

REFLECTION**"it didn't work, did it?"****by Guillermo de Carndonagh**

The summer months have seen the emergence of a large number of books and television specials about the "Great Captains" of American history. The generals of the Second World War and the War Between the States have gotten the greatest coverage. When we read about these men and the conflicts in which they engaged we are struck by the fact that those that were successful, were men with a concrete mode of action. They had ideals, and measurable goals that were clearly supportive of their ideals. Goals were achieved by following broad strategies and the strategies were implemented by a wide range of tactics.

The effectiveness of this sort of integrated thinking is not something confined to the profession of arms, rather it is the only way that great causes and projects move forward. It should be an important component of the decision making process of our Traditionalist organizations.

Our Ideal is that people should come to know Christ and submit themselves to his authentic teaching. Like most ideals we cannot know for sure when it has been achieved. Only when a person dies and appears before the awesome judgment seat of Christ is the authenticity of his submission fully and finally evaluated. We can, though, list measurable goals the achievement of which either alone or in concert can reasonably be inferred as representing movement towards the ideal. Increased numbers of Traditional Mass attendees coupled with increased reception of the sacrament of penance would seem a reasonable, and importantly a measurable goal.

Broad strategies aimed at increasing the size of the community; might be advertising campaigns to reach the general public or the sponsoring of events of a cultural nature. Strategies would also include activities that build the faith of members of the community such as adult education programs, prayer groups, identification of apostolates that practice the corporal works of mercy. I fear to mention the next, because I may confirm the timid in their inaction, but a practical list of strategies will also include conflicts you avoid because they consume resources without moving the community towards its goals and which in fact may impair the communities attainment of those goals. There are situations where it is a better strategy to eschew the direct attack and instead devote the husbanded resources to building up a community where the truth is taught. Like the documents of the Council of Trent it is possible to teach the truth without mentioning the heretic.

Tactics are the actions that implement the strategy. The details of a billboard ad campaign or the timing and content of public service announcements about your activities. Tactics are dictated by local conditions and resources. Tactics are only effective when they implement a strategy that in turn moves the community closer to a goal. Tactics and strategies must be malleable and modified as conditions change but care must be taken to not let either take on a life of its own un-referenced to the communities goals.

In the Fall 1997 issue of Latin Mass magazine a deacon reports the following encounter with a high school student: -- He came to me with it: "Sir," he asked, "what exactly was the aim of Vatican II?" "Aggiornamento- bring the Church up to date," I answered, writing this on a piece of paper for him. "Not in the sense that the Church wanted to make itself like the modern world," I continued to write, "rather, the Church wanted to find ways of better preaching the Go spel in the modern world." I was pleased with this distinction, and as Joseph studied the piece of paper I reflected that John XXIII and Paul VI would be happy with it also. My satisfaction was interrupted by Joseph's considered evaluation: "Sir," he said pensively, "it didn't work, did it?"

It would be tragic indeed if thirty years from now a bright young man were to ask, "what exactly were the Tridentines?," and upon being told, he opined, "it didn't work, did it?". Tragic indeed, if it did not work because the strategies used were not referenced to practical measurable goals or if the tactics engaged in were not supportive of appropriate strategies. In closing an idea part goal part slogan; "Every Traditional Mass site a parish, every Traditional parish a mother of parishes."