

WISDOM LEADERSHIP

RB 64:17-19

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As we heard already so many useful ideas about wisdom leadership for us today, I will jump immediately into the Rule of Benedict (RB) and more specifically into the text given me for explanation, mainly Verses 18-19 in the context of RB 64 (see distributed scheme). Jacques Dupont said about "lectio divina", that it is like breathing gently, and with perseverance on the ashes until the flame comes out. So we breathe, so to say, with this patience and love on the different expressions, until the life is made visible, - an orientation for our lives. Also, I will not only read the text scientifically, but existentially, having had my own little experience of leadership. In this difficult time, I often read RB to seek help. Looking back I am grateful for this time, and it helped me to grow.

As the goal of the conference is to explain what Benedict wanted to say, I will not use inclusive language, trusting that all of us can easily translate his orientations into our own lives.

The expression "wisdom leadership" is in agreement with RB 64. Already in the election of the abbot (64:2) one of the criteria was: "wisdom of teaching" (sapientia doctrinae). What does this wisdom entail according to Benedict? He postulates it for the abbot and all his officials who cooperate with him.

In Antiquity the word had different main contents:

1. The openness to the whole reality (the whole human being, the person in its interrelations (community) and the world around us.
2. The knowledge, better, the perception of reality not only through the intellect but also through the senses and through experience.
3. The capacity to judge what is better and less good, or bad and less bad.

In some writings it is synonymous with prudence. Wisdom 8:7 says: "virtues are the fruit of her labours (of wisdom), since it is she who teaches temperance and prudence, justice and fortitude, nothing in life is more useful for the human being". She is the root of the four cardinal virtues.

4. Sometimes wisdom entails also to go the way between the two extremes, the way of the middle, the way of discretion, and in this way is linked to moderation and temperance.

As studies on the virtue of wisdom state, one has always to put Wisdom into context, because the content is so broad: she could be compared to a beautiful sculpture, which we see only from one special side, never in her fullness. So we will look at wisdom in the context of RB 64.

Looking for words belonging to wisdom in the second part of RB 64, we encounter two times the words "prudently", a term generally linked to wisdom; also the terms of being circumspect, considerate, discerning, tempering, and having discretion are related to wisdom (all the words are underlined). In a sense we could summarize the qualities of the abbot in the second part of RB 64, especially our passage Vv. 18-19 (in 17-20) with "wisdom". And we are grateful to Benedict that he unfolded her richness for us.

Leadership has to do with a community and with the individual different members, all journeying to their goal. So we will look first to this community, and to their journey, then to the wise leader and pay special attention to "awareness" and vision. I want to conclude with Christ-figures, which RB uses for the leader.

1. THE STRONG AND THE WEAK MEMBERS

In this passage Benedict talks about all the members, who should not be overdriven, lest they would die in one day (V.18), and then he mentions the weak and the strong (V.19). But who is weak, and who is strong? The strong ones, according to this text, want something to strive after: ideals, goals and

challenges; maybe they are strong physically or morally. It is the only instance in RB, that the term “strong” is used for individual monks. But the term “weak” is mentioned very often. V.18 said the brothers should not be induced to flee, or fall back in dismay. They would easily plunge into depression, give it all up and flee (so when the work is too heavy as we see in 48:22; or already at the beginning they need the admonition: do not flee right away, - Prol 48). They can be “infirm” concerning their physical strength (they cannot work so much, or need more things - 34:4); they can be infirm regarding food (they need exemptions or special dishes - cf 39:1), and also spiritually, not even being able to bear a particular reading in the evening (42:4).

We could remember our own communities with strong and weak members.

How to bring them all together? How to realize the ideal, as 34:5 says: “all members” - in all their differences - “will be in peace”. And how can they make their way together?

2. THE WALKING TOGETHER

The Scripture text with the surrounding verses indicates that the members of the flock are on a journey to their final destination (Vv. 18f). Strong and weak alike! The symbol of a community in RB is not a nest, but a way. All of them should arrive together, as Benedict strongly says in 72:12: “Christ may lead us all together to life everlasting”. The weak may be in danger to fall behind, stand still, or even flee; the strong may want to progress quicker. But all have to arrive together.

The common journeying began on the profession day, when the name of “brother” was first used explicitly (a pity that it is not done in all translations). He had put the document on the altar; he had sung the “Suscipe me” - and the community, identifying itself with him, had sung also “Suscipe me” (receive me). With this they officially recognized the new brother (frater novicius, 58:23) as one of them. All of them are from now on one (see 2:20). So they become responsible for each other, to help each other on the way. The abbot is the guarantee that this will really be done (58:29: he takes the document from the altar).

