the cross represents the ultimate form of self-giving love. Paul continuing this model of leadership identifies himself as a "servant of Christ," underscoring humility and dedication to mission (Wilkes, 1998). Again, Paul highlights that "All authority comes from God" (cf. Rom. 13: 1). Thus, leadership is portrayed as service rather than domination in the scriptures.

Leadership in the Consecrated Life

The word "Superior" refers to both physical persons as Superiors in the leadership roles within a religious Institute, and to the collegiate person which is the General Chapter, that has the supreme authority in the Religious Institute (cf. can. 631). Every Superior fulfills her office and exercise her authority (or power), not arbitrarily, but in accordance with the norms of the universal law and of the proper law of the Institute. (can. 617). Thus, the

dispositions of can. 617 on one hand prevent possible abuses of power and on the other hand, inform members of their rights and duties.

The authority attributed to all Superiors not endowed with the ordinary power of governance presents a strict analogy with the power of governance. This power has a public character that is, it implies the exercise of a function proper to the Church, so that it is carried out in the name of the same Church. Their task may be called “an ecclesiastical office” (cf. can. 145, §1). The authority applicable to female religious Superiors according to can. 596 §3 are however referred to as dominative power.

Ordinary power is that which is included in the office itself (for example, in the office of provincial) and which, therefore, is granted to a person in virtue of that same office (can. 131, §1). Ordinary power can be either proper or vicarious (cf. can. 131, §2). Proper power is contained in the office itself and is exercised in one’s own name (as that of local Superior). Vicarious authority derives from an office of substituting for a Superior who is absent or impeded (as the vicar general in religious Institutes); or even when the Superior is not impeded but has provided someone who acts as vice-director (as in certain structures or religious organisms in which the Superior is the vicar of another: for example, in certain vice-provinces and vicariates). Delegated authority is that power conferred by a special and personal title from another to act as his representative without being constituted in office: It is given to a person who acts in the name of the Superior.

The Church considers the existence of a Superior necessary in every religious institute and in the various organisms or their component parts. *Evangelica testificatio* (n. 28) states that the presence of the Superior is necessary in every community or group of persons. The Code confirms the same necessity (cf. can. 608). Moreover, at the beginning of their term of office, the Superior should make a profession of faith “in accordance with the Constitutions: Superiors in clerical religious Institutes and clerical societies of apostolic life” (can. 833, n. 8).

Authority as Service and Dialogue

The Code of Canon Law prescribes that the authority which Superiors receive from God through the ministry of Church is to be exercised by them in a spirit of service. In fulfilling their office, they are to be docile to the will of God, and are to govern those subject to them as children of God. By their reverence for the human person, they are to promote voluntary obedience. They are to listen willingly to their subjects and foster their co-operation for the good of the institute and the Church, without prejudice however to their authority to decide and to command what is to be done (cf. can. 618).

The canon underlines, service and dialogue. It is an authoritative service (*postestativa*) that which the Superior carries out in the exercise of leading (governing)/directing (*munus regendi*), of teaching (*munus docendi*), and of sanctifying (*munus sanctificandi*). This authority *comes from God* through the ministry of the Church.

Authority and the Criteria of its Exercise

Can. 618 enumerates six criteria on the mode of the exercising the authority: to govern those subject to them as children of God; show reverence and respect for the human person; promote voluntary obedience; listen willingly to their subjects; foster their co-operation for the good of the Church and of the institute; without prejudice however to their authority to decide and to command what is to be done. The above listed norms of operation are relational and communal in respect of the exercise of the authority of the Superior in a given

community.

Mary Pat Garvin notes two pertinent elements to leadership: relational quality and leadership as communal and shared. She threw light on how critical a person's interpersonal intelligence is to being a qualified or competent leader. For her, "leadership is best understood as a process that resides neither in an individual leader nor in the position itself. Rather, leadership is the dynamic relationship created and nourished between leaders and members".³ Highlighting that leadership is communal and shared, she notes:

effective leadership today is leadership that is communal and shared ... goes far beyond how we relate to our current councils or leadership teams ... is all about generativity! It is about providing for our members what they need to develop their own capacities for leadership, be it leaders of our ministries and/or as future leaders of our congregations.⁴

On the other hand, members equally play a vital role in supporting the Servant Leader's effectiveness. They should recognize the Superior's humanness, fostering a collaborative environment. This mutual understanding enables collective pursuit of the Institute's common good. Members' cooperation is essential for achieving shared goals. By working together, they promote the Institute's mission. This synergy enhances overall governance and spiritual growth.

