

Homily
22nd Sunday OT - A
Rev. Peter G. Jankowski
August 29-30, 2020

Jer 20: 7-9
Ps 63: 2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9
Rm 12: 1-2
Mt 16: 21-27

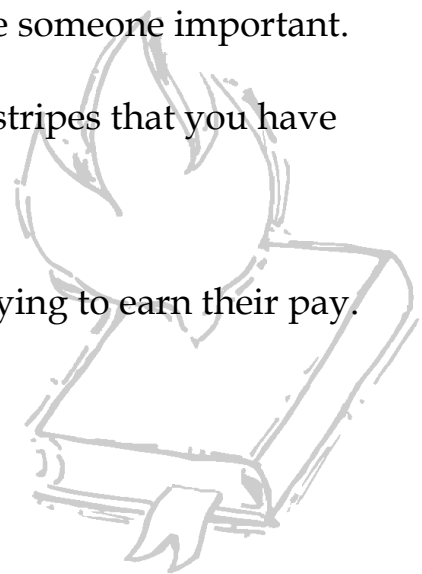
The entire gospel message can be summarized by one phrase today:

The Arch Deluxe.

A few years ago, the McDonalds' Corporation decided to take a different direction with their business. The company was making a great deal of money, but like any prosperous company, they knew they had to stay one step ahead of the competition. So, the McDonalds' Corporation hired a whole new set of executives with great salaries and benefits.

Now imagine that you are one of those executives. You get this great salary and benefits and you realize that you have acquired a great deal of responsibility. People look up to you. You are someone important. And with all that respect, you want to earn the stripes that you have been given.

So, you have these McDonalds' executives trying to earn their pay.



The create a vision that would startle the nation, something they believed would make such a huge profit that their high salaries would be justified. And with great expectations, these new executives at the McDonalds' Corporation came up with their new vision called... the Arch deluxe.

The burger went on the market with high hopes. It was well advertised and well thought-out. And as the months went on, the dreams and visions presented by these young executives came to its conclusion... *the Arch deluxe was a bust!*

No, no one bought the Arch deluxe. The idea bombed so badly that many of those newly hired executives were fired on the spot. The execs did not calculate how badly the burger would sell, and because of their mistake, they lost their jobs in the process.

And as we know, when you are an executive, the bigger the mistake, the bigger the fall. People are not usually too charitable with you when you make those kinds of errors. People usually do not forgive. And when you lose your company's trust, you often lose your hope and your

job.

I went online and found so many examples of good people who made great failures and/or lived in horrible situations. I came to find out about the story of Oprah Winfrey (named after the character “Orpah” in the book of Ruth but, since no one could say the word correctly, she changed her name). I guess Oprah was brought up in a meager living situation, failed initially as a talk show host, moved to Chicago to kick-start her career and became one of the most popular and richest television personalities in the country.

I read about the story of Bill Gates, the co-founder of Microsoft. According to the Internet, Gates initially ran a company called “Traf-O-Data” which was established to create reports for roadway engineers from raw traffic data.” No one in Seattle bought into the company and the company went belly-up. Gates tried a second time with his software company, “Microsoft,” and the rest was history.

Colonel Harlan Sanders was known, most famously, for bringing us Kentucky Fried Chicken. According to the internet, Colonel Sanders

pitched his revolutionary idea for cooking poultry to business after business, being rejected along the way. Finally, using his \$105 social security check at the age of 62, Colonel Sanders was able to find an investor to market his product and by age 75, he sold his restaurant business to a tidy sum of \$2 million.

I guess in 1899, Henry Ford established “The Detroit Automobile Company,” which ended going belly-up in his first try. His second attempt at business was later sold to an investor who turned the idea into the Cadillac automobile empire. His third attempt at success was named “The Ford Motor Company” in the 1920s. His “Model-T” Ford, built from a new concept called an “assembly line,” took off like a rocket and Ford became rich in the process.

1. “We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face... we must do that which we think we cannot.” - Eleanor Roosevelt
“Ganamos fuerza y valor, y confianza por cada experiencia en la que realmente nos detenemos a mirar miedo en la cara ... tenemos que hacer lo que creemos que no se puede.” - Eleanor Roosevelt
2. “I failed my way to success.” - Thomas Edison (who failed in inventing the light bulb over 9,000 times before finding a way to success)

“Fallé mi camino hacia el éxito.” - Thomas Edison

There are so many examples in our secular world of those who have failed with their human and business enterprises. There also are so many success stories of those who were able (to quote Nat King Cole) to pick themselves up, dust themselves off and start all over again.

In last week’s gospel, St. Peter received the greatest gift a person could ever receive from God. Peter was given the daunting task of becoming our role model, a person in whom we would put our trust so that we could encounter a relationship with God. Of course, as the just-appointed leader of the apostles, Peter wanted to make a good impression on the Lord but failed miserably in his first attempt as a leader. Immediately after receiving those metaphorical “keys to heaven,” St. Peter immediately after patronizes the Lord after the Lord taught the disciples about the concept of sacrifice. In his words, Peter “remonstrates” Jesus. “God forbid anything happen to you, master,” he tells the Lord. Then the Lord remonstrated Peter back and, like many executives and leaders who have fallen over bad decisions and endured

cruel lessons in humility, St. Peter was rebuked by the Lord and was turned back.

There is a great lesson that is presented us today in our Sunday gospel reading. Even though St. Peter made a terribly mistake, Jesus does not reject him; Peter is not cast out because of his mistake (and the ones that were to follow in this story of faith). As we know in scripture, St. Peter learned from his mistakes and became a better person because of it. We all do. Whether we are leaders or followers, we find out more about ourselves by overcoming our problems in life more than the glories we share.

If we learn anything from our readings this weekend, we learn about the gifts of leadership. Those gifts do not include power or prestige or conceit or pride. The gifts of leadership that will lead us to heaven include kindness, meekness, humility, and patience, words written to us by St. Paul (Col 3: 12-17). Leadership requires listening and caring. If we want to be good leaders, we must learn to take care of others rather than desiring to rule over others. Most of all, leadership requires us to learn

about the God who created us all, so that we can put our lives, jobs, and ministries into their proper perspective.

Yes, the story that we hear today is one of sacrifice and Jesus' ultimate sacrifice on the cross as a blueprint as to how we should live our lives. The gospel today is also a lesson about failure and learning to recover from the bad and sinful ways we live our lives, as well as the mistakes and falls we make in our journey on earth. Let us learn the lessons from our mistakes. Let us learn how to forgive those who make mistakes in our lives. Let us grow into better people so that in the end, in the kingdom of heaven, we may all share the glory of the one who leads us into this love, our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us bring these gifts around the altar, share them with each other, and offer them to the people that we meet.

The following examples come from the following website:
<https://www.wanderlustworker.com/12-famous-people-who-failed-before-succeeding/>



#3 – OPRAH WINFREY

PHOTO CREDIT: HOMEBUNCH.COM

Oprah had a rocky start in life. As the daughter of a teenaged low-income mother, her start was anything but glamorous. In her early years, Oprah recounts that not only were her living conditions rough, but she was always sexually abused, starting at the age of 9, by her cousin, uncle, and a family friend. At the age of 14 Oprah got pregnant, but her son died shortly after birth.

However, at the age of 14, Oprah was sent to live with her father, Vernon, in Tennessee. He helped her focus on her schooling, and she was subsequently accepted on a full scholarship to Tennessee State University, majoring in communications. In high school, and in her first two years of college, Winfrey interned at a local radio station, helping to develop a foundation for a career in media.

But, even after Oprah was hired on to a local television station for the news, things didn't go so easily. She was fired by the producer because she "unfit for television," later taking a position with another station in Baltimore. Eventually, she hosted a local talk show named, *People are Talking*.

Later, in 1983, Winfrey re-located to Chicago, to host a station's low-rated talk show called *AM Chicago*. Within a few months, the show went from last in the ratings, to higher than *Donahue*, which was the number

one show at the time. This led to the show being renamed *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, which was syndicated across the country.



#7 – BILL GATES

PHOTO CREDIT: WIKIPEDIA

Before Microsoft was born, Bill Gates suffered failure in business. Known today to be one of the wealthiest men in the world, Bill Gates's upper middle-class family is a stark contrast from some of the other successful failures out there that didn't have well-off parents.

However, Bill Gates didn't rely on his family. His business acumen was second to none. But his first business was indeed a failure. Traf-O-Data was a partnership between Gates, Paul Gilbert, and Paul Allen. The goal of the business was to create reports for roadway engineers from raw traffic data.

The company did achieve a little bit of success by processing the raw traffic data to generate some income. But the machine that they had built to process the data flopped when they tried to present it to a Seattle County traffic employee. Yet, this business helped to set Gates and his partner Paul Allen up for major success with Microsoft.

Although Gates failed at his first business, it didn't discourage him from trying again. He didn't want to give up because the sheer notion of business intrigued him. He was cleverly able to put together a company that revolutionized the personal computing marketplace. And we all know just how successful that was for him.



#8 - HENRY FORD

PHOTO CREDIT: WIKIPEDIA

Many people know Henry Ford for the Ford Motor Company, one of the most successful automotive companies of all time. However, what they don't know is that Ford failed two times before that abruptly resulted in bankruptcies, prior to successfully launching the present incarnation of his company.

Ford is no stranger to failure, but he also didn't give up. Yet, when we think about Ford, we don't picture the failures because all it took was just succeeding one time. However, in 1899, at the age of 36 years old, Ford formed his first company, the Detroit Automobile Company with backing from the famed lumber baron, William H. Murphy. That company went bankrupt.

His second attempt was in 1901, when he formed the Henry Ford Company, which he ended up leaving with the rights to his name. That company was later renamed to the Cadillac Automobile Company. However, it was Ford's third try, with the Ford Motor Company, that hit the proverbial nail on the head.

After that, we all know the story. Ford revolutionized the automobile industry, pioneering not only the Model T and the assembly line, but also the concept and notion of an automobile in every home. Driving became a "thing," and subsequently, Ford's Model T went on to sell over 17 million units.



#9 – COLONEL SANDERS

PHOTO CREDIT: KENTUCKY.COM

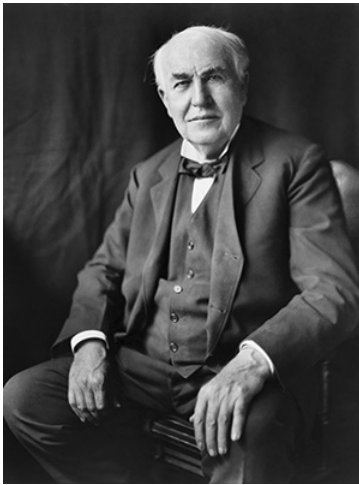
People know him because of his iconic white suit and bow tie. Colonel Sanders was the founder of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC). Yet, the zany Sanders got off to a rocky start in life. In fact, it wasn't until the age of 62 that he set out with a \$105 social security check in hand to pitch his chicken recipe to restaurants. 1,009 folks told him he was crazy, but he didn't give up.

Sanders worked many jobs including fireman, tire salesman, insurance salesman, and of course, a cook. He brewed up his secret chicken recipe between 1939-1940 when he figured out how to pressure fry the chicken in a faster and more consistent product all the time. He was at the age of 50 when that happened.

However, it wasn't until 1952 that he hit the road and began trying to sell his franchise-model chicken restaurant. The first restaurant that he landed was based out of Salt Lake City, Utah, which became the first Kentucky Fried Chicken. The restaurant tripled its sales within a year where 75% of that revenue was from the colonel's chicken.

The company grew and expanded faster than he could have ever imagined. In 1964, at the age of 74 years old, Sanders sold the company for \$2 million dollars to a group of investors led by Jack C. Massey and John Y. Brown Jr. He retained the rights to the Canadian franchises and stayed on as a salaried goodwill ambassador to the company.

However, this just goes to show you that it doesn't matter how old you are or just how much money you have to your name in order to accomplish something great.



#10 – THOMAS EDISON

PHOTO CREDIT: WIKIPEDIA

We've all heard the name before. This famous American is attributed with failing over 10,000 times to invent a commercially viable electric lightbulb, but he didn't give up. When asked by a newspaper reporter if he felt like a failure and if he should give up, after having gone through over 9,000 failed attempts, Edison simply stated "Why would I feel like a failure? And why would I ever give up? I now know definitely over 9,000 ways an electric lightbulb will not work. Success is almost in my grasp."

This is also the same person whose teachers said he was "too stupid to learn anything," and fired from his first two employment positions for not being productive enough. However, Edison, through his failures, is also the greatest innovator of all time with 1,093 US patents to his name, along with several others in the UK, and Canada. This is someone who refused to ever give up no matter what.

It's said that in his early days, he attributed his success to his mother, who pulled him out of school and began to teach him herself. It's because of his mother, and how wholeheartedly she believed in him, that he didn't want to disappoint her. His early fascination for chemical experiments and mechanical engineering paved the way for a future that was incredible bright. His company, GE, is still one of the largest publicly-traded firms in the world, continually innovating across virtually every spectrum.