

“I personally recommend this book and invite you to read and reflect on its message of servant leadership. As I state in the foreword to the book, servant leadership “offers the wisdom of the ages to a world that desperately needs new approaches to leadership.” As Dan points out in Chapter One, “Servant leadership is a paradoxical concept that fits the teachings and example of Jesus.”

-Most Rev. Martin Amos
Bishop of Davenport

“Catholic religious orders were among the first to respond to Robert Greenleaf’s servant leadership writings in the 1970s, and throughout the past forty years. *Servant Leadership Models for Your Parish* is a welcome addition to the growing body of servant leadership literature, and a useful guide for Catholics everywhere.”

-Larry C. Spears

The Spears Center for Servant Leadership
Indianapolis, Indiana

Servant Leadership Models for Your Parish:

"At first blush, to many, the concepts of leadership and "Christ" are a challenge to reconcile. Unfortunately, our exposure to leaders is often that of pedestal leaders, as Dan Ebener describes them in his book, Servant Leadership Models for Your Parish. But the really successful leaders are those who get people to focus on and accomplish goals. In my career in the US Army and working with the Army as a Federal Civil Servant, I have seen success and failure in leadership. The successful leaders are those who understand and live as servant leaders. They lead by putting their folks in the position and with the resources to succeed...this, to me, means "serving" in the effort to guarantee success. Dan's model for the servant leader is Jesus Christ and through selected scripture, he develops the servant leader paradigm. In this book, Dan documents the successful application of "servant leadership" in three different sized parishes with three different management styles. I recommend this book and the participation in Dan's Servant Leader Institute for all in leadership roles in the Church...the servant leader concept is a force multiplier in a climate of growing ministries and limited resources."

- Pat Monahan
Stewardship Committee
St John Vianney
Bettendorf, Iowa

Servant Leadership Models for your Parish

"If you, as an individual, are interested in improving your faith by helping your fellow man, this book is a must read! We, as believers in God, can do more than we think! This book helps us to understand what and why we are needed as members of our Church. Jesus Christ came to serve, not to be served and that is what "Servant Leadership" helps us to know, as well as what we can and must do.

I hope this helps others to want to read this book and participate as I did in the Servant Leadership Institute."

- Meta Hill, Member

Immaculate Conception Parish

Colfax, Iowa

“As the Parish Life Administrator (PLA) of a parish of 260 families, I find that the only way to accomplish parish needs is to empower parishioners to take responsibility for the areas of parish life that their talents and abilities allow them. Parishioners are more than willing to help if asked and allowed by the leader of the parish to apply their talents to the work at hand. The book “Servant Leadership for Your Parish” gives you the information and tools necessary to realize that the Pastor/PLA does not and should not feel that they need to “control” everything going on in the parish, that they need to give direction and support. This book helps one realize that the changing parish environment requires a change in the way things are done. Servant Leadership is the future of parish life.”

- Deacon Don Frericks
St. Andrew's
Blue Grass, IA

“Servant leadership models for your parish is about a style of church leadership that applies to clergy and lay people in church ministry. This book includes stories about servant leaders who emerge from surprising places, including a woman who cleans the pews, a man who grabs tools from his pick-up truck to fix a door before Mass and a group of lay religious education teachers who call the kids by name. Each of them is a servant leader because they take initiative and lead certain ministries in their parish.

The book also includes stories of those who hold positional power in the church and the ways that they practice servant leadership. There is a pastor who is willing to admit his mistakes, a pastoral associate who consults with her parishioners before making decisions and parish staff who give credit to others when the parish succeeds (the window) and who take the blame when things don’t work out (the mirror).

One of the themes of this book is that “the true measure of leadership is not how many followers you lead but how many leaders you develop.” The church needs lay people to step up and take initiative and positional leaders who empower people to do just that.

