



VIRTUE CORNER

2020 was an extraordinary year. The COVID-19 crisis and the political divisiveness are just two of its most significant characteristics. Our national chaplain, Fr. Nathanael Haslam, in his recently published book *“The Future of Leadership,”* states: *“Leaders, in a particular way, have a special responsibility to take note of the world situation and face the concrete dilemmas posed to humanity.”* The Lumen Institute is committed to *“enlightening leaders, pursuing excellence, and influencing culture”* and so has decided to dedicate the year 2021 to the Lumen core value of *leadership* and its corresponding virtues of the pursuit of excellence, integrity, magnanimity, and influence. We will dedicate three Leadership Circles to each one so as to assimilate these virtues as completely as possible.

We begin with the virtue of “influence.” According to our Lumen handbook, it is *“moving others to think and act uprightly through conscientious effort.”* The word is derived etymologically from the Latin “influerē,” which literally means “to flow into.” It is interesting to know that originally it was a medieval astrological term that signified the streaming ethereal power from the stars acting upon the character or destiny of men. (Our word “influenza,” which echoes so much to us in our COVID dominated society, comes from the same idea.) Today, the influence that interests us is not a supposed astrological effect flowing over humanity, but rather the positive or negative impact that a relationship with another person can have in our lives.

How do we determine if our influence over others is positive or negative? How do we know if we are “moving others to think and act *uprightly*”? In his aforementioned book *“The Future of Leadership,”* Fr. Haslam makes a bold claim: *“The following of Jesus Christ and living ‘the course of love’ is the essence of true leadership. Why? It is true leadership because it is based on him who is Truth and who shows men and women how to be truly and fully human.”* In other words, the quality of our influence over others will be determined by how effective it is in bringing others into a vital relationship with Jesus Christ. He is our reference point for thinking and acting uprightly, for determining positive or negative influence.

In the next two Leadership circles, we will go more deeply into influence. But for today, let us ask ourselves: how can I exercise more meaningful Christian influence?



GOSPEL REFLECTION (30 MIN)

Luke 12: 42-48

The Lord replied, “Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward whom the master will put in charge of his servants to distribute the food allowance at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master on arrival finds doing so. Truly, I say to you, he will put him in charge of all his property. But if that servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed in coming,’ and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, to eat and drink and get drunk, then that servant’s master will come on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour and will punish him severely and assign him a place with the unfaithful.

That servant who knew his master’s will but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will shall be beaten severely; and the servant who was ignorant of his master’s will but acted in a way deserving of a severe beating shall be beaten only lightly. Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still, more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.”

Questions for Discussion:

1. In the place and times of Jesus, a steward had almost unlimited power. He was often himself a slave, yet a trusted steward ran his master’s house and administered his estate, and thus had a powerful influence over all the other slaves. In this parable, how does the bad steward’s influence turn from good to bad? What criteria of action caused this transformation?
2. Why does knowledge of the master’s will affect how the steward’s service is judged?
3. Looking back over our lives, do I believe that I have “*been entrusted with much?*” As leaders of our families, employees, colleagues, or friends, have I exercised influence for good, to the degree that I can stand in hopeful confidence on judgment day?
4. Have I wasted opportunities of moving others to think and act uprightly through a lack of conscientious effort?
5. Going forward, are there any other ways that we could exercise positive Christian influence as individuals or as a Lumen chapter?





CASE DISCUSSION (20 MIN)

Peter Freissle and “His Way at Work”

(Have the circle watch Peter’s two-minute testimony: <https://hwaw.com/how-we-started/>)

Peter Freissle is the President / CEO of *Polydeck Screen Corporation* that provides synthetic screen media to the mining industry worldwide. Having developed his company into a very successful, multimillion-dollar corporation with over 375 employees in the United States and Latin America, Peter’s philosophy to “care for people in a way that honors God” soon became to be at the forefront of all of his endeavors.

