

'Where We Failed'—To Avoid Pitfalls of the Past, Read the Signs of the Times

By "we" I mean many members of the Church and by "failed" I mean we did not rightly read the signs of the times. I have chosen this theme, not only in order to humbly confess some of our mistakes, but also assist others in avoiding similar pitfalls.

The failure manifested itself in crises.

The word "crisis" is derived from the Greek word which means "judgment." Any crisis in history is therefore a judgment on the way people think, act and live.

The judgments are really internal before they are external. They are not like a spanking for an act of disobedience (spanking is an ancient rite practiced some generations ago in the belief that nothing so much develops character as a pat on the back, provided it is given hard enough, often enough and low enough), it is basically internal: a headache can be a crisis or a judgment on our failure to eat; the barbarian invasion of Rome was a judgment on the Empire's loss of civic virtues.

The Church has had various crises or judgments in its history and though they came from outside the Church, they were caused by the way we lived and acted.

These crises were threefold and in all three cases, we had to learn a lesson the hard way. The first was religious, the second was social, the third was secular.

Religious Crisis

The first crisis was religious or spiritual. In the sixteenth century, the world became critical of the Church on two counts: its vast accumulation of wealth and the decline of morals and holiness among the priests and the religious. With the expropriation of monastic lands and the breakup of Christian unity, the Church saw the validity of the charge and beat its breast admitting that some of the accusing-fingers were right.

Previous to the French Revolution, many protested against the too intimate union between the Monseigneurs and the Seigneurs, the altar and the throne. The chaos that followed suggested the protests were right.

In this century, the secular order began to compare the churches to a ghetto sanctifying the already sanctified. John XXIII, in the name of the Church recognized the justice of this complaint, and opened the doors of the Church to the world, saying the secular order was also God's universe.

It is not therefore to be believed that the tensions created in a society are necessarily evil. If it were not for tensions, many would refuse to confront important issues: the comfortable would never be disturbed, and the disturbed would never be comforted.

Would there ever be a moral or spiritual conversion, or the

This is the text of Bishop Sheen's talk to the Rochester Chamber of Commerce Monday, Jan. 23.

growth of the soul toward perfection and closer union with God, without tension. Christ is the great Disturber. His finger stirs our conscience. His eyes probe our hidden sins. His voice challenges our motives. There has never been a conversion, from St. Paul on to this very hour, which was not a disturbance to our complacency.

I have seen the disturbance during the 16 years I served the poor of Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Latin America and other parts of the world. There were always poor in the world, and there always will be. But now the poor know that they are poor. This consciousness has become a demand, sometimes revolutionary, that they share in the blessings of the rich.

Everywhere tensions are created in our societies. They are unpleasant, they rattle our comfort, they disturb our bridge parties, they force us to discuss problems over highballs, they probe wounds in the hope of healing, they make us conscious of our unfulfilled responsibilities. Even Communism is right in its protest, though it is wrong in its reforms.

Often these tensions are created in a society in which the principals may be abusive, but their principles are holy and on God's side.

It may even be that those who are submerged may be violent. And here a careful distinction must be made. Our Lord said: "The Kingdom of Heaven is won by violence."

There are two kinds of violence, violence against others, and violence against ourselves; violence against neighbor and violence against egotism and pride. Our Lord condemned external violence, when Peter used it, as he swung his sword as an awkward fisherman, and the last he could do was to cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. The Saviour told him to put that kind of sword back into its scabbard.

But the other kind of violence that he brought was the sword that thrusts not outwards, but inwards against anything which stands in the way of love of God or neighbor. "I came not to bring peace, but the sword." To the extent that we do not use inner violence against every form of prejudice and superiority, that external violence comes into being.

Looking back then on history, the Church was weakened in those moments when it ceased to listen to the reasonable tensions created by the world. The disturbers are not wrong, just because they disturbed, as the Church discovered.

When someone tells me that I am not holy as I ought to be, I am irritated; my false peace is troubled. I may say, "How dare you say that to a priest?" Or I may get down on my knees, humble myself before God, and begin to change. True, the change cannot be over-night.

You cannot put a bomb under a baby and blow it up into a man. The most irritating thing about being a Christian is that we might not always be right. So we are disturbed, irritated and annoyed.

The second crisis of judgment of the Church was social and was directed against parochialism, or the limiting of its vision to a parish by a pastor, to a diocese by a bishop. Such books as "The Uncomfortable Pew," "The Suburban Captivity of the Churches," and "Requiem for a Parish" inveighed against our failure to be more embracing and less introspective.

