

ACADEMIA DE LÍDERES CATÓLICOS
for
“A New Heaven on a New Earth”

Mario J. Paredes
July 18, 2024

This era of change, within a change of era, a transition between modernity and postmodernity, takes place amidst a multifaceted and complex crisis, with multiple causes, and serious and diverse problems. One problem, **an absence of leadership**, has emerged due to the lack, or absence, of leaders, well-trained leaders, and leaders with authority.

Facing the urgency of this crisis for leadership, we see many events, literature, social experiments, and training searching for leaders. **But we lack the raw materials:** men and women who live in **the truth** and in a **spirit of service to the good of all**.

Professor John Kotter gives us a good synthesis of a leader's profile and duties: *“Chart the course, set out a vision of the future and the strategies to produce the changes necessary to realize that vision. Align the people whose cooperation is required... (for) the creation of teams and coalitions... Motivate and inspire (to) overcome obstacles... that oppose change. Produce change. In other words, the leader determines where we need to go, shows us the right path, convinces us that we need to go there, and leads us through the obstacles that separate us from the promised land.”* (LOWNEY, Chris: *Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company That Changed the World*, Loyola Press, Chicago, 2003, p. 23)

This task of social leadership will always require **study, learning, training, and ongoing updates** in understanding the dynamism and historical development of life in society and its institutions.

But, also, a leader's vocation and mission, to be genuine and have repercussions on the well-being of all and on healthy social growth and development, requires **authority**. A leader's vocation and mission require coherence between deeds and words, what is preached and practiced, personal interests and those of the represented social group, what is believed and lived, and the search for truth and the actions to find it.

The ACADEMIA DE LÍDERES CATÓLICOS and its directors, aware of the serious crisis and the great problems that we face in this historical and social juncture, facing this lack of well-formed leadership, this alarming lack of well-formed men and women for the leadership of our society, and this lack of leaders with authority, strives, with truth and coherence of life, to **provide training in leadership** and for leaders, with deep and serious knowledge of the great issues of life in society, for the construction of a fraternal, just, and supportive social coexistence in all the areas and institutions in which our lives and daily personal and community work develop.

This contribution to society and all humanity is made by the ACADEMIA DE LÍDERES CATÓLICOS, embracing a vision of the Church that is less hierarchical and more focused on communion, less clerical and more focused on the greater participation of all, **less pyramidal and more circular**, focused on the equality of knowing ourselves as brothers and sisters, children of the same God and Father and **in line with the request for the permanent and comprehensive formation of laypeople, which the Church has been urgently calling for**, in all its forums and documents, especially following the Second Vatican Council, to fulfill their proper mission. Consider:

*“Today's spiritual agitation and the changing conditions of life are part of a broader and deeper revolution. As a result of the latter, **intellectual formation** is ever increasingly based on the mathematical and natural sciences and on those dealing with man himself, while in the practical order the technology which stems from these sciences takes on mounting importance. This scientific spirit has a new kind of impact on the cultural sphere and on modes of thought... To a certain extent, the human intellect is also broadening its dominion over time... Advances in biology, psychology, and the social sciences ... are helping men exert direct influence on the life of social groups. At the same time, the human race is giving steadily-increasing thought to forecasting and regulating its own population growth. History itself speeds along on so rapid a course that an individual person can scarcely keep abreast of it. The destiny of the human community has become all of a piece, where once the various groups of men had a kind of private history of their own. Thus, the human race has passed from a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary one. In consequence there has arisen a new series of problems, a series as numerous as can be, calling for efforts of analysis and synthesis.” (G.S. 5)*

“This council exhorts Christians ... to strive to discharge their earthly duties conscientiously and in response to the Gospel spirit. They are mistaken who ... think that they may therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities. For they are forgetting that by the faith itself they are more

obliged than ever to measure up to these duties, each according to his proper vocation... This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age... Therefore, let there be no false opposition between professional and social activities on the one part, and religious life on the other... Christians should rather rejoice that, following the example of Christ Who worked as an artisan, they are free to give proper exercise to all their earthly activities and to their humane, domestic, professional, social and technical enterprises by gathering them into one vital synthesis with religious values, under whose supreme direction all things are harmonized unto God's glory. Secular duties and activities belong properly although not exclusively to laymen. Therefore acting as citizens in the world, whether individually or socially, they will keep the laws proper to each discipline, and labor to equip themselves with a genuine expertise in their various fields. ... Enlightened by Christian wisdom and giving close attention to the teaching authority of the Church, let the layman take on his own distinctive role... Since they have an active role to play in the whole life of the Church, laymen are not only bound to penetrate the world with a Christian spirit, but are also called to be witnesses to Christ in all things in the midst of human society.” (G.S. 43)

We do so with the awareness, as I have said, of the importance of leadership in social life, and with the urgency of a well-formed and healthy leadership **in the face of discredit**, the lack of values, and the personal and social corruption shown by leaders of our communities and nations, in all areas and institutions of life in society. We do so amidst the corruption of leaders that drive and condemn impoverishment, inequality, violence, injustice, a thousand forms and conditions of life unworthy of human beings, and, in short, a “culture of death.”

Knowing, too, that, in human coexistence, **religion** governs life in society and its institutions - according to each denomination and creed. Religion is called upon to imbue the lives of individuals and social institutions with values. In the same way, the lack of principles and values in the lives of individuals, their work, and social existence shows the failure of the mission of religious institutions in each society.

The ACADEMIA DE LÍDERES CATÓLICOS is inspired by the vision and mission it has developed **from the Gospel of Jesus Christ**, certain that Gospel values coincide with the deepest and most human values intrinsic to human nature and inscribed in the heart of every human being. These are values that invite us all to the realization of the good and “abundant life” (John 10:10) for all.

These are principles and values that, for social coexistence, we find in the millenary magisterium of the Catholic Church, made explicit, especially, in its **Social Doctrine**, especially since the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leo XIII in 1891.

This work of the ACADEMIA DE LÍDERES CATÓLICOS is executed, moreover, with an understanding that the life of the human being in society is a **political** life, understanding politics, in its best and broadest sense, as the individual task in the search for the common good, as understood by the ancient Greeks and as understood and preached today by Pope Francis: *“To make possible the development of a world community, capable of realizing fraternity on the basis of peoples and nations that live in social friendship, the best policy at the service of the true common good is needed.”* (Fratelli Tutti 154)

The ACADEMIA DE LÍDERES CATÓLICOS, then, is an entity that calls professionals interested in public affairs, striving to find and train a **new generation of political leaders**, with an awareness of the exercise of leadership and power as a service to the good of all.

This is an endeavor that the Academy executes **openly**, to all creeds and modes of thought that also search for the humanization of the human being and the best coexistence for a better, more just, supportive, and fraternal world.

For this reason, between July 19 and 28, the ACADEMIA DE LÍDERES CATÓLICOS, LATIN AMERICA chapter, with the sponsorship of the **RAMÓN TALLAJ FOUNDATION**, will hold the **IX INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA PROGRAM ON THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH**, as an AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE AND SOLIDARY INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, with THE POOR AT THE HEART OF DEVELOPMENT.

For more detailed information about this academic event, I invite you to visit

<https://liderescatolicos.net/diplomado2024/>

We celebrate the expansion of the ACADEMIA DE LÍDERES CATÓLICOS throughout the world. We celebrate the expansion of the ACADEMY’s work to Latin American countries, including the Hispanic and Latin American community residing in the United States. We celebrate the vision of the founders of this ACADEMY, who set out to seek out and form men and women with the best will to influence, guide, and lead human communities in building “a new heaven on a new earth.” (Rev 21:1).