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Fearless Leaders

Perhaps in an overzealous attempt to appear prescient, we called our special section "Leadership for the Next Millennium." This title might imply that leaders will need unprecedented skills to succeed in the 21st century. While it's true that leaders are facing new challenges—laypersons assuming roles of religious women and men, for example—the abilities that have always made some people outstanding leaders will remain paramount—even in our next, otherwise unpredictable era.

A look into history bears out my premise. In her book *No Ordinary Time*, historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, who spoke at the last Catholic Health Assembly, tells how two of the world's most famous and effective leaders, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, responded to Hitler's challenge at the start of World War II. When Italy entered the war in 1940, Roosevelt gave a speech in which he courageously confirmed that the United States would aid the Allies, emphasizing his faith that American industry could produce ever-increasing amounts of munitions—a faith not shared by all Army staff. After the speech, Churchill expressed his admiration for FDR, and at the same time described a universal trait of leaders. Roosevelt, he said, was "never afraid to run risks for the sake of his resolve."

In taking the political risk to promise aid, Roosevelt not only stood up for what he believed, he also demonstrated faith that the American people would come through. And they did. In a stunning affirmation of what people can accomplish when they are inspired by a leader and a cause, they made sacrifices, changed their lifestyles, and learned new skills.

Churchill possessed the same ability to encourage others by his faith in them. After the evacuation of Dunkirk, Churchill gave a speech to the British Parliament that, Goodwin says, "stirred the souls" of the people: "We shall not flag or fail . . . We shall defend our island whatever the cost may be . . . we shall never surrender." If the British people "possessed the courage and determination he perpetually saw in them," she writes, "it was because he had helped to create it by the intensity of his belief in their qualities."

Inspiring others, showing faith in those they lead, and having the courage to proclaim their convictions despite obstacles—these are attributes for leaders in the next millennium.

KUDOS We have received many responses to our September-October issue on caring for aging and chronically ill persons. Julie Trocchio, CHA's director of long-term care, helped us identify the topics we should cover and the authors who made this a valuable issue for our readers. We are grateful to Julie for her deft guidance.

For the eight years she has written our "Communications Strategies" column, we have appreciated Rhoda Weiss's expertise. The Public Relations Society of America agrees. PRSA recently awarded Rhoda the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award for her work in healthcare public relations.