The Social Crisis

Almost every bishop in the last few decades has become accustomed to thinking that his primary duty was to his diocese, and every pastor to his parish. The Vatican Council has reminded the bishop that his first duty was to the world; that he was consecrated for the world, and only for jurisdictional reasons was he limited to a small part of it. The Council furthermore reminded him that he is a member of a body which in one instance is humanity, and another, the Mystical Body of Christ. In an organism the eye cannot say to the ear, "I have no need of you," nor have we need of you. If we were as deeply sympathetic as we should be, we would sense hunger in our stomach and restlessness in our whole being at the thought of 250,000 people sleeping in the streets of Bombay every night.

To this end of recognizing responsibility, not only to the poor and the socially disin-

herited in our midst, but to the hungry in India, to the lepers in Africa, to the refugees in Korea and southern Viet Nam, we are imposing a tax on all construction or reconstruction in the diocese. This tax will be a percentage graduated according to the expenditure, and will be given to the poor in this city and diocese, and to the poor of the world.

Parochialism has almost ruined the church because it concentrates only on the narrow limits of the diocese, the parish and the assembly, while forgetting the world. A similar mistake could be made by those who think they live in a city, as we thought we lived only in a church. The truth of the matter could be told in Dickens' book: "The Tale of Two Cities." One City is the Secular City; the other is the Inner City. Our comfortable professors, suffering no indignity, tell us that "God is dead" in the Secular City. Maybe He is dead in the Secular City. But I will tell you one place, where He is very much alive. He is alive in the Inner City.

As the Church had to learn that the world was the stage on which the Gospel was preached, so the world has to learn that the Inner City is the area where the Secular City will find God.

Could not all the industries of the Secular City begin to give a proportion of their blessings to the Inner City, not just "tokens," but something more substantial.

Maybe up to this time, we have been chickens instead of pigs. One day a chicken and a pig were walking along a billboard with a gigantic advertisement of ham and eggs. The chicken said to the pig: "How proud we should be of what we do for the American people."

The pig answered: "It is all right for you to say that; you make only a contribution; but I make a total commitment."

I plead for a total constructive commitment to the Inner City.

The third crisis or judgment of the Church was in the secular order. We divorced ourselves from the world, on the false assumption that religion was one thing and business, the commercial and scientific world another.

We failed to heed the words of Polonius: "There are more things on earth, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." The ecumenical spirit was weak, our philosophy was abstract and sometimes unrelated to the concrete and the individual. We began to be spunged about our little fortresses, whether they were "my parish," "my organization," or "my institution."

Then came the Vatican Council in which all faith, all people, the political, economic and social order were invited to sit down at our deliberations. What we learned was this: the virtue of tangibility are not in the abstract, but in the concrete.

It is very easy to love humanity, but it is very hard to love that human.

One of the great weaknesses of humanism is that it is a brotherhood without tears.

Dostoevski said that he had no difficulty in loving humanity, but he found it almost intolerable to have anyone around him who sniffed and blew his nose incessantly. G. K. Chesterton said, "It will take a little more than a humanist to realize that the people who sit opposite you in the New York subway are just as precious in the

secular order.

It reminds one of when the Indonesians were pressing the Dutch to leave their country. The Governor General of Java, in a conversation with a journalist, was unable to understand why the Indonesians should have taken the negative attitude: "Look what we have done for them. Look at the schools and hospitals. A hundred years ago the population was only a few million, today there are 60 millions. We have done away with malaria, plague and dysentery. We have given them an honest and efficient administration and abolished civil war and piracy. Look at the roads, the highways, railways, the industries, and they want us to go. Can you tell me why they want us to go?"

"I am afraid," replied Van der Post, "it is because you have never had the right look in your eye when you spoke to them."

The problem of having the right look in the eye is basically getting our feet wet, moving among the poor, the right families crowded into one cottage, touching little children, putting clothes on the back of a boy, bringing food to their table and sitting with them, then we begin to love them. You can never love a leper until you have touched a leper. You can never love the poor until your cold hand has been warmed in theirs.

Incidentally, this is happiness. Almost every neurosis in the world comes from want of service. There is not a single one of us who can go up to a crucifix and lay his hand on the cross of Christ and say, "I am innocent." Because I am not innocent. I am one with my neighbors who are not innocent. Because I am not sinless, I am one with those who are not sinless.

As Christ, who has not just touched our human nature, but took it with all of its woes, and hunger and thirst and imprisonment and death, so I put the whole force of the Church in this diocese on the side of the socially depressed and disinherited, and all people who are struggling for our marvelous American heritage and our Christian civilization.