Scope of the Authority

The authority or power conferred on the Church by divine institution for the purpose of governing is called the power of governance or also the power of jurisdiction. According to the prescriptions of law, the faithful who have received Sacred Orders (cf. can. 129, §1), namely, clerics (cf. can. 266, §1), are capable of exercising the power of governance. Lay members of the faithful can collaborate in the exercise of the power of governance in accord with the norm of law (cf. can. 129, §2), except in matters which presuppose Sacred Orders.

The power of governance is distinguished as legislative, executive, and judicial (cf. can. 135, §1), to be exercised in accord with the canons (cf. can. 135, §2ff.). The power can be ordinary, proper and vicarious or delegated (cf. can. 131, §§1-2). Executive power can be delegated in conformity with the canons (cf. can. 137ff).

Also for the life and activity of the institutes of consecrated life and their members, as ecclesial juridic public persons, the Code determines the power or authority by which they are governed and which has its source in the Church itself (cf. can. 618).

The current Code enumerates pastoral and ascetic attributes of good governance as demanded in the consecrated life. The Code enlists that: superiors are to diligently devote themselves to their office; together with the members entrusted to them, they are to strive to build in Christ a fraternal community, in which God is sought and loved above all; they are therefore frequently to nourish their members with the food of God's word/liturgy; they are to be an example to the members in cultivating virtue and in observing the laws and traditions proper to the institute; they provide to the members, opportune assistance in their personal needs; they are to be solicitous in caring for and visiting the sick; they are to chide the restless; Console the faint hearted and be patient with all. (cann. 619, 620). This form of leadership could truly be transformative, such that the members could be enabled to grow and mature in their uniqueness as individuals called in their vocation to the service of God, the Church and the world.

Thus, as already noted, authority in the consecrated life understood as service rather than domination

³ www.conf_uisg_garvin_2013-en. Accessed on 17 June 2025.

⁴ www.conf_uisg_garvin_2013-en. Accessed on 17 June 2025.

involves Superiors who serve, guide, support, and nurture their communities (cf. Spears, 2004). Servant leadership transforms authority into accompaniment and discernment, expecting leaders to listen, encourage participation, and foster unity in the community (cf. Fry, 2003). As an approach that builds trust and promotes communal growth in the consecrated life, servant leadership involves qualities that reflect spiritual depth as well as human maturity. Qualities such as humility, which recognizes leadership as service (Nouwen, 1989), listening, with a practical discernment of the needs of others, with heartfelt concern, enabling them to experience the richness of their humanity (Benedict XVI, 2006), community building, which fosters unity (Reinke, 2004) among the members, care for the poor in a way that lives out the mission outwardly (Francis, 2013) and authenticity, which lives out what one teaches (Palmer, 2007), are essential.

Office of the Major Superior and the Role

The Code clearly specifies those whom the law identifies as Major Superiors in the consecrated life as: those who govern the entire institute: Supreme Moderators; those who govern any of its province: Provincial Superiors; those who govern a part of the Institute equivalent to a province; those who govern a “*sui iuris*” house (autonomous house): Abbot; and equally the respective vicars of the above (can. 620). Besides the afore mentioned are added the Abbot Primate and the Superior and the Superior of a Monastic Religious Institute, though these do not have the authority which the Universal Law gives to Major Superiors. Consequently, the councillors, general provincial or local assistants, Superiors of houses which are not “*sui iuris*” (autonomous), are not recognized by law as Major Superiors.

It is the obligation of the major Superior to promote knowledge of and execution of the ...” decrees of the Holy See (can. 592 §2), to ensure that the documents are observed (can. 592 §2), and to ensure the correction of abuses in order to prevent eventual non-observance of the regulations (cf. can. 619). Again, periodically, Supreme Moderators have the special duties to send a brief account (and statistics) of the state and life of the Institute to the Apostolic See (*quinquennale*) (cf. can. 592 §1). It is equally within their purview to engage in canonical visitations to the houses of the Religious Institutes (can. 628). It is the onus of the minor Superiors however, to ensure the efficient knowledge of the Constitution and Decrees, Catechetical Instruction and Exhortations of the competent authorities.

Authority of Single Superiors

The Code of Canon Law clearly states and specifies the scope of authority of the Supreme/General Moderator in the two paragraphs of canon 622: First, the Supreme Moderator has authority over all provinces/regions of the institute; over all the houses; and over all the members of the institute. Second, other Superiors have authority within the limits of their office.

