



Boston Catholic Journal



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Vatican II:



The Model of the Failed Corporation

Imagine a corporation that is very large; indeed, has many thousands of managers and employees, and what is more, more than a billion customers.

The corporation has prospered for 2000 years with the business model it had developed and which had been rigorously maintained by a succession of over 200 presidents and many more board members. The customers have been satisfied and in no way found the business wanting in the way of customer service and business policy.

A new president is elected — and without any compelling warrant or reason decides to change the business model dramatically. The managers and the employees are told — despite any evidence — that the business is wanting and could prosper more, even though it is at the apex of any competing businesses by several magnitudes of order. **Business had been good, the customers happy, and the employees as well**, but he and a handful of likeminded board members wished to change not only the model, but the erstwhile admired architecture of its thousands of stores throughout the world, as well as dramatically simplifying the interiors to more accord with its less successful competitors — and what is more, totally changed the business language itself — so that these formerly unifying features were to be discarded in favor of disunity. Once again, it must be emphasized, there was no compelling reason to make such drastic changes to a remarkably successful corporation.

The model is changed according these new principles that differ greatly from the former.

Decline Hailed as Growth

Within a few years, this once monolithic business, viewed as a paradigm of success in its area of competence, then loses tens of thousands of employees and managers and — most importantly — the customer base, once in the area of 75% repeat business became 40%, and in a few more years less than 25%.

Remarkably, the new president — and his successors — **hail the change as a success, despite metrics in every area that show it in decline** — almost in receivership! The stores close by the thousands, or are consolidated in an effort to stop the hemorrhaging of customers.

Then, in the middle of this disastrous downward spiral, the corporation is hit, in successive years, with over \$3 Billion dollars of loss in the way of lawsuits due to negligent hiring practices involving employees' misconduct of the most vile sort

and the incessant litigation that followed. To pay for their negligence — or rather, to pay the lawyers and the victims for the negligence of the managers — the corporation must sell off large portions of its portfolio and close many, many of its stores. The customers are fewer and fewer, and what is more, there are **no invested employees to be had** as a result of the scandal. **The schools of management must, of course, close also**, for there are no more candidates for the positions which themselves are fewer and fewer.

Despite all this, the Chairman (in the case of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis) and the Board (bishops and cardinals) are *determined more than ever* — *not* to return to the successful and prosperous method of the last 2000 years — but to *continue* in its *new* business model which is crumbling daily with still further departures from the past, and is itself becoming increasingly arthritic — together with its remaining customers.

What do you see in all this? What is your assessment of its management and its future as a viable business? The question, of course, is rhetorical, except for a doctrinaire few who maintain that — despite all appearances and metrics — it is actually *prospering* in its manifest decline.

This is a vignette of the state of the “modern” Catholic Church subsequent to Vatican II. It is the state of the Church today. And many increasingly wonder if it is the same Church at all — given the changes that followed — and still follow — that ill-fated Council that effectively defected from the Faith and went the way of the world.

Their parents and grandparents tell them of something which once was unspeakably beautiful — and manifestly holy. They pray it will be again.

So do we.

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