

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP - REFLECTION



I ask for what I
desire as we begin
this topic



I pray that my entire
being become open
to God's grace



I imagine these texts
being addressed to me,
and note my response

Grace: that we find courage to initiate change from within in the face of our challenges

A scholastic at the Jesuit college in Ferrara, Bartolomeo Romano, was dissatisfied with conditions there and wanted to be moved. The house at Ferrara certainly experienced its troubles. The four Jesuits there were overworked, and the town's citizens were becoming disillusioned with the Jesuits. Ignatius had written to the superior, suggesting ways to improve the situation. In this letter, written to a scholastic who had been complaining strongly, Ignatius assures Romano that his difficulty was not with the place but with himself. Rather than try to change the town, Ignatius suggests, Romano "should try to change the interior man and recall him to God's service."

The peace of Christ.

Dear Brother Bartolomeo:

From your letters and also from those of others, but mostly from your own, we understand what your condition is, and we are all the sorrier about it since we so desire your spiritual good and eternal salvation. You are much mistaken in thinking that the cause of your unrest, or lack of progress in the Lord, is the place where you are or your superiors or your brethren. It comes from inside, not from without: from your lack of humility, lack of obedience, lack of prayer — in a word, from your lack of mortification and fervor in advancing along the way of perfection. You can change residence, superiors, and brethren; but unless you change your interior person, you will never do well; you will be the same wherever you are until you become humble, obedient, devout, and mortified in your self-love. And so this is the change you should seek, not the other; I mean, you should try to change the interior man and recall him to God's service. Give up the thought of any external change: you will either be good there in Ferrara or in none of the colleges. We are all the more certain of this because we know you will be able to be helped better in Ferrara than any place else. I give you one piece of advice: go to your superior in heartfelt humility, ask his help, open your heart to him in confession or however you like, and accept with devotion whatever remedies he may give you; busy yourself with examining and bewailing your own imperfections rather than with contemplating those of others. Try to give more edification in the future; do not try the patience of those who love you in Christ our Lord and would like to see you his good and perfect servant. Every month write a few lines on how you are doing in humility, obedience, prayer, and desire for your own perfection; and [write] also on how your studies are going. May Christ our Lord keep you. *Rome, January 26*

Ignatius on Interior Change (1555)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

What difficult situations are calling me to adapt from within?

What interior disposition am I invited to embrace to better face the challenge?