While there have been lots of books written about servant leadership in recent years, what makes this book different are these three features: (1) a solid research base from Catholic parishes; (2) extensive examples and stories describing what servant leadership looks like; and (3) an explanation of how and why servant leadership works.

While the book quotes Scripture extensively, the focus is on the servant behaviors of those practicing church leadership. This book is a gift for those of us who would like to see the church develop leaders who will lead like Jesus and bring new life to the church.”

- Review by Msgr. Marv Mottet
Aug. 22, 2010



DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT

April 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

One of our diocesan staff members, Dan R. Ebener, has spent the past five years working on his book, [Servant Leadership Models for Your Parish](#), which gleans what he has learned from over 30 years of ministry and over 10 years of teaching graduate classes in organizational leadership. (See attached flyer with order form.)

I personally recommend this book and invite you to read and reflect on its message of servant leadership. As I state in the foreword to the book, servant leadership “offers the wisdom of the ages to a world that desperately needs new approaches to leadership.” As Dan points out in Chapter One, “Servant leadership is a paradoxical concept that fits the teachings and example of Jesus.”

Dan has a sense of mission to communicate the message of servant leadership. Therefore, he has graciously decided to donate all his royalties and proceeds from the sale of the book to charity. A teacher at heart, Dan has been conducting leadership trainings in our diocese for priests, deacons and lay people.

This book can be a useful source of ideas for parish discussions about leadership. Parishes might also consider having their parish councils or study groups read and reflect on one chapter at a time. Dan would also be willing to visit parishes and do book signings if you are interested. He may be contacted at ebener@davenportdiocese.org. As I am sure you realize, leadership development has become a critical aspect of faith formation in today’s parish. We need to form Catholic leaders in the theology, philosophy and practice of servant leadership.

I recommend you order a copy of Dan’s book. It can help us create servant leadership models in our parishes and develop servant leaders in our diocese.

Yours in Christ,

+ Martin Amos

Most Rev. Martin Amos
Bishop of Davenport

**Book Review for the June issue of “The Courier” on
Servant Leadership Models for Your Parish, by Dan R. Ebener (Paulist Press / 2010).**

Then [Jesus] sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all” (Mark 9:35).

Jesus summoned them and said to them, “You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:42-45).

These words of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospel of Mark, have served in part as the inspiration for an increasingly popular style of leadership described as “servant leadership.” The term can be traced back to the writings of author and theorist, Robert K. Greenleaf, who began writing on the topic in 1970. Since then, there have been countless books written on servant leadership, and literally hundreds of corporations and organizations (including such corporate giants as GM, American Express, GE, Honeywell, and even Wal-Mart) have publicly adopted its approach to leadership as their governing philosophy.

Many of the books on this subject describe the theory and philosophy of servant leadership, and explore its principles. Dan R. Ebener, in his book, Servant Leadership Models for Your Parish (Paulist Press, 2010), offers a different and more practical perspective. Ebener, who presently teaches leadership studies at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa, has 33 years of ministry experience and has worked in social action, stewardship and parish planning for the Diocese of Davenport for over 20 years.

The content and research for this book grew out of a single, direct question that Bishop William Franklin posed to Ebener in 2004: “How do you measure parish life?” The question was asked

in the context of developing a pastoral planning process in the diocese focused on the future structuring and staffing of parishes. What resulted from the question was an extensive study of parish life in the Diocese of Davenport which serves as the basis for the research and ideas presented in this book.

Ebener holds that, in light of the teaching and example of Jesus, what most clearly marks the identity of a Catholic parish are acts of service and love. He notes Tertullian's observation in the third century that the early Christians were known by "how they love one another." Individual Catholics and their parishes should strive always to be "faithful" to this gospel calling to love, but they should strive also to be "effective" in seeking to build a more loving and caring community. It is not enough in his eyes for a Catholic parish to be only focused on faithfulness or only on effectiveness; both are essential, and servant leadership is the key to bringing them together. To demonstrate how this is so serves as the core idea of his book.

