

Robert F. Wagner Documents Collection

Speeches Series

Box # 060006W

Folder #13

TEXT OF SPEECH--ANNIVERSARY
DINNER OF RT. REV JAMES PERNETTE
DEWOLFE

October 17, 1962

File Name - 06.016.0000.060006W.13.PDF

REMARKS BY MAYOR WAGNER

AT

ANNIVERSARY DINNER

OF

RT. REV. JAMES PERNETTE DEWOLFE

WEDNESDAY, 7:00 PM

OCTOBER 17, 1962

GARDEN ROOM

GARDEN CITY HOTEL

PRECEDE FOR DEWOLFE SPEECH

THIS IS A GATHERING UNDER RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL AUSPICES IN TRIBUTE TO A GREAT RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL LEADER.

BEFORE PAYING MY OWN TRIBUTE TO BISHOP DEWOLFE, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO SPEAK OF A SUBJECT WHICH CANNOT BE FAR FROM THE CONCERN OF ANY GATHERING UNDER RELIGIOUS AUSPICES....AND THAT IS OUR YOUTH. HE IS A BOLD MAN WHO THINKS HE KNOWS ALL THE ANSWERS TO THIS PROBLEM OR TO ANY MAJOR PHASE OF IT.

IT IS EASY ENOUGH TO BLAME THE CURRENT MANIFESTATIONS AND PROPORTIONS OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY ON TV, ON MOVIES, ON COMIC

BOOKS, AND ON SOME OF THE MAGAZINES THAT ONE FINDS ON SOME OF THE NEWSSTANDS IN THIS CITY. I DO NOT AGREE WITH SUCH AN EASY ANSWER TO SUCH A HARD PROBLEM.

ALL OF US -- AND I MEAN ALL OF US -- SHARE NOT THE BLAME BUT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR YOUTH. AS FOR THE BLAME, I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD SPEND TOO MUCH TIME ON THAT. IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE SIDEWALKS, "THERE IS NO PERCENTAGE IN THAT." WE HAVE TOO MUCH THAT IS ABSOLUTELY URGENT TO DO TO STAND AROUND POINTING THE FINGER OF BLAME AT ANYBODY -- UNLESS POINTING THE FINGER RESULTS IN THROWING A HELPFUL LIGHT ON PRESENT PROBLEMS. AS FAR AS THE MASS MEDIA ARE CONCERNED, I AGREE, IN GENERAL, WITH MR. NEWTON MINOW, CHAIRMAN OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS

COMMISSION, WHO, WHILE ABSOLVING THE TV INDUSTRY OF PRIME RESPONSIBILITY FOR STIMULATING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY, HAS CHARGED THE INDUSTRY WITH FAILURE TO MEET ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO USE THE MIGHTY, ALL-POWERFUL MEDIUM OF TV CONSTRUCTIVELY FOR THE EDUCATION AND INSPIRATION OF OUR YOUTH. I HASTEN TO SAY AT THIS POINT THAT THE IMPACT OF THE MASS MEDIA SHOULD BE NEITHER DENIED NOR UNDERESTIMATED. IT IS VERY GREAT, INDEED. SAINT AUGUSTINE, IN HIS CONFESSIONS, WROTE THAT HE LEARNED LESS FROM "THOSE WHO TAUGHT ME THAN FROM THOSE WHO TALKED TO ME..NO DOUBT A FREE CURIOSITY HAS MORE FORCE IN OUR LEARNING THINGS.. THAN A FRIGHTFUL ENFORCEMENT."

SAINT AUGUSTINE'S OBSERVATIONS OF FIFTEEN CENTURIES AGO ARE PERTINENT TODAY. THE INFLUENCE OF THE MASS MEDIA AND THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE MASS MEDIA AND THE CONVERSATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS WHICH OUR YOUNGER PEOPLE HAVE WITH ONE ANOTHER ARE OF COMPELLING INFLUENCE. BUT STILL THE CHURCH, SCHOOL AND THE HOME CAN, SHOULD AND DO HAVE MAJOR IMPACT, TOO. ALL THESE INFLUENCES SHOULD BE WORKING TOWARD A COMMON END. AT LEAST, THE SAME SET OF VALUES SHOULD BE REFLECTED IN ALL THESE ELEMENTS.

OUR PROBLEM AS LEADERS IN THOUGHT AND ACTION IS TO AROUSE OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR ENTIRE COUNTRY TO THE PRESENT DANGERS OF

SPIRITUAL DETERIORATION, AND AGAINST THE PRESENT TENDENCY TO ACCEPT A MEAN FORM OF MATERIALISM AS A SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY.

ALL OF US NEED TO DO MUCH, MUCH MORE THAN WE ARE DOING IN THESE DIRECTIONS I'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT. WE CANNOT RELAX OUR EFFORTS FOR A MOMENT, BOTH IN PRESSING THE SEARCH FOR ALL THE FINAL ANSWERS AND, IN THE MEAN-TIME, ACTING ON THE BASIS OF THE BEST ANSWERS WE CAN FIND.

THERE IS NO HIGHER DUTY; THERE IS NO GREATER PROBLEM; THERE IS NO MORE URGENT DEMAND UPON US THAN THIS ONE.

IN CONCERNING OURSELVES WITH THE EDUCATIONAL, SPIRITUAL, AND SOCIAL NEEDS OF OUR YOUTH, WE ARE SERVING BOTH GOD AND MAN. AND NOW ,

- 6 -

LET ME TURN TO THE TOPIC OF THE EVENING,
BISHOP DE WOLFE..

IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE HERE THIS EVENING TO PAY TRIBUTE TO BISHOP DEWOLFE.

HIS AFFINITY FOR THE SEA-WASHED SHORES OF LONG ISLAND REFLECTS THE SECRET OF HIS LAND-LOCKED ORIGINS. THERE WAS NOTHING LIKE IT IN KANSAS CITY WHERE HE WAS BORN AND RAISED, NOR IN OHIO WHERE HE WENT TO COLLEGE AND STUDIED FOR THE MINISTRY.

BUT IN THE TWO DECADES THAT HE HAS BEEN BISHOP IN LONG ISLAND, HE HAS BECOME A BELOVED AND IMPORTANT PART OF THE LONG ISLAND SCENE. HE HAS BEEN A POTENT AND RESTLESS FORCE FOR CIVIC AND SPIRITUAL GOOD, WHETHER HE WAS MINISTERING TO HIS PARISHIONERS ON THE GOLD COAST WATERFRONT OR TO THE SPANISH-SPEAKING FLOCKS IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCHES OF BROOKLYN.

UNDER HIS GUIDANCE, I AM TOLD, A LARGE NUMBER OF YOUNG MEN AND OF OLDER MEN, TOO, HAVE ENTERED THE EPISPOCAL PRIESTHOOD.

THIS IS A CHURCHMAN OF MANY VIRTUES, CHARMS AND ACHIEVEMENTS. HE IS ALSO AN AVID FISHERMAN AND AN EXCELLENT COOK.

HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS HAVE MADE THEMSELVES FELT NOT ONLY IN LONG ISLAND BUT THROUGHOUT NEW YORK. HIS KEEN AND ACTIVE INTEREST IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, AND IN THE ESSENTIAL GOAL OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL AMERICANS HAS SUBSTANTIALLY ADVANCED THOSE CