

"WHEN THE POWER DIPS"

INTRODUCTION It's strange...how a seed for a sermon gets planted. The seed for this one was planted Wednesday night, around 11:15 pm, by Warner Wolf who was giving us the Channel Two Sports Round Up for the day.

In his rather exuberant way he reported that the lights had gone out at Shea Stadium earlier that evening in the middle of a game between the Mets and the Pirates leaving everyone in darkness. There was a fifteen minute wait for an electrician. The brief blackout was soon corrected and play resumed. Con Edison in summing up the problem suggested the trouble was caused by "a power dip". The blackout was due to a "power dip".

We're use to such things happening in our city - blackouts and power failures and the problems they cause. But this was the first time I heard it explained as "a power dip". Somehow it sounds less ominous than "power failure" or "black out". Anyway...my mind began to move in different directions and I found myself thinking about the "power dip" that can occur in a person's life.

DEVELOPMENT If I were to suggest a text around which to build this brief message, I would direct you to those words of John read earlier in the service. In the first chapter of his book, John writes:

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men...the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it."

Those are good words to have in mind when the power dips in your life, and it does. They are times when we find ourselves cut off from the source of all power - all life and love - and the power dips and life sags. We become careless in keeping ourselves "hooked-up" to the source of power. Our lives become over-crowded, the circuits become over-loaded and things break down. The power dips and we're in trouble.

Several Summers ago, up in Saratoga at the Performing Arts Center, the gifted pianist, Rudolph Serkin, was playing Beethoven's Emperor Concerto with the Philadelphia Orchestra for a capacity crowd that spilled out onto the green lawn around the Center.

Suddenly, well along in the First Movement, a "power dip" occurred and the stage lights went out. In the inky blackness the orchestra could see neither the music nor the conductor and the keyboard of the Steinway was in total darkness. The audience anticipated an interruption, but the artist continued to play, never missing a beat of the score, never creating a discord, as though nothing had happened. They say it went on for about two minutes which probably seemed like an eternity, but finally the lights came back on and a ripple of applause ran through the audience. It was a magnificent performance of musicianship which left most of the people in that audience tingling. And herein, rests a thought or two for us to carry along with us for that time in life when the power dips.

KEEP THE MUSIC GOING First-off, it suggests the importance of keeping the music going when the power dips. Surely this is the role of the Christian...of people like ourselves - to keep the music going even when it's tough to see very far ahead...admittedly the music is hard and in front of you...when you feel enveloped in darkness...

MELANIE CURTIS

BEFORE

"The Scripture Reading for today is taken from the Gospel According to St. John. Chaoter 1. Verses 1 - 12.

It is found on page 922 in the Bible that is in the pews."

After announcing the page number...pause for about 10 to 15 seconds...allowing people time to locate the scripture in the Bible. People do like to follow along with the reader.

Thanks...

AFTER

"Thus ended the reading taken from the Holy Scripture. May God add His blessing to the reading of His Word and to our understanding of it.

Thanks be to God! Amen!

REMEMBER TO:

1. Go slowly...don't rush it...remember it's The Word of God...don't read it casually, and
2. Keep your voice up...smile...and remember that Ada Kinney has to hear you 'way in the back of the Church.

And perhaps somewhere in your life you can put these closing words taken from a poster on a wall in a room in New York Hospital, to be put in that place where you keep the things most important...to be taken out and looked at at other times.

"I believe in the sun - even when it is not shining.
I believe in Love, even when I am alone.
I believe in God, even when He is silent."

Good thoughts to have with us to hold on "When the Power Dips".

PRAYER Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee more faithfully; to give
and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds;
to toil and not to seek for rest; to labor and not to ask for
any reward, save that of knowing that we do thy will.

As we try to find our way through the darkened and difficult tunnels of everyday life, open our eyes that we may see that light which the darkness cannot put out and which, if we will let it, will shine in us and through us to others.

In the spirit of Christ, we pray.

the demands placed upon us are high and involve sacrifice - for the great Composer of life has provided us with a magnificent score to follow. And His music is more important than ever when the power dips.

IN ORDER TO KEEP IT GOING Then, too, the skill to keep the strains of faith and of hope sounding does not come by accident. For one thing, we have to know the score. And this is something that comes only by faithful practice, study, discipline and rehearsal.

Yes, honest rehearsal supports a musician when the power dips and some faithful cultivation of "holy habits" will support a Christian when the power dips and the spirt flags.