First, Ebener identifies servant leaders as those who "place themselves in humble service to their parish, recognize the gifts and talents of their people, and call them forth through empowering actions." If parish leaders demonstrate these three behaviors of servant leadership – i.e., "serving," "recognizing," and "empowering" – then the parishioners they lead will follow by actively loving and serving one another and their sisters and brothers in the broader community.

In its research, Ebener's team measured parishioners' activity in terms of: helping ("informal ways that members reach out to assist each other"); initiating ("voluntary steps to accomplish projects, to generate new ideas, or to start activities in the interest of the [parish]"); participating ("engage[ment] in the formal activities of the [parish]"); and self-developing (members' "actively seeking to grow, to learn, and to develop themselves into their roles and responsibilities").

The more a parish demonstrates these behaviors, the more "faithful" it is to the Gospel's call to love and service, and the more "effective" it is in living out the Church's mission to bring the witness of the Gospel to the world. The key here is that the actions of the servant leader (pastor,

parish staff, etc.) call forth, inspire, and facilitate the faith-filled activities of the followers (parishioners) who are empowered to share leadership in the parish as well.

The heart of the book lies in how Ebener demonstrates his premises concerning servant leadership through the research he's conducted in his diocese. Part of his team's work involved a case study of three "high performing" parishes which had been identified in the course of this research. The three are a small parish of 43 families in rural, south central Iowa (St. Mary Magdalen's, Bloomfield), a mid-size parish of 516 families in a growing community between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City (St. Mary's, Solon), and a large parish of 1,690 families in an urban neighborhood of Iowa City (St. Mary's, Iowa City).

While the approaches and methods of ministry in these three parishes are very different, the caring, empowering, other-centered leadership of pastor and parish staff is a common thread. And, the stories of Christian service told in each setting are both simple and inspiring – from an 80-year-old woman's initiative to have tulips planted in front of the church, to weekly faith formation sessions where over 200 adults participate as catechists and learners, to a young teen with Down Syndrome being welcomed into the youth group, to a parish's commitment to tithe 5% of its income to assist those living in poverty both locally and beyond. The servant leaders in the book are real people – Fr. John, Julie, Sr. Agnes, etc. – and we see the seeds of their witness and lives of service bear real fruit in the lives of their parishioners.

This book is written for church leaders: "bishops and pastors, deacons and lay volunteers, pastoral associates and parish staff, diocesan directors and committee chairpersons." It is "for those who wish to improve the performance of religious organizations by integrating the teachings of Jesus and the practices of their congregations with what we can learn from the general research about organizational life." In short, it is written for those who seek to follow the way of the one who *did not come to be served, but to serve*.

<h1>Initiatives</h1> <p>In Support of Christians in the World</p>	<p>National Center for the Laity PO Box 291102 Chicago, IL 60629 www.catholiclabor.org/NCL.htm</p>	<p>December 2010</p> <p>Number 190</p>
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Taking the Initiative

In Lay Formation

Robert Greenleaf (1904-1990) was an executive who promoted a managerial style now known as *servant leadership*. His ideas are perpetuated at the Greenleaf Center (770 Pawtucket Dr., Westfield, IN 46074; www.greenleaf.org) and through multiple press runs of his book *Servant Leadership* (Paulist Press [1977], 997 Macarthur Blvd., Mahwah, NJ 07430; \$24.95).

Now Dan Ebener pens *Servant Leadership Models for Your Parish* (Paulist Press [2010]; \$24.95), about a style of church leadership. This book includes stories about servant leaders who emerge from surprising places, including a woman who cleans the pews, a man who grabs tools from his pickup truck to fix a door before Mass and a dedicated group of lay religious education teachers.

