

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

November 19, 2013 at 1:42pm

Toronto mayor's antics highlight lack of personal accountability in today's leadership

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NCR Today

A thick skin is needed for anyone in leadership. Despite your best intentions, you will not please all you serve. Despite your efforts to work for the common good, unforeseen circumstances will challenge you and force you to take a difficult stand and remain firm in your convictions.

But there is a difference between being thick-skinned in the face of adversity not of your making and being thick-headed when the fault is clearly yours. Mayor Rob Ford of Toronto falls in the latter category.

After months of accusations and now actual confessions of drug use and frequent "drunken stupors," the man not only refuses to resign; he promises to run for re-election next year. His profanity-laced press interviews have provided easy fodder for late-night comics. We can imagine the writers rubbing their hands with glee with each new, unbelievably stupid thing that comes from this man's mouth. As a Canadian, I don't know whether to laugh at the absurdity of it all or cry for our national humiliation.

The lack of personal accountability in leadership today is no laughing matter. None of us are saints, but leaders must uphold a certain standard of moral decency. We don't need heroes who make us glow with pride, but we do not deserve scoundrels who make us hang our heads in shame.

Yes, the ranks of leadership have been filled with scoundrels throughout history. In the past, people either did not know what went on behind the scenes in courts and government chambers or simply lacked the power to do anything. Today's social media gives us power as never before, and it gives us the responsibility to stand up and scream out when leaders have lost their credibility.

What kind of person continues to fight for leadership in the face of overwhelming evidence of his or her

incompetence? What kind of person refuses to resign even when found guilty of wrongdoing? What kind of person tries to redirect the blame onto his or her accusers or the nasty media outlets?

I've had enough of misbehaving leaders wrapping themselves with the self-righteous cloak of "Blessed are those who are persecuted." These words apply only to those who are wrongly persecuted while giving their lives for what is right and good. When the judgment is justified, then resignation must be demanded.

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