Holy habits of private prayer, weekly worship and some form of service to others are helpful in generating a faith that sees us through those power dips. Think about this in these moments before you receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Is your inner life being properly cultivated and nourished so that when the time of testing comes you will have what it takes to keep on playing the piece life has asked you to play?

Our job as followers of Christ - whether we're Protestants, Catholics, or Eastern Orothodox (we're all Christians) is to keep the music going when the power dips and in order to do this we have to know the score, the music, the melodies of Christ's tune. And this involves worship, study and giving.

LIGHTS COME BACK ON Then, we also need to keep in mind that the lights go back on, that the power flows again. They came back on at Shea Stadium. They came back on up in Saratoga that Summer evening. It's only temporary. You see, we believe in a universe where the darkness has been overcome. That's the message of Easter. ^X There's one ringing truth that the Christian attests to and that is that he does not operate in the darkness, that there is nothing to fear when the power dips. Hear again that wonderful word of John's:

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it."

The lights come back on and help comes. Sometimes it comes from people and places you least expect it. That's been my experience. Several weeks ago my wife and I were walking along Fifth Avenue on a Sunday afternoon and we spotted Vladimir Horowitz. It was fun to see him strolling down Fifth Avenue and we both remembered an incident involving Mr. Horowitz that occurred in Carnegie Hall back in the mid-sixties. It was in November of 1965 (I think), when NYC experienced its first major power failure. Mr. Horowitz had just started to play Chopin's "Polonaise" before 200 or more people at Carnegie Hall. Although the hall was pitch black, Mr. Horowitz (like Mr. Serkin) went right on playing - not missing a note.

In such moments, help comes - sometimes from people and places you least expect it. Can you imagine how Mr. Horowitz must have felt when a stage hand rushed out on to the stage with a flash light and focussed it on the keyboard?

When the power dips, help comes...and we go on with our living! Remember that. It comes from places, from people you least expect it...through whom God is working.

Girl, 14, Conquers Tanglewood With 3 Violins



Walter Scott

Mi Dori holding her third violin of the evening as she was applauded by Leonard Bernstein after performance with the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood.

By JOHN ROCKWELL

Special to The New York Times

LENOX, Mass., July 27 — Prodigious talent for a performing musician has three components: technical skill, artistic mastery and, rarest of all, that strange combination of pluck and luck that allows the artist to triumph in sudden crises.

Mi Dori, a diminutive 14-year-old Japanese violinist who studies at the Juilliard School in New York, pulled off just that triple play Saturday at Tanglewood, astounding the audience and the Boston Symphony itself with her aplomb in a situation that might have daunted the canniest veteran.

Technically Near-Perfect

All had gone normally through the first four movements of Leonard Bernstein's Serenade, assuming you count as "normal" a technically near-perfect performance on a muggy night of a difficult piece played from memory (Mr. Bernstein, who was conducting, used a score) with winning artistic insight by a 14-year-old.

But then, in the heat of the long and complex fifth and final movement, Miss Dori broke her E string. She quickly turned to Malcolm Lowe, the concertmaster, who looked nonplussed but finally handed over his Stradivarius. There was a moment's pause while Miss Dori fitted her chin rest onto the new violin. But then she proceeded absolutely unfazed.

Then it happened again — another snapped E string. By this time Mr. Lowe was playing the Guadagnini of the acting associate concertmaster, Max Hobart, and Mr. Hobart had returned Miss Dori's violin and was playing it, "faking" his way around the missing E string.

Miss Dori took Mr. Hobart's Guadagnini from Mr. Lowe, thinking at first it was her own violin, restrung. Realizing that it wasn't, and unwilling once again to interrupt the music, she played on, perfectly. When there was a brief pause in her part, she snapped on her chin rest, and finished the piece on Mr. Hobart's violin.

When it was over, audience, orchestra and conductor-composer joined in giving her a cheering, stomping, whistling ovation. Mr. Bernstein is a hugger and a kisser, but this time everybody hugged and kissed Miss Dori, starting

INSIDE

Safeway Deal Is Signed

Safeway agreed to be acquired for \$4.25 billion by a group of investors headed by Kohlberg, Kravis, Roberts and Safeway management. Page D1.

South African Rebels Killed

South African security forces said they had killed two black rebels, one of whom was described as the country's leading terrorist. Page A2.

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