



THIS IS NOT A SPIDER STORY

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991 University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

In Spiderman, when Uncle Ben told his nephew Peter Parker the words: with great power comes great responsibility, he was just expressing his own version of Jesus' own words in the Scriptures, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more." (Luke 12:48, New American Standard Bible, 1995). This goes to show how leadership is a gift and not a privilege. Even the late President Corazon Aquino had said the same thing herself.

People who have been cast into positions of power probably need to take this as a serious mantra in their leadership careers. The trust that they are ultimately given by the people who have made them occupy those seats need to be safeguarded with their own lives. Sadly and frankly speaking, most if not all leaders fail to regard the very essence of their posts as something akin to holding a fragile object in their hands. For these types of leaders, the what-are-we-in-power-for syndrome is a malady that fails to find a cure. This is probably why we are fixated about introducing speakers thus: blah-blah-blah, let's all welcome the former president XXXX, ex-mayor so-and-so, ex-barangay chairman XYZ. Honor is directly equated with power.

Influence runs deep for people associated with those in power, or so, they want to believe. This is best illustrated by habitual name-dropping and emphasis on associations. It's an unfortunate thing that leaders' reputations are often tarnished not because of something they have personally done, but because of what their relatives and friends tend to do because of the perceived connections-to-the-powers-that-be which they flaunt so well.

A leader is easily the target of gossip because he is a public figure. He is scrutinized no matter how well he tries to guard his privacy. It is therefore upon him to live a life worth emulating by his constituents. This should not be misconstrued as a call to BE perfect; everyone knows nobody can ever be that. But it should be an objective of every great leader: to lead by example, to govern fairly, to dispense of his duties in the best and wisest possible way. Not everyone can be as wise as Solomon, but every leader should strive to regard his oath as something as sacred as a marriage vow. His obligations lie not elsewhere but in the people he leads, his words before people are not mere rhetoric, his actions are not mere objects of entertainment or a means of grandstanding. He has to take his position as a divine responsibility.

Leadership is not something anyone can take lightly—it is a heavy responsibility that the weaker, self-serving ones will not be able to carry too well. Leadership is to be viewed as God's own way of calling those in power to make the lives of his most intelligent creations better, so that those lives become fitting tributes to the Great Maker Himself. Vox populi, vox Dei.

Questions for discussion:

1. What, to you, is a great leader? In your opinion, who have been good examples of true leadership?
2. Do you think anyone can be a great leader? Why or why not?
3. If you could be the president/prime minister of your own country for a day, what would be the first thing you would do?
4. How can people help their leaders govern well? Should leadership be a responsibility shared by constituents as well? Justify your answer.
5. In your opinion, what should leaders in these times focus on? (example answers: education, jobs creation, infrastructure, etc) Why do you think so? See More