

**Archbishop of Perth Timothy Costelloe's address at a Caritas Australia Just Leadership Day:**

**"Youth Lead for Justice: Catholic Leadership for the 21st Century"**

The Archbishop begins by giving six leadership quotes, followed by two from Mary MacKillop:

1. "A leader is like a shepherd; he stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go ahead so that the others can follow." Nelson Mandela
2. "Don't seek power for power's sake." Harry Potter
3. "We must decide what to do with the time that is given to us." Lord of the Rings
4. "We must keep our eyes on the shepherd and wait, look and listen for his command." Evelyn Underhill
5. "The best is the enemy of the good." St John of Boscoe
6. "You will catch more bees with a spoonful of honey than with a barrelful of vinegar." St Francis de Sales.
7. "Never see a need without doing something about it." Mary MacKillop
8. "Never forget who you are following." Mary MacKillop

NB: These are syntheses of the actual quotes.

He then expands on these quotes to derive six important **leadership lessons**:

1. "A leader is like a shepherd; he stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go ahead so that the others can follow." Nelson Mandela

**Leadership lesson:** A leader must not be the centre of attention. Leadership is not about oneself, but about others. A leader does not stifle the energy and vision of the people who they are trying to lead, but is an enabler and encourager and helps others to flourish.

2. "Don't seek power for power's sake." Harry Potter

**Leadership lesson:** A leader must demonstrate humility and have self-knowledge. We may be scared and want to shrink away from responsibility when presented with it, but a leader must rise to the challenge and be courageous. Just as Harry accepts wisdom and advice from Dumbledore and others, so too must leaders know that they do not know everything, just because they are in a position of power.

3. "We must decide what to do with the time that is given to us." Lord of the Rings

**Leadership lesson:** A leader must balance being an idealist (looking towards a better future and not accepting the way things are) with being a realist (being grounded in the reality that faces them). A leader must also recognise that there are several steps between the reality and the ideal, and not be discouraged by however many steps there are to attain the ideal. Instead, they help work out what those steps are, don't get discouraged by what might be considered as slow progress, and keep their eyes on the bigger picture.

4. "We must keep our eyes on the shepherd and wait, look and listen for his command." Evelyn Underhill

**Leadership lesson:** Leaders are also followers and learners. The question is – who do you follow? Who do you want to emulate? Leaders must be wise in their discernment about their role models.

5. "The best is the enemy of the good." St John of Boscoe

**Leadership lesson:** Similar to the lesson from Lord of the Rings: a leader must not get discouraged by the small steps – by the good they achieve, even if it isn't the 'best' they were hoping for.

6. "You will catch more bees with a spoonful of honey than with a barrelful of vinegar." St Francis de Sales.

**Leadership lesson:** A leader must be nice to people! A leader treats everyone well and with respect, and acknowledges their gifts and talents.

7. “Never see a need without doing something about it.” Mary MacKillop

**Leadership lesson:** Leaders are people who have eyes open and ears tuned in to see the needs of others. A leader must be sensitive to the ways people express their needs.

8. “Never forget who you are following.” Mary MacKillop

**Leadership lesson:** Anyone – Christian or non-Christian – can be a good leader. What makes us different is the reason *why* we work to be good and just leaders, and the example we aspire to emulate.

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The Archbishop then goes on to reflect on the example of Jesus, who is the leadership example we follow, and indicates four main lessons we can learn from four moments in the Gospels:

1. [Jesus washes the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper \(John 13:1-17\)](#): In their culture, washing someone’s feet was a way of honouring people but was normally reserved for the lowest of the low – the lowest servant of the house – because it was dirty work! Jesus washes the feet of his disciples and tells them to ‘go and do likewise.’  
**Leadership lesson:** A leader is not above hard work, and should not delegate any tasks to those under them that they would not do themselves; but rather leads by example.
2. [Jesus healing the blind man of Bethsaida \(Mark 8:22-25\)](#): In most incidences when Jesus heals someone, the healing is instant. In this case, the man is first partially healed and then wholly healed.  
**Leadership lesson:** A leader must recognise their gifts and talents and use them for the good of all. A leader must also prepare themselves for not always getting the desired result first time around, and be persistent, not letting discouragement and doubt creep in.
3. [Peter’s denials \(Luke 22:54-62\)](#): Jesus was hurt and let down by many people, but Peter was his closest friend.  
**Leadership lesson:** A leader must have a big and compassionate heart. This is different from having a thick skin – it means a leader must know and practice true forgiveness, knowing that they will be let down, sometimes by those in whom they trust the most. A leader must do their best to understand the people with and for whom they’re working, and understand that people are complex.
4. [Jesus denouncing the Pharisees \(Matthew 23\)](#): The only times Jesus gets angry or is tough on people is when he is talking about the religious leaders and how they do not live up to their responsibilities.  
**Leadership lesson:** A leader must accept the mantle of responsibility bestowed upon them, and do everything for the good of all.

## **Conclusion**

St Paul reminds us that we are to have the same mind, heart and attitude in us as in Christ Jesus. We want to be people who:

- See through his eyes;
- Listen with his ears;
- Speak his words;
- Reach out and love others with his heart.