



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS LIFE  
SCHOLARS ROUNDTABLE

Review of Articles  
Leadership  
*Human Development Spring 2007*

William A. Barry, S.J.

**“When Religious Leadership Fails: The Psychology of Administrative Scandals”**

David B. Couturier, O.F.M. Cap.

*Human Development* 28/1 (Spring), 2007, pp. 5–11

The author, an organizational consultant to many congregations and dioceses, notes that all organizations function in two dimensions, the rational and the non-rational and leaders need to be aware of both to prevent scandals. “All groups ... need to develop and maintain an organizational asceticism that attends to the discrepancy between the community’s ideal and actual behavior, especially over core convictions. But, for religious groups, this means developing an ecclesiology robust enough to consider not only the community’s virtues and vices, but also its unconscious customs and conventions.” He then writes of various defenses organizations put up to deal with change and crisis, defenses that can lead to scandal and disaster. Organizations need to be able to bring unconscious factors to light. The author offers some advice on how to avoid administrative scandals.

**“Leader of the Pack”**

George Wilson, S.J.

*Human Development* 28/1 (Spring), 2007, pp. 12–15

The author, a human-systems facilitator, maintains that many books and articles focus on the qualities of leaders but few seem to recognize that leadership is a relational reality. It takes two to tango. Wilson focuses on the culture, often unconscious, of the group and argues that leaders need to pay attention to this culture, especially “to the signals that express the identity of the group. Its accepted behavior patterns, its unconscious biases and projections, its collective strengths, whether named or unacknowledged.” What is needed for effective leadership is some level of consonance “between the personal culture of the office-holder and the culture of the group.”

**“Bearer of Bad News: The Ministry of Delivering Hard Words”**

Paul D. Holland, S.J.

*Human Development* 28/1 (Spring), 2007, pp. 41–44

The author, rector of a relatively large Jesuit community with many ill and aging members, presents some down-to-earth advice on how to be a bearer of bad news to those one leads. The advice includes what to do before, during and after the conversation.

### **“A Note on Leadership, Ignatian Style”**

William A. Barry, S.J.

*Human Development* 28/1 (Spring), 2007, pp. 45–48

The author, a former rector and provincial, notes that Ignatius presumes that God has a stake in the decisions of leaders and in the choice of those who become leaders. Ignatian leadership requires mutuality and trust between the leaders and the led. Hence leaders in this tradition are expected to listen to others in order to make decisions that are more in accord with God’s intention. Ignatius presumes that God communicates to everyone; hence superiors need to listen to others, including those who sing outside the chorus, in order to make decisions more in tune with what God desires. “Leaders have as one of their most important tasks to help everyone working in the organization to accept the mission and to realize that an atmosphere of mutuality and trust is essential to its functioning as God intends.” Ignatian leadership depends on the trust of the leader in the ingenuity and integrity of the Jesuits in the