Conclusion

The whole world is looking at Rochester, but it is looking at us in the same way that one woman looks at the face of another woman who has a pimple on her nose. She could be well dressed, beautiful and tastefully groomed—but the searchlight is on the blemish.

What does the whole world see as it looks at Rochester? But what does it see? Does it see our industry, our commerce?

It sees an insignificant little pimple on our face which could be healed in a minute with equal parts of the ointment of humility, love and service.

I am one of your latest citizens, but one of its proudest. Look what we do: we help clothe the world; we photograph the world; we make precise the imprecisions of the rest of the world; we multiply copies for the offices of the world; we help cure the sicknesses of the world... There is not a single problem in the technological field which we cannot solve.

If we just put our heads together—and what heads there are here tonight; we could wipe out the blemish on our nose in two years. Our Lord told the young man who wanted to be his follower: "There is just one thing lacking: LOVE—LOVE—CHRISTIAN LOVE."

The rich man who had Lazarus at his door could have solved the problem in a minute, if he so desired. It does not require technique as much as spirit.

A minister told me a story of a young Anglican priest in Washington who was working with a group of 14 year old boys in a room which was formerly occupied for years by a group of women. One of the women came in and said, "What are these niggers doing here in this room?" The young English minister answered that he thought the Lord loved both the Negro and the white alike. She indignantly remarked, "You leave Jesus Christ out of this."

The fact is our Western civilization is the greatest in history; and so is our technology. But we are great not because we are white. We are great because we are Christian. And the moment we lose that Christian love, we lose our greatness.

This is our choice—there are two symbols in the world. One symbol is that of the clenched fist which stands for hatred, violence and destruction. It is the gesture which turns the hand of man which was to be an instrument of art and science, into that which most closely resembles the claw of the beast. The other gesture is the folded hands. They cannot protest, for they were not made for defense; they cannot fight, for they were made for supplication—ten Gothic spires aspiring heavenwards for the souls of men.

By and through their prayers, may the race of Cain come beneath the cross, where there is a man unfurled on it like a wounded eagle, and may their clenched fists open and release their hate. When hate has gone out of the city those arms which were nailed in hate, will fold themselves together in judgment, and in embrace, that all the world may know how great is the Love of God in man.

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Dreams Already 'Changes are Needed in our Outlook on the World' Are Realities

Had anyone two years ago predicted that in 1967 Christians of so many different denominations would attend each others churches in such large numbers to pray for religious unity, that person would have been considered an impossible dreamer.

This year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in mid-January linked people in prayer who had been neighbors for decades in their communities and yet strangers to each other at the hour of their worship.

Much of the impetus for the development of this present climate had its origin in a church in Rome with the strange title, in English, of "St. Paul's-without-the-walls."

The famous church does indeed have walls. "Without-the-walls" refers to its location out beyond the bastion-walls of ancient Rome where St. Paul was martyred and where a church was built sixteen centuries ago. Rome's walls have in large measure been dismantled and the original church structure has been replaced—but the ancient title survives.

It was in that church that Pope John announced in 1959 his plan to hold an ecumenical council and, six years later, as the Council neared its conclusion, in that same church Pope Paul put the seal of his own example to approve inter-faith rites when he took part with Protestant, Orthodox as well as Catholic participants in the Council at a service for religious unity.

There is perhaps an appropriateness that such a service should be held at St. Paul's-without-the-walls. For four centuries the barriers-between-Christians of different denominations have risen higher and higher. Now those walls are tumbling down and Catholics and Protestants can look at each other without antipathy—we are increasingly finding that even our own local churches are, like St. Paul's in Rome, "without walls."

This was expressed at the grass-roots level in the remark of one woman, a Catholic, who attended one of the recent ecumenical services at the Protestant church to which her husband belongs—"For the first time in our married life," she said, "my husband and I have been able to attend church together, to say the same prayers, sing the same hymns, hear the same scripture readings and the same sermon and we weren't either of us excluded from any part of the service."

The progress of the past two years gives us, it seems, sufficient reason "to dream the impossible dream"—to hope that our ultimate goal is, after all, also attainable—Communion "without walls." It is obviously a goal eminently worth praying and working for.

—Father Henry A. Atwell

(This is the letter Bishop Sheen sent Father Joseph Daley, appointing him to the new position of Vicar for Pastoral Planning. Father Daley has been vice chancellor and previously was a curate at St. Cecilia's Church, Elmira; St. Ambrose Church, Rochester, and St. Charles Borromeo Church, Greece. He was ordained in 1949.)