The Supreme/General Moderator is called “Supreme” since in the institute, no other Superior is above her, no other Superior is equal to her, at the same level, and every member is subject to her. However, the authority must be exercised in accordance with the proper laws or Constitutions, Directory, Customs, etc., of the particular Institute. Eventual limitations could nonetheless come from the reservation on the part of the General Chapter, the reservation on the part of the Holy See, the configuration of the Offices and of Subordinate Superiors, and the interventions of the Council. Again, the authority of the Supreme Moderator is universal and Supreme in the Institute, and it is extended to the physical and juridical person(s). It is immediate above the Institute. It is as well regulated by the Proper and Universal Law.

The authority of Subordinate Superiors, that is, those lower in rank to the Supreme Moderator, is limited to the juridical person of which they are Superiors and to the physical persons. It is immediate in both cases, and is subordinate to that of the Supreme Moderator; however, it is proper to their office at their level, and it is equally regulated by Proper and Universal Law.

Garvin again highlights the understanding of “power as influence” in leadership. For her, “when we have power, we have influence. Likewise, when we have influence we have power!” She encourages the leaders in the religious life to be “alert and ready to employ the many unsung types of power” at their disposal daily. She underlines three types of power:⁵

- The power of encouragement: At this very moment, somewhere on this planet, there is a member of your Religious Institute or a local or provincial leader who is struggling. Perhaps this Sister is experiencing an onslaught of doubts regarding her vocation or the wisdom of an important decision she had to make during the past week. Recognize the power of encouragement that you possess! Your encouragement, not an answer to her doubts or struggles, has the power to release the much needed energy, vision and courage she may need this very day to look at reality in the face and remain hopeful.

- The power of hospitality: Many Religious Institutes claim hospitality as a hallmark of their charism. As we know being hospitable goes far beyond welcoming someone into our homes and convents. Imagine the power you possess to ignite the spiritual and psychic energy of your members by being hospitable to new ideas regardless of who in the Religious Institute offers them. Though not all new ideas will bear fruit, a hospitable attitude signals to the membership that all are called to participate in designing how the Religious Institutes will continue to minister to God’s people.

The power of resilience: Resilience is often described as the space and time between disappointment and recommitment, between sorrow and healing, and between offense and forgiveness. Recognize and claim the power of resilience in your own life! Replenish your own spiritual, emotional, relational and physical needs so as to have the energy to be generative, able to act with the courage and the depth of imagination so needed in religious leadership today.

Superiors and their Councils

The Law prescribes that Superiors are to have their own council, in accordance with the Constitutions, and they must make use of the council in the exercise of their office (cf. can. 627 §1). Again, apart from the cases prescribed in the Universal Law, an Institute’s own law is to determine the cases in which the validity of an act depends upon consent or advice being sought in accordance with can. 127 (cf. can. 627 §2).

The Council is representative of the community and helps the Superior in the ordinary governance of the Institute. Competences or duties of the Council should be explicitly established by the proper law. This must specify the cases in which consent is required (consent as a binding opinion, if the Superior decides to act) and cases in which counsel or advice (counsel/advice as non-binding Opinion, but which must be requested).

Some fundamental principles regulate the significance and necessary role the council play in the governance of religious Institutes with the Major Superior, such as: the necessity of the existence of the council at all levels; the necessity of consultation in foreseen cases; the necessity of following the opinion of the Council in exceptional cases and the affairs of Ordinary governance. It is noteworthy that the Superior is not part of the Council and as such has no right to vote. He/she has a right to vote only in cases in which the Council acts as a

⁵ www.conf_uisg_garvin_2013-en. Accessed on 17 June 2025.

college (cf. A Gutierrez, CPR 1973, 122-154; CPR 1981, 23-26; Pont. Com. Interpr., 14 May 1985, *Communicationes* 1985, 262, II). Again, when the council must express its opinion, the council must be convoked according to the prescripts of the law (can. 166) and it must express its opinion by a majority of votes.

Of equal significance is the residence of Superiors. Can. 629 prescribes that Superiors should reside in their proper houses, and must not leave it except in accordance with the Religious Institute's Proper Law. The Supreme Moderator must reside in the house of the General Curia/Generalate of the Institute. The Provincial must reside in a house of the Province, while the Local Superior must reside in the house in which she presides (can. 629).

