I propose that there are two fundamental qualities that must animate both the personal life and ministry of every ecclesial leader in the Catholic Church. These qualities are both old and new. They are “new” insofar as Pope Francis highlights their importance, in a variety of ways, in his Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*. However, each of these qualities has deep roots within Catholic theology since the Patristic Era. While using my own words, which I believe capture what the Holy Father expresses in *The Joy of the Gospel*, these two qualities are:

1. **“Empowered” Humility**
   The Holy Father makes clear that the work of ministry begins with the Lord’s initiative (EG #24). It is Christ who transforms each disciple by an encounter with His love. This encounter also “empowers” the disciple to respond by manifesting Christ’s love to others in mission. This response must be genuine and wholehearted, despite whatever struggles or challenges exist to go into the peripheries of society. There can be no place in our world where mission is afraid to go since it is Christ who leads the way.

   A genuine spirit of humility is required both to embrace such an encounter with Christ and to respond in mission. Humility is the virtue that recognizes the truth of one’s own life (strengths, weaknesses and sins). It fosters a spirit of discernment that allows the Lord to lead the Church and its leaders according to His will. Without this virtue, mission can quickly become institutionalized and programmatic, rather than an accompaniment of people, one person at a time, towards healing and renewal. The gift of joy is born in the hearts of disciples when they encounter Christ’s personal love and the burning desire they will feel to share that same love with others.

   **Thesis:** Humility sets ecclesial ministry apart from all forms of leadership, since its source, power and goal must remain Christ’s initiative, not the leader’s work or choice.

2. **Commitment to creativity in ministry**
   There is a profound need to explore new and creative ways to bring the Good News of the Gospel into our contemporary world (EG #33). This includes new methods, new contexts, and a new “language” that speaks to contemporary persons, all the while remaining faithful to the living Tradition of the Church.

   Such creativity demands each ecclesial leader possess the following qualities that are essential for effective missionary discipleship: a clear vision regarding the goals of one’s ministry, a commitment...
to create action-oriented plans, a sense of personal responsibility and accountability that one’s work will bear fruit (EG 24), a collaborative spirit that engenders a sense of co-responsibility among all members of the Church for our common mission, a personal ability to listen authentically, a desire to foster true community, and a spirit of patience and flexibility.

**Thesis:** If mission is to become a transformative presence within contemporary society, it is imperative that missionary disciples be creative in their approach, while faithful to the content of their message.