It is common to all administrations to meet situations when they arise, instead of anticipating them in advance. We tend to plug in holes when there is a drip, in place of planning, coordination and pre-arranging programs. The Diocese must be thought of not only in terms of jurisdictional limits, it should be envisaged also as a total pastoral charge.

As far back as 1955, Pius XII asked, "If we were not struggling too individually and disintegrated, would it not be better if apostolic activity were re-examined in the light of the principles that govern all orderly collaboration?" In my opinion, this today is one of the most urgent needs of the apostolic action of the clergy and laity in our day.

Vatican Council II picked up this plan for ordered planning. "The forms of apostolate should be properly adapted to current needs, not only in terms of spiritual and moral conditions, but also of social, demographic and economic needs. Religious and social surveys, made through the offices of pastoral services, are cordially recommended." (Decree on Bishops, Para. 17)

"Special concern should be shown for those among the faithful who, on account of their way or condition of life, cannot sufficiently make use of the common and ordinary pastoral services of parish priests or are quite cut off from them, such as migrant workers, airplane personnel, etc." (Decree on Bishops, Para. 18)

Why has the Church and the Council been so insistent on collaboration and unification of forces, if it is not because the Church in our times is in an

entirely new situation. The Church is no longer just an aggregation of parishes, congregations and sacred assemblies on days of worship. It is a kind of Diaspora as were the Jews when they were scattered among the nations.

Our parishes are no longer places where men work, sleep, live, earn a living and recreate. Most of the faithful earn their living outside the parish, and if they witness to Christ, do it often outside their parish. It is in the world that they enter into new relationships, new unities, new communities economic, political, social, industrial—just as the Jews had to enter into new unities in their new world. Our scattered people then have to think differently, act differently now than they ever did before, for the Diaspora has thrust them into the commercial and secular world.

Before we were a united ecclesia or parish, now we are dispersed, scattered, fragmented, almost a pilgrim people roaming in another world, so that like St. Peter, I might begin this letter as he did to the faithful, "I send greetings to all those living among foreigners in the dispersion." (Peter 1:1)

This forces us to create new forms of life. God is doing something to us; He is telling us something in the new situation, in which we find ourselves. Only to the extent that we seek out in our bustling human ways His plan, will He manifest His holy purpose. Because the Jews were dispersed, they did not cease to be the people of God, because we are dispersed as the people of God in the secular world, we are not separated from His plan; we merely have to reinterpret His message, and see things in a new way.

There are no changes needed in the teachings derived from Christ and the Word of God, but changes are needed in our outlook on the world. The rending of the veil of the Temple in an earthquake opened up the Holy of Holies to the world, and the earthquake of secularism has shaken us out of hid-

denness and complacency. It may very well be that the Church is entering upon one of her most important missions since the fall of the Roman Empire; the Holy of Holies must now be revealed to the world and not be kept wholly to ourselves.

Since the Diaspora presents us with a new order of things, we must not remain in the present situation of trying to solve problems only when they arise; we must anticipate them.

To this end, in accordance with the decrees of Vatican Council II, I hereby name you, ad nutum episcopali, Episcopal Vicar for Pastoral Planning.

Your functions throughout the Diocese will be to make comprehensive surveys, looking to pastoral care and pastoral projects, which will be submitted to the Pastoral Council for consideration and action.

These sociological, demographic and economic surveys will embrace such projects as the following: The redistribution of the Diocese, not on the basis of counties, but on concentrations of clergy and faithful; supra-parochial organizations; a sociological survey on the urbanization of our population, even in rural areas; plans on how to reach the "hard-to-reach" groups; the advisability of having mobile churches to care for migrant workers, trailer camps and isolated areas of population;

a study concerning the wisdom of establishing centers of priests in rural districts (Decree on Priests); taking advantage of telephones and highways to form an apostolic team for the spiritual, intellectual and social development of an area; the study of population projections to plan churches accordingly; even the advisability of chapels in industrial or housing complexes and shopping centers; making surveys of the advisability of the use of television in our schools in which the State and Public Schools would exchange courses; the formation of a project destined to narrow the gap between social and divine values; a unification of organizations which are presently unrelated, such as charities, education, marriage courts, family care, press, Christian witnessing into an organism, so that all the members of the Diocesan body will function for the general good of the Church.

An Ear to the Atheist

Vatican City — (NC) — The Vatican's postconciliar Secretariat for Non-Believers plans to establish here in the near future a center for the study of atheism.

The one-and-a-half-year-old secretariat headed by Franz-

Your duties would not be to implement these projects, but to submit them to the Pastoral Council for verification and implementation.