I cannot but repeat the beautiful model my sisters gave to me of this walking together. As Juniors and Novices in springtime we went to the potato fields of our farm. We began in the morning at one side, and had to be at the other side in the afternoon. Each one of us had a hoe to weed around the potato plants. As I was not so strong, after some time I was left behind, and thoughts of discouragement crept in: “The monastic life is too heavy for me, I will not make it; I better go.” But then, looking before me, I saw that the Sister from my right side had already weeded some plants in my line. I got new hope and was again together with all. But after some time once more I fell behind. “I am not strong enough for this life”, - the same thoughts! I have to say that all my doubts about my monastic vocation lie on these potato fields ... Looking ahead, I discovered, that the Sister from my left side had weeded several plants for me. And again I was in line with them. I do not know how often this happened; in any case we arrived together at the other side. - When we had our jubilee together, we talked about our past experiences. I asked, looking to the surrounding potato fields: “Do you know that you saved my vocation here on these fields?” They answered: “We put always one strong Sister to your left, and another strong one to your right side.” So I had a good occasion to thank them. To me this became a deep symbol for our monastic community life. It is true, that sometimes we want to give up, or we feel left behind, - but in the deepest sense, our Sisters carry us along. And we do the same with all our Sisters. According to this model, the strong ones used their strength to help the weak; and the weak did not flee, because they were supported by the strong ones. The strong and the weak; - the Sisters are not always aware to help out. Here the leader’s task becomes evident, to help this common journey being realized.

The Scripture text in 64:18 is taken from Genesis 33:13. Esau proposed to break camp and move on, and to go one beside the other. Jacob replied: “... The children are weak and the sheep and cows which have

calved make it hard for me. *If they are driven too hard, even for one day, the whole drove will die.*"^{1[1]} He wanted to follow and go as slowly as the little ones could do it, and he would arrive later. Only the case of the weak ones is taken into account here. And the whole flock adapts to the pace of these, moving on slowly. But this is not exactly what Benedict wants to underline. And maybe therefore he says: "taking this and other examples of discretion...; the strong should also have something to strive after" (V.19). The level should not just go down in all regards. We might think of this danger today.

A community of strong and weak; but all are walking together! The leader has to have the vision of what the community is, where it is going, and how to achieve it.

3. ASPECTS OF THE LEADER'S WISDOM

Here we have to consider the expressions in Vv. 17-20: let him be circumspect, foresighted (providus) and considerate (consideratus) ... let him discern and temper and imitate the discretion... (all terms are underlined).

"Providus" (in our translation "circumspect") means to look ahead, to look around and to care about. It is difficult to express this in the different languages. The abbot should not only see what is ahead and forget all what is around him, but also take prudent measures according to the problems of the concrete situation. The word belongs to wisdom literature. All the usages of the Rule of Benedict are added to his immediate source. The abbot has to dispose everything "with foresight (circumspection) and justice" (provide et iuste - 3:6). Looking to the possible consequences, he also cares for moderation in regards to meals (41:4 - in abbatis sit providentia), and even about the measure of the habits (55:8).

"To consider", "consideration", - these word are used mainly for the abbot^{2[2]} and in the context of pondering the different aspects. "Considerare" means concretely to observe, to weigh, to reflect, to distinguish, and to discern and decide. It supposes intuition, taking into account the different views, mainly caring for the weak ones.

Another pair of words is mentioned here: "to discern and to temper" (discernat et temperet - V.17), and again in V.19 "taking the examples of discretion, the mother of virtues, let him temper all things." In this short text we read two times the root of "discerning". In itself "discretion" would already summarize everything, but we can also consider the different steps:

- 1. looking before and around, listening to all aspects,
- 2. considering, discerning, weighing and pondering,
- 3. tempering, moderating, deciding in discretion, avoiding the two extremes.

