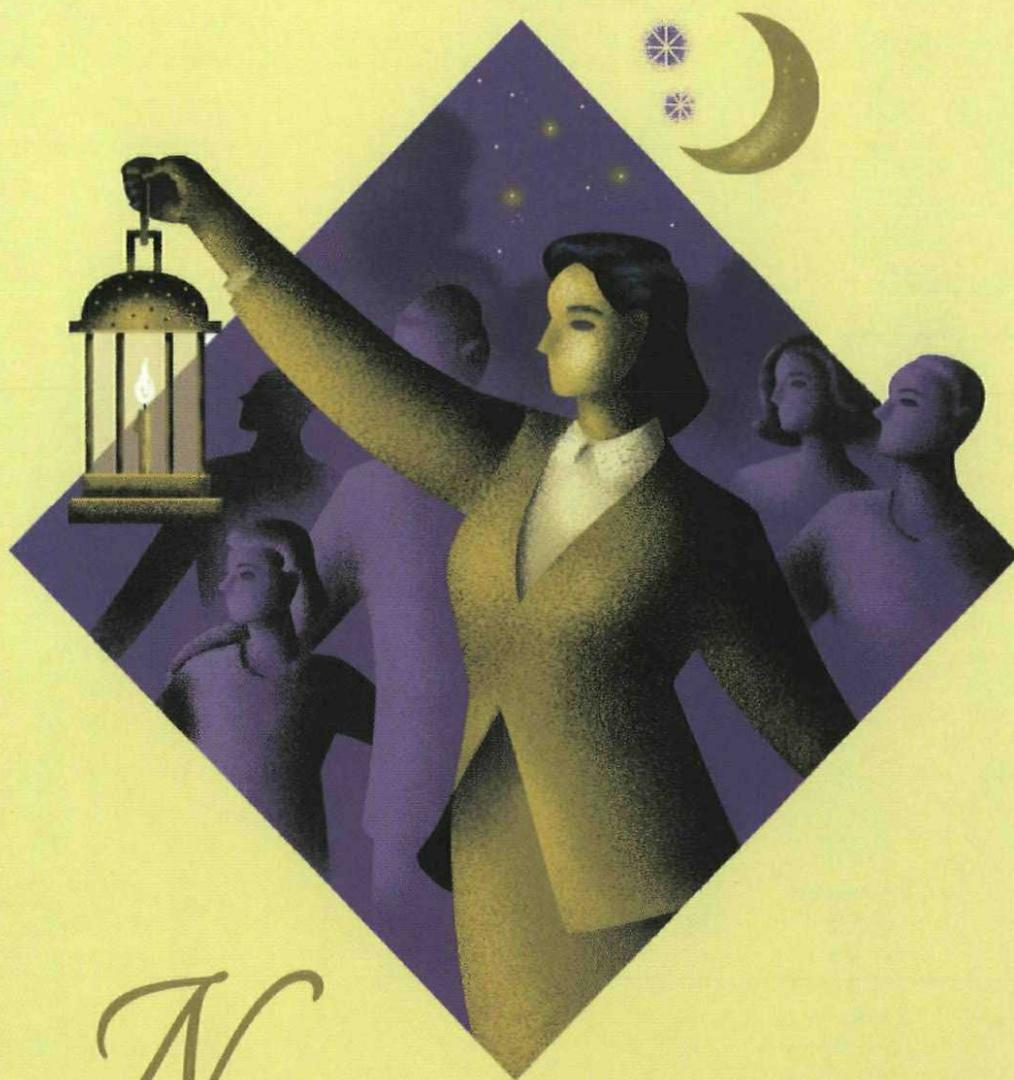


LEADERS ENCOURAGE *the Heart*



*N*ever has the need for effective leadership been so great as it is today. Dramatic changes have already transformed our society and will continue to transform our organization in ways that few can anticipate. The half-life of new scientific information is eight years and dropping, and futurists predict that by 2005, half of our scientific and technical information will become obsolete every 18 months.

BY CAROL TILLEY



The leaders of Catholic healthcare in the future, like leaders in almost every industry, face tremendous and exciting challenges as they move into the new millennium. Daily, leaders are confronted not only with the daunting challenges related to healthcare economics and good stewardship, but, particularly, with the challenge of fulfilling their mission, of making Christ's vision a reality. On occasion, they may find themselves questioning the strength of their commitment to the ministry, but the mark of an effective leader is to minimize those periods of self-doubt, passionately committing to a vision of things as they can be as opposed to the way they *are*. This is where integrity, imagination, and courage come into play. A person committed from the heart can meet challenges head-on.

In my experience, real leadership is rooted in a deep sense of being. True leadership comes from who a person is—from his or her character. Excellent leaders stand for something. They have created or found something in life that truly matters to them. To place this in the context of CHA's Transformational Leadership Competency model, such leaders are rooted in a deep and personal spirituality. They act out of a strong sense of value and find meaning and purpose in what they do and what happens in their organization. Their leadership comes from a deep awareness of self, and it inspires others to follow. In a recent conversation, a leader in Catholic healthcare defined leadership in this way: "Leadership is what we call it when we see people doing something they love and we want to help." In other words, leadership arises when a person of integrity has the vision to see beyond present circumstances to a more desirable future and other people are drawn into relationships with his or her vision.

Leaders who foster genuine relationships and dialogue engage people in conversations about what matters to them, enabling them to take a stand in favor of what they genuinely care about. Conversations that touch us at the heart generate real commitment and establish the creative tension that enables breakthrough ideas. In this sense, leadership is really a creative act; it is generative, bringing something into being that was not there before. According to John O'Donohue, who writes in this issue, the leader is "someone who can

awaken life and creativity in other people."

As we approach the 21st century, we see that autocratic or functional modes of leadership are yielding to a newer model, one that reflects the deep hunger in our society for a world where people truly care for one another, where people are treated with dignity and are invited to authentic, personal transformation. Transformational leaders are dynamic individuals who use their creativity, spontaneity, and imagination to achieve positive change by influencing others who have the passion to move the organization toward a better future. The true leader thinks in terms of doing what should be done for the good of the organization and the community, rather than in terms of personal recognition and reward. The vision itself is far more important than personal survival. When the leader internalizes this transformational perspective and pursues what is right for the collective good, others are motivated by the leader's actions and power. They, too, are willing to take significant risks because the leader believes in the vision and is attached to the organization by choice, by taking a moral position. The leader's credibility lies in this behavioral integrity.

This transformational process, in a very real sense, transcends the organization, resulting in an emotional and spiritual breakthrough, one which is both energizing and frightening. A belief in oneself is the only thing that gives a leader the self-confidence to step into the unknown and to persuade others to do the same. This very attribute, of forming and motivating a community, also requires its opposite, a capacity for aloneness. In a rapidly changing world, it is not always possible to share one's concerns or seek support. Great leaders have to walk alone from time to time. They also have to derive their satisfaction from the successes of others and give those others the recognition that they themselves may be denied. When they do their job of indirect leadership well, "The people will say, 'We did it ourselves'" (Lao Tsu, *Tao Teh Ching*). □

"THE
FIRST AND
LAST TASK
OF A
LEADER IS
TO KEEP
HOPE
ALIVE."

- John Gardner

Ms. Tilley is executive director, Center for Leadership Excellence, Catholic Health Association, St. Louis. She was guest editor for this leadership section.