Ebener, who was social action director for the Diocese of Davenport and now teaches organizational leadership for St. Ambrose University (518 W. Locust St., Davenport, IA 52803), includes stories of those who hold power positions in the church and ways that they practice servant leadership. There is a pastor, for example, who admits his mistakes. Other parish leaders give credit to others when things succeed (directing attention out the window) and who model accountability when things don't work out (directing attention to the mirror).

Ebener demonstrates the concept that "the true measure of leadership is not how many followers you lead but how many leaders you develop." This book has a solid research base from Catholic parishes; extensive examples and stories describing what servant leadership looks like; and an explanation of how and why servant leadership works. While it extensively quotes Scripture, the focus is on real servants in real leadership situations. Ebener's website is www.servantleadershipmodels.com.

Oglesby native pens book on parish 'servant leadership'

REVIEWED BY ABBOT CLAUDE PEIFER, OSB
FOR THE CATHOLIC POST

Dr. Dan Ebener is a native of the Diocese of Peoria, originally from Holy Family Parish in Oglesby and a 1971 graduate of St. Bede Academy in Peru. He is presently a tenured professor at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa, and is director of stewardship and planning for the Davenport diocese.

Bishop Martin Amos of Davenport contributed the Foreword to Ebener's new book, which answers a question posed by his predecessor, Bishop William Franklin: "How can one measure the life of a parish?"

In 2005 and 2006, Ebener directed a parish life study of all 84 parishes in the Davenport diocese,

He also performed case studies of three parishes of different sizes selected for their superior performances.

"Servant Leadership Models for Your Parish" resulted from a doctoral dissertation Ebener based on data derived from these studies.

It is a book about leadership, which is studied by sociologists and increasingly by students of business.

Leadership is understood as a process by which a person influences followers to achieve a common goal. The term "servant leadership" was coined by Robert Greenleaf in 1970 and has been widely adopted.

A servant leader as described by



Ebener

Greenleaf is one who acts not out of self-interest, but for the common good, encourages others to participate, and brings out the best in them. There is a clear correlation between this and the teaching and example of Jesus in the Gospels: "Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant."

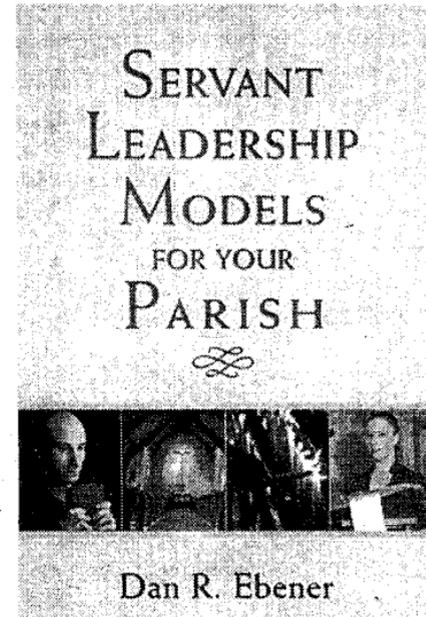
The author describes his methodology and the theory that undergirds it, then the kind of behaviors that are characteristic of genuine servant leaders. There are seven of these: recognizing, serving, empowering, helping, initiating, participating, and self-developing. The three case studies of a large parish, a small parish, and a medium-sized parish show what these behaviors look like in practice.

Ebener's purpose is to produce,

in Catholic parishes the kind of leadership that conforms to the Gospel ideal. He believes this can be done with the help of the analysis and verification that has been developed as a model in business studies.

The ordinary reader may be overwhelmed by the more technical aspects of the research presented. Still, anyone concerned about improving the religious value of parish life and helping people to follow the Gospel will find "Servant Leadership Models for Your Parish" provides profitable food for thought and practical ways of developing the leadership needed to make a parish into a vital Christian community.

ABBOT CLAUDE Peifer, OSB, is abbot of St. Bede Abbey in Peru.



"Servant Leadership Models for Your Parish," by Dan R. Ebener, Paulist Press, New York/Mahwah, N.J., 2010. Paper, \$24.95