It is interesting how these few verses in 64:17-20 are in harmony with RB 3 "Calling the Brethren to counsel" with the listening to all, the pondering (iudicare, tractare), and finally the decision. I will take the different elements:

1. The abbot has to listen to what the strong ones desire (cupere), strive after. And it seems, he understands their aspiration and approves of it. He also has to be aware of the feelings of the weak, of their depression and temptation to flee. Listening to the different needs and opinions, he knows at the same time that it is one community journeying. How to bind them together? Looking ahead he will ask: where are we going? With a vision in mind (given to him by the Bible and its witnesses, and the Rule; - today we add our Constitutions), he will not just lower the level and let the entire

1[1] The Vulgata text, which apparently Benedict used here, has another version, "if I overdrive my flocks, all will die in one day". ("...si plus in ambulando fecero laborare, morientur una die cuncti greges"). Here we have one proof that Benedict used the Vulgate). They die all in one day, this is more dramatic! (The Scripture text says, they are overdriven one day, - and then they will die).

2[2] See RB 34:2; 37:2-3; 40:5; 48:25; 53:19; 55:3.20-21.

flock continue more slowly, but he will also encourage the others to go beyond or to help the weak ones, if they do not do it already by themselves (as on our potato field). The leader has a subsidiary role.

2. Then he will consider and weigh, what is more important or less bad. He will do this in the spirit of stewardship before God and the final realities (see 64:7.21), but also taking into account the human reality. He keeps the two, sometimes three to four aspects in mind. He will distinguish and discern, - very often with the help of the brothers (see RB 3) - , how to encourage unity and walking together forward. What is God's will in this present situation? When in these few verses the words of discernment, discretion, tempering and moderation are used, it mirrors surely Benedict's own experience. He stresses especially, not to overburden the weak (see the Scripture text), and challenges to keep to the middle (discretion). One is always put into question from left and right. So one has to be continually attentive to God and the reality around us.

To make this clearer, let us think of the delicate question of wine. Benedict, living in Italy, cannot persuade his brothers in his times, that wine is not for monks (that would be his ideal, as it was for the desert fathers), but he also does not just allow as much as the monks want. He agrees to a hemina, which he does not prescribe for all. He leaves space for those who want to be more ascetic (41:4: "But those, to whom God gives the strength to abstain, must know that they will earn their own reward.") A strategy that can be seen throughout the Rule! It is the scope of a Rule to fix the minimum so that the weak are not discouraged and the strong encouraged to go beyond (18:24f; 49; 73). Benedict shows that he does not want only to consider one part, here the weak, - but also the strong. It is proper to his Rule to weigh both parts.^{3[3]}

3. Sometimes discretion (in the first centuries being synonymous with discernment) for RB can just mean moderation, and in our text it goes together with temperance.^{4[4]} The abbot is admonished in 64:17: "let him discern and temper" (temperare) ... and in V. 19: "let him temper all things", which is still stronger. "To temper" means originally to put a goal and a measure to one thing, to limit, and then to organize, to rule. The measure is different according to the characters, as RB 2:25-28 said. The same expression occurs in RB 41:5: "He should temper and regulate all things in such a way that souls will be saved and that the brothers go about their activities without justifiable grumbling". Thinking of all prohibitions - sometimes angry - against the murmuring in RB, it is surprising that there can be a just murmuring, which has to be avoided through wise ordering. It becomes clear, that the Rule is not only written for the strong ones. With discernment, moderation and temperance the abbot avoids the cause for just murmuring. And the members will arrive together at their goal, in 41 described as "salvation of souls".

To "temper" goes together with balance; I will just enumerate some balances of this text:

8 rather to profit than to preside,

9 to draw out the new and old,

10 mercy and judgement,

11 to hate the vices, but to love the brethren,

12 to act prudently and not to go to excess,

14 not to allow the vices to grow, but eradicate them as it is convenient for everyone,

15 rather to be loved than to be feared,

17 the work concerns God or the world,

19 that the strong may have something to strive after, and the weak may not fall back in dismay.

It is a mirror of being "circumspect", of balancing the different sides, so that all come together.

3[3] A characteristic which comes from the Rule of Augustine, to whom Benedict owes much in this chapter!

4[4] In the Rule the word "discernere" is also used for to separate, to distinguish, and in the negative version: there should be no "discernments" of persons, - no preference of persons.

4. AWARENESS

Although awareness belongs already to wisdom, it holds a special place in our chapter, which shows us three expressions: “cogitare” (thinking), “memor”, “memini” (remembering), “scire” (to know). This idea (with different words) is specially used in all the chapters of the abbot (2-3; 27; 64). Here:

7 he should always bear in mind, what he has undertaken,

8 and let him know ... that he is to be of profit,

9 he must be learned in the divine law, so that he may know from where to bring forth new things and old,

13 let him keep his own frailty always before his eyes, and remember that the bruised reed must not be broken.