The Canonical Requirement of Advice and Consent in the Leadership

Role of the Superior With her Council

In line with the universal law and the constitutional norms of religious Institutes, Superiors are bound to have their own council, whose assistance they are to use in fulfilling their role. In addition to universal law provisions, proper law determines cases requiring consent or counsel for valid action, obtained according to can. 127 (can. 627 §1). When law requires consent or counsel from a college or group, it must be convened in line with the law (cf. can. 166), unless particular law states otherwise only for counsel; valid acts however require absolute majority consent of those present or counsel sought from all (can. 127 §1). Those consulted must offer sincere opinions, and maintain confidentiality in grave matters, and the Superior can insist upon this obligation (can. 127 §3).

The purpose of the council is to foster collaborative decision-making, reflecting the collegial nature of a religious Institute (can. 115 §2) and safeguarding against unilateral actions. The council's purpose is to provide wise, informed input, enabling the Superior to make quality decisions for the Institute's good and the Church's mission (Hill, 1986). Councillors should offer independent, integrity-driven advice, not mere concurrence, while the Superior weighs their counsel and acts in accordance with universal and proper law. The Superior general and councillors are to review universal and proper law, identifying instances requiring the council's advice or consent (e.g., canons 638 §3; 647 §1, §2; 656, 3; 697, 699 §1, and 703). Proper law may conform to or exceed the requirements of the Code of Canon Law, adding other needs for consent or advice. Notably, universal law requires a collegial vote (absolute majority) for dismissing a member (can. 699 §1); proper law may add other instances (e.g., merging provinces or suppression of a canonically erected house). If collegial vote is required, an absolute majority decides, binding the Superior to act (can. 119, 2; McDermott, 2006).

When proper law requires council consent (e.g., property alienation, Can. 638 §3), the Superior must convene the council and obtain an absolute majority's consent for valid action (e.g., three of four councillors). If advice is required, the Superior must seek council input, but is not bound by it; unanimous advice however, warrants careful consideration. Some Institutes may allow conference calls for council advice, if that is stated in proper law (can. 127 §1), enabling Superiors to make decisions while visiting distant communities, reserving formal convocations for consent-required decisions (McDermott, 2006).

Besides, the Dicastery for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life permits Institutes to allow councillors to consent via phone conference for non-secret votes (e.g., admission to vows, orders, offices), if stated in proper law; secret votes require a quorum of the council present. Phone conferences enable councillors to share expertise, influencing decisions. With council consent, the Superior can act validly but is not obligated to; the Superior may consider new information (e.g., property value increase) and decide

differently, prioritizing the Institute's interests (cf. Ryan, 1987). To the question: "Whether when the law requires that the Superior must have the consent of the council or of a body of persons in order to act, in keeping with canon 127 §1, does the Superior have the right of voting with the others, at least to break a tie?", the Pontifical Commission for Interpretation of Legal Texts, on May 15, 1995, responded negatively, meaning the Superior does not have the right to vote with councillors, even to break a tie, when consent is required (McDermott, 2006).

Universal law and an Institute's approved custom must be distinguished. If the Dicastery-approved constitutions outline specific collegial interactions, those provisions are part of proper law, which the Dicastery honors in order to preserve the Institute's patrimony (can. 578). Superiors and councillors, serving professionally, should keep confidential all council discussions and deliberations, not just grave matters (can. 127 §3).

Authority of Superiors and of the Chapters

Superiors and chapters of institutes enjoy that power over members which is defined in universal law and the constitutions (can. 596, §1). The above canon applies to all institutes: clerical and lay, those of pontifical or diocesan right, masculine and feminine. Such power is by nature ecclesial. It includes all the functions and powers necessary for governing the organisms, members, and property of an institute concerning the attainment of the end. Such functions are implied as to make rules (normative), to have them carried out (executive), and to settle disputed questions and impose non-canonical penalties.

Superiors and chapters of the institutes have over the members only that authority defined by universal law and by the constitutions, while in clerical Institute of Pontifical Right, their Superiors enjoy ecclesiastical power of governance, both for the external as well as the internal forum.