After a profound experience of God encountered in a silent retreat, and several personal experiences in which he experienced God’s love and protection, Peter began to feel a call to incorporate Christ’s call into his business life. In 2007, as his flight crossed the Pacific Ocean, the overflow of what God was doing in Peter’s life spilled onto the CEO seated next to him. Peter shared his business card and explained how God was transforming the why and how of his business. Testimony after testimony from Peter brought a consistent response from the hotel executive: “You can’t do that and run a successful business!” Peter knew differently, but the question became: “How could he help this leader and others like him break through these perceived barriers?”

From the conversation on that flight, there was a prompting in Peter’s heart stirred by Jesus’ calling for believers to be salt and light... not to hide their light under a bowl, but to put it on a stand, so it gives light to others. His prayers over the next couple of months sought guidance on how to share God’s gift of love and care with other business leaders.

With much prayer and guidance from Godly leaders in the workplace ministry movement, Peter’s spiritual journey brought him to launch, on March 31, 2008, “His Way at Work (HWAW).” HWAW is a nonprofit organization that aims to inspire and train CEOs to “love their employees as their neighbors” and develop caring cultures within their company that creates EROI--an “Eternal” Return on Investment. These caring initiatives have influenced scores of companies and over 120,000 employees around the world.

A proud father of four children, Peter inspires family, friends, employees, and colleagues to care for those who are less fortunate and to “love your neighbor as yourself.”



Questions for Discussion:

1. Mr. Freissle speaks about how he “uses his work to glorify God.” As a leader in your business, have you ever considered that your business could become a place for evangelization or greater Christian influence?
2. Upon seeing Peter’s example of Polydeck and “His Way at Work,” do you still think, as did the hotel executive on Peter’s plane flight, “You can’t do that and run a successful business!”? Why not? What are the obstacles that you might have to overcome in order to exercise a more effective “Lumen influence” over your colleagues or employees?
3. Peter’s discovered his initial inspiration to transform his business and business life in a silent retreat led by a Legionary priest. Have you perhaps neglected giving time to a more profound encounter with God with the excuse that you didn’t have the time? Or that you couldn’t see the use of such a retreat?
4. As a leader in your business, have you ever considered consulting a group like “His Way at Work” to see how you also could better influence your colleagues or employees?

Resolution (10 minutes)

Develop a specific group resolution for improving our Lumen Excellence scores in the month ahead.

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Character



Faith



Leadership

What are Lumen's Core Values?

Lumen has identified three specific areas where it seeks to form and strengthen its members: Character - Faith - Leadership. Within each category lay more specific values, as follows:

Character



Prudence - sound judgment in determining action.

Perseverance - a strong commitment to overcoming all obstacles.

Fairness - giving God and others their due in thought, word, and deed.

Self-Mastery - controlling one's passions amid personal drive and success.

Faith



Spiritual Drive - a firm desire to live one's faith in thought and action.

Prayer - regular communication with God seeking His will and friendship.

Stewardship - maximizing personal and professional resources entrusted by God.

Confidence in God - a willingness to place trust in the hands of Providence.

Leadership



Excellence - the pursuit of distinction in business, family, and community life.

Integrity - consistency between what one professes to be and how one lives.

Magnanimity - commitment to serve by putting others' needs first.

Influence - moving others to think and act uprightly through conscientious effort.



UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Character



Faith



Leadership

Lumen Core Values Self-Assessment (10 minutes)

Core Values Assessment. Spend 10 minutes in silence assessing positive and negative examples of how you pursue excellence in your relationship with God and others. The below quadrant can help in jotting down some of your assessment as well as a tool for the whole Lumen Circle and how you can let it be a leaven in your life.

What struck me in this circle and how I might apply it to my THINKING. What CRITICAL ISSUES am I facing? What is the biggest CHALLENGES with these issues I face and what OPPORTUNITIES does it present.

God:

Family:

Business:

Lumen Action:

What ACTION STEPS can I take now or long term? Develop a concrete resolution for how you can improve in your efforts to improve your relationships with others during the next month. Your resolution should be a specific action or activity that is easily measured.