Every such plan, projection and method of procedure, however, modern, technical and sociological it may seem to be, is in the last analysis, nothing else but the communication to the world of the saving mercy, love, compassion and truth of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

May the Holy Spirit guide you in this new office, for which you already have many talents and preparation. This appointment complements the first appointment we have made, namely, for the poor. This one is for the world; both are fundamentally related to Him whose first beatitude was to the poor, and whose last message before the Ascension was, "to go into the world."

kus Cardinal Koenig of Vienna will cooperate with the city's educational institutions and seminaries in the project, according to an article in the Vatican City's weekly magazine, L'Osservatore della Domenica.

The article was, in effect, the first public "progress report" on the secretariat since its foundation.

"The secretariat... is not" the article concluded, "to be an instrument for direct apostolate among non-believers. It is rather an organ for spreading a knowledge of doctrines and special situations, of means of contact with persons and groups, of the working reality for establishing a climate of understanding and stimulating theological-moral meditation on the Gospel message to be presented to the men of our times and particularly to all those who no longer seem to understand what religion is for or who regard it as an obstacle to liberty and a full expression of man."

New Answer For New

By REV. THOMAS J. HOCTOR

(This is the text of a sermon Father Hoctor gave at St. Pius X Church, Chili, Sunday, Jan. 26. Father Hoctor is a member of the faculty at St. Andrew's Seminary.)

There is a story about an old gardener who returned to his Alma Mater after a 25 year absence, to find one of his teachers giving an examination. He saw the paper, and remarked with astonishment, "Professor, these are the same questions you asked us 25 years ago!"

"Ah yes," replied the teacher. "But the answers are all different now."

I propose to discuss an issue this morning of intense local interest: other questions may in the long run, be more important, but none are more urgent now. In broad terms, I am referring to the employment of the poor and disenfranchised: Rochester has telescoped it for now into the dispute between FIGHT and the Eastman Kodak Company.

I do this for several reasons. Bishop Sheen has committed our diocese publicly this week to the service of the poor in a way that will require frankly some Catholics to alter their emotional lives. How well prepared are Catholics to recognize and move beyond certain entrenched attitudes? Do we have only the stale, old answers to the old questions? Recent cases of defections of support among some Protestants for their Council of Churches raises, in my view, some delicate questions that our Church must confront as well. To what extent is a Church—or school, or any social institution—supposed to reflect the values of its membership, and to what degree should it attempt to move beyond those outlooks—to form better ones?

Prejudice, wherever it occurs, springs first from ignorance and misunderstanding, and ends in fear and hatred and animosity, with no room en route for the kind of love and service that surely, Christianity is all about.

Problems have many sides, always. May I isolate three illustrations from the many comments the local papers have been printing?

I. "The angry statements and demands of FIGHT seem unreasonable and unjust."

Quite true. Negro leaders do not generally talk temperately, reasonably, or with proper qualifications and control. In other words, they don't sound at all like comfortable middle-class whites. Beneath the hostile rhetoric, they are operating after all from a quite different base. I wonder what it must feel like to know that one's people, making up 10 per cent of America's population, still furnish over 40 per cent of the fighting men in Viet Nam since many of their white counterparts are in colleges and graduate schools instead? What must they think when Washington requires certain economies in domestic spending, and they see the anti-poverty funds cut back before anything else?

If only the employment problem could be solved simply with money.

Leading In Film

Chicago — If a film should ever be made on the Negroes' struggle for racial justice, the starring role will undoubtedly go to Sidney Poitier—who will be playing himself.

So suggests a film scholar who has just completed an extensive study on Poitier's films and their influence on inter-racial understanding.

"Through his activity as an actor, he is one of the very few people who have contributed to the Negro's full participation in society," Dr. Andrew Ruszkowski, a professor from the Catholic University of Peru, who was awarded a Fulbright grant to conduct his study. "To the Negro, he has given more confidence, more dignity, more respect. And to many white people, he has been a revelation of the qualities that Negro people have."

Dr. Ruszkowski, 65, is a professor of history, economic thought and natural laws at the university, located in Lima, and is also a vice president of the International Catholic Film Office. Prior to going to Latin America, where he has helped set up 10 national Catholic film offices, he was involved with films in Poland, where he was a film critic for a Warsaw daily and one of the founders of the Polish Film Critics Association.

In his study of Poitier's films, which he has been conducting in cooperation with the Department of Sociology at Loyola University in Chicago, Dr. Ruszkowski has seen all of the 28 pictures that Poitier has made—from "No Way Out" in 1950 to the yet-to-be-released "To Sir, With Love."

Among the others have been

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