Table 1

Power of governance in Clerical Institutes versus Common Power of Governance in Non-clerical Institutes

	Power of governance or jurisdiction	Universal/common power or dominative
Concept:	It is the public power given by Christ to the Church: the power of governing the faithful in order to attain eternal life.	It is the proper power of the institute: the power of governing her members for the individual and social good of the Institute.
Origin:	It derives from the communication made by the Church by means of her organs.	It derives from the communication made by the institute by means of legitimate elections.
Means:	In the external forum, it deals with triplex function.	Superiors can give only precepts to individuals and communities.
	Legislative, reserved to special general chapters.	They cannot Institute canonical processed procedure.
	Judiciary, reserved to major Superior of exempt clerical Institutes.	Although they can deal with many matters by way of administration.
	Executives, reserved to major and minor Superiors, who can deny one of some ecclesiastical goods (impose specific punishment).	They cannot impose ecclesiastical penalties as such; they can only deny one of some goods/benefits or privileges proper Institute.
Quantity:	It is ordinary, Vicar of the Roman Pontiff, Personal (non-territorial), In bonum ecclesiae, Canonical, because it comes from CIC, Public, because the church is a public society.	It is Ordinary, Proper Personal <i>In bonum proprii Instituti</i> ,
Extension:	It is full, because it comprises the public power of the Church and also the proper power of the Institute.	It is semi-full, because it comprises only the power of the institute. Thus, it does not boast of the triplex function: legislative, judiciary and coercive/compulsory.

Conclusion

Mary Pat's deposition highlights Jesus' clarity in confronting abuse of authority and power among ancient leaders, citing his rebuke of the disciples: "It shall not be so among you" (Matthew 20:26). Jesus modeled relational and generative leadership, living a rhythm of contemplation and action centered on God, nourished by prayer, solitude, and mission with his disciples. He empowered people rather than oppressing them, demonstrating a leadership style that is both servant-hearted and empowering.

This leadership approach is modeled on Jesus and Mary, who exemplified service and devotion. Paul VI's 1969 allocution to the Synod of Bishops emphasized Mary's special relationship with the Church and those in leadership, calling her "our Teacher" who guides doctrine and example (Paul VI, 1969). Pius XII similarly presented Mary as an example of servant leadership, highlighting her response to God's call as the "servant" of the Lord (Lk 1:38-39).

In consecrated life, Superiors are called to this type of leadership, fostering a community of service, dialogue, and generosity. Mary's example, grounded in devotion and theological reasoning, inspires true transformation and vital missionary apostolate. By embracing servant leadership, Superiors and members can guarantee transformation and effective ministry, reflecting Jesus' empowering approach of servant leadership.

References

- 1983 Code of Canon Law*. (1983). Vatican City: Vatican Press.
- Benedict XVI. (2005). *Deus Caritas Est*. Vatican City: Vatican Press.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church*. (1992). Vatican City: Vatican Press.
- Ehusani, G. (2018). *Leadership: An introduction*. Abuja: Lux Terra Leadership Foundation. Unpublished.
- Francis. *Evangelii Gaudium*. (2013). Vatican City: Vatican Press.
- Fry, L. (2003). Toward a Theory of Spiritual Leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 14, 693-727.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant Leadership*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Hill, R. A. (1986). "The Role of Councils and Councils Revisited." *Review for Religious*, 140-144; 623-624; 933-935.
- John Paul II. (1996). *Vita Consecrata*. Vatican City: Vatican Press.
- Laurence Ryan. (1987). Consultation in the Church. *The Furrow*, 38, 483-492.
- McDermott, R. (2006). *Consecrated life, cases, commentary, documents, readings*. Michigan Avenue.
- McDonough, E. (1984). Religious Superiors and Government. *The Way Supplement*, 50, 61-70.
- McDonough, E. (1990). Basic Governance Structures in Religious Institutes. *Review for Religious*, 928-933.
- McDonough, E. (1991). "Participation in Governance." *Review for Religious*, 775-780.
- Nouwen, H. J. M. (1989). *In the Name of Jesus*. Crossroad.
- Palmer, P. J. (2007). *The Courage to Teach*. Jossey-Bass.
- Paul VI. (1971). Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelica testificatio*. AAS 63, 497- 526.
- Peter, G. N. (2019). *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. Sage.
- Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Canons of the Code of Canon Law, 14 May 1985, *Communicationes* 1985, 262, II.
- Reinke, S. J. (2004). Servant Leadership. *Global Virtue Ethics Review*, 5, 30-57.
- Russell, R. & Stone, G. (2002). A Review of Servant Leadership Attributes: Developing a Practical Model. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 23, 145-157.
- Spears, L. C. (1995). *Reflections on Leadership*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Vatican II Council. (1965). Dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium*, AAS 57, 5-75.
- Wilkes, G. (1998). *Jesus on Leadership*. Tyndale.
- www.conf_uisg_garvin_2013-en. Accessed on 17 June 2025.