18 he should bear in mind the discretion of Holy Jacob.

The abbot is pictured as a very mindful person. Of what is he aware? This idea is reflected in the style, often with a little Latin Word (ut, ne), in English “so that”, “that”, or “lest”. We see this in our little text: “so that the strong have something to strive after and the weak may not fall back in dismay”. - The leader is aware, that he has to care for the unity of the community, so that its members keep progressing together on their journey. This is one goal of leadership.

The other two indications (ut), “so that” are eschatological: he acts merciful, that (so that) he will also experience the same. This is especially true, when we think that he himself is a bruised reed. And at the end, dealing about administering wheat in due time (21): “so that after having ministered well me may hear from the Lord what the good servant heard ... he will set him over all his goods” (22)! It seems important to remember this always as a very consoling reality.

Another goal is indicated in V.8, “that he may know” ... which concerns also his awareness of the Bible and its witnesses. The common vision and the guidelines for action are discovered in the Bible. These are the primary and objective orientations. Benedict can also say that the abbot is strictly bound to this present Rule (64:20).

But implicitly, as we saw, he is also aware of the longings, limitations and temptations of his brothers.

Summarizing: being aware of the unity of the community, of the eschatological reality, of the Bible and its orientation, and of the concrete members with their feelings and desires.

Finally he has always his own frailty before his eyes. He is always very conscious of his fragility, easily wounded, even broken. We could ask, why does Benedict not admonish to be conscious of one's own gifts, - it would fit more our modern thought. In his situation it was more important to stress the awareness of one's weakness. This is put in the midst of the second part of RB 64 (the nucleus); so it has a special weight in this chapter. And what is before and follows afterwards, is an explanation why he should always keep his own frailty before his eyes: not to break the vessel although it is rusty (12) (used for a member of his community), not to crush the bruised reed (13 b). It seems to me important, that the abbot has accepted his limitations, and so treats with respect all the weak, broken and vulnerable members in his community. His own frailty is not something to be discouraged about; on the contrary; he can draw from it the experience with which to help the brothers grow, and to be himself more loving and compassionate. To this fragile person, Benedict can commit his brothers. We think of Jesus, committing the lambs and sheep to Peter, who is aware of his denial.

In line with these thoughts, I am amazed how Benedict has the courage to say at the end of RB 2:40, that in administering to others spiritual help, the abbot becomes free of his own vices. This means that the exercise of leadership, as difficult as it is, will help also the abbot himself to progress. Surely this will only happen, if he is aware of his own vices, of the shadow sides, and where he is not living up to his ministry, and accepted the fact. RB 46:6 talks about the abbot and elders, “who know how to heal their own wounds as well as those of others”. Here again the awareness of one's own wounds and the knowledge of how to heal, is a presupposition of healing others with intuition and compassion.

The sober self-knowledge makes the leader merciful, so that he always exalts mercy above judgement (V.10) even when encountering vicious members. Acknowledging his frailty, he has nothing to defend, so he need not be excitable, exacting, headstrong or jealous (V.16). Surely in his own person he is in solidarity with the weak. And from there, flows the discretion, the consideration of all the different characters, so that they can journey together to their goal. The leader is, so to say, in the midst of this flock, walking forward, and helping each one to advance.

Here, I see a connection with his role of teaching. The abbot teaches Holy Scripture and nothing outside it (2:4). In 64:9 it says; "he must be learned in the divine law, that he may know from where to bring forth new things and old". One would think maybe of conferences, of personal admonitions and encouragements; but the Vv. 17-20 complement this view. Here Benedict talks about examples and persons, whom the leader has to imitate or to bear in mind; and he acts according to this. It is a teaching by doing. This is in harmony with the twofold teaching mentioned in RB 2:11-15. The abbot points out the good and holy more by example than by words. And he should show in his own life, what is not to be done, and what is to be done. The nucleus of 64,II shows us, that it is from below, that he teaches, being conscious of his own frailty, and even his own vices (2:40). So from his own experience with sinfulness on the one side and the mercy of the Lord on the other side, he will not speak big but humble words, he can better foster life in his members. As the one who sees the speck in his own eyes, he does not project it to others (2:15). Awareness of the depth and height of life fosters this double and effective teaching, which is also connected to correction, as a teaching addressed to the individual. And the teaching is more effective, when he knows about the need to be corrected himself (see also 64:12.14 - parallel, eradicate prudently with charity).

Awareness finally is linked with stewardship expressed in the beginning of our passage and at the end: Vv.7-8 and 21-22. The abbot is aware, that he has to give an account of his stewardship, of his ministry. He receives the wheat, and will distribute it in due time. It is consoling, that he receives the necessary gifts and graces from the Lord, and will pass them on, in a good ministry (the word is used here) and stewardship (vilicatio). He is only a servant with his co-servants (conservi). He has to profit them, rather than to preside (8). The ministry, as seen in the parts C and C' is surely a matter of love, a love which is given to him by our Lord, but also vice versa by the members (64:15; 63:13; see also 72:10). Here again the discretion is needed, facing the particular members: the vices are to be hated, all what is not according to the will of God, but the persons are to be loved (64:11).

I will conclude my remarks with a last one. Until now we did not mention the most important person: Christ. But all the previously mentioned expressions point to this: the abbot is a Christ-figure and should be like him. It is not just about morality or ethics as Pope Benedict XVI repeats; it is a strong and loving relationship to Christ.

5. THE ABBOT, A CHRIST FIGURE

As a title we could put 2:30: "The abbot must always remember what he is and remember what he is called." It is a strong admonition to grow in Christ and to be similar to him. Let us look at five different main aspects of Christ, the abbot has to represent.

5.1 Christ, the servant of the Lord.

This seems to me the strongest picture, expressed in this chapter (in the midst: 64:13). The first song of the servant, Is 42:1-9, shows the tender and compassionate dealing of the servant, who is not excitable (turbulentus) and does not break the crushed reed, nor snuff the faltering wick. He has a special consideration for the weak and prisoners and those who need light. The servant, whom God holds by his hands, is also the suffering servant (last song: Is 52:13 - 53:12), the vulnerable healer: by his wounds we are healed. The woundedness, the leader's own fragility, makes him more conform to Christ and fosters

compassion and tenderness. Other qualities mentioned in this chapter are linked to this picture: not to be excitable (*turbulentus*) but quiet, not exacting or headstrong (V.16), to minister, to serve (V.21), to profit more than to preside over (V.8), to prudently scrape off the rust (V.12) ... and finally in V. 19 to care that the weak may not fall back in dismay.

5.2 Christ, the shepherd

A shepherd has to care that all the sheep walk together. This flock is composed of different members, strong and weak, stubborn and negligent ... (a reading of RB 2 in this regard is enlightening). The abbot should not favour the fast ones, and neglect the slow ones. The end of chapter 27 shows Benedict concretely as the one who experiences many difficult problems in his community with restless and wayward members, and then draws hope from the good shepherd: Christ. These two verses of 27:8-9 are fruit of his personal meditation. Christ, the good shepherd, seeks the one lost sheep with whom he has such compassion as to put it on his own shoulders (27:8-9). Benedict adds the characteristics of "holy" and "compassion", which are not mentioned directly in the Gospels. The good shepherd brings the sheep back to the flock (also not directly expressed in the Gospels). It is Christ himself who builds unity, and causes the flock to progress, not the abbot. Following Christ the abbot has to care not to lose anyone of the sheep (27:5). Benedict himself must have experienced a lot of contradiction and contestation of authority in his community, and because of this inserted later RB 27 (How the abbot should be concerned about the excommunicated), which could be considered as a third directory of the abbot. Of course, in this regard we can easily see in the abbot a Christ-figure. In order to be a good shepherd, he has to grow in love of Christ and identity with Christ, the good shepherd.

5.3 Christ, the teacher.

The abbot points always again and again to Christ, who teaches in word and action. His whole life - death and resurrection - is a mighty teaching. We might also think of the patristic interpretation of the psalms. Whenever they speak of teaching, doctrine, or commandments, the Fathers see Christ who summarizes in his person everything we have to learn and to teach. When the summit of the 7th step of humility says: "that I learn your commandments", it means as well that I learn your person: Christ. This holds also for the abbot, who has to learn Christ ever more deeply in all his experiences. Also the members should learn Christ, listening to the teacher-abbot, who does not teach something "outside, or against the law of the Lord" (2:4).

Like Christ the abbot ministers a teaching adapted to each one, in the form of admonition, even warning, but also of correction. It is different with the weak and with the strong. A text of RB 2 clarifies: "... serving a variety of temperaments, some by coaxing, some by reproof and some by convincing arguments. And to each one's character and intelligence he must ... accommodate and adapt himself" (2:31-32). The abbot will learn this in deepening his love for Christ.

5.4 Christ, the healer and physician

The abbot - so it is said two times in RB 27 and 28 - should act as a wise physician. He might delegate some of his delicate tasks, but he is the main representative of the true physician: Christ. Not every brother participates in this task, but only special and wise brothers (27:2-3; 46:5-6). The whole community in RB is seen more like a hospital than an institute of perfection. All need healing. And they have the medicines: the Bible, the Holy Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours, especially the Our Father, and the prayer for each other. The abbot will "apply compresses, the ointment of encouragement, the medicines of divine Scripture, and also the cauterizing iron" of harsh correction if necessary; finally all will pray (28:3-4; cf 27:4).

The abbot is the physician of everyone, as it is also said in 64, that he has to correct (V.12) and in another picture scrape off the rust (V.12) or eradicate the vices (64:14;5[5]). The abbot - Christ - cures as he sees

[5[5] See 2:26-29 - a personal insertion of Benedict to his source: RM

it expedient for everyone (64:14 - expedire: to get the foot free); in this way healing is seen as a process to true freedom.

When nothing succeeds, the prayer of all is addressed to our Lord (Christ) "who can do everything and restore health to the 'infirm brother' (28:4-5)". I do not think that all the members represent Christ explicitly as the physician to each other. In each one is Christ present; and therefore the good example, the positive helping, the encouragement, and the prayer hold for all. Maybe because of experiences with strong characters in his community (see 70:6), Benedict does not foster "fraternal correction" in his situation. On the contrary he is strong underlining the unity of the community, forbidding that some brothers will put obstacles to the healing process of a sinful member, or that they, so to say, claim to represent the physician of everyone correcting, beating others (see RB 26 in its severity; also 70:4-6).

Christ is also the physician of the whole community, seen in RB 28 as one body (28:6-8; see 34:5); there we read that a member has to be cut off. This is similar to an amputation of the body: the community (see Mt 18:5-9; it is the same chapter as the lost sheep). Benedict, writing his Rule, became more pastoral, but also more realistic, seeing that not always the lost sheep will be quiet afterwards, on the contrary, will contaminate the others, bring them to a downfall (as Mt 18:5-9 puts it) and will hinder them on their common journey to the goal. At the end of his Rule he mentions three times that somebody has to be expelled (65:21; 62:10; 71:9) Today the canon law provides for it with the guarantee of a detailed procedure. The abbot as physician has to amputate if nothing else helps!

The abbot represents also Christ, the physician, applying, so to say, prophylactic means. In this regard we could point to the preventive measures against murmuring, overburdening, sadness, and against unjust distribution. The physician does not go to excess, but is wise and merciful, irradiating confidence, and regulating a balanced life style.

Christ the healer is himself wounded. Also the abbot is always aware of his frailty (64:13). He is a wounded healer.

5.5 Christ, the Father

For Benedict this last Christ-figure is the first: he is Father. In general the RB avoids the family model, which its source still had (Father, mother, children). The vis-à-vis of the abbot in RB are not the children, or sons,^{6[6]} but brothers or fellow servants, as it is in our text (V.21). Christ is the Father of the community; the abbot is "only" a representative.^{7[7]} Father for RB is not meant as a patriarchal figure, but means, that he has to transmit life as Christ did; it. The functions of a father are: calling to life, preserving life, and fostering life. We see some expressions pointing to this: his word is like "ferment" for the members (2:5), the bruised reed will not be broken (64:13). And as father he has to show the same love to all (aequalis caritas - 2:22), a love which is the gift of self. And so he helps to build the unity in plurality. Of course the "aequalis caritas" (equal love) does not always have to show itself in the same forms, but rather as everyone needs it. Or to say it with the centre (nucleus) of 72: "as it is useful for him" (72:7)! Like a father he is ready to give his life for the community and each one. He is concerned with the "salvation of souls", which could be translated: salvation of the members, as they are walking to their final goal.

So the engagement to leadership helps the leader also to become more Christ-centred, and with this a more selfless, a more loving person, who just wants to serve. This might be the deepest meaning of wisdom leadership, wisdom standing for Christ.

^{6[6]} Only used once in a Scripture text

^{7[7]} See the interesting article of Fidelis Ruppert: Nur Stellvertreter. Zum Selbstbild des Abtes in der Benediktsregel,- *Erbe und Auftrag* 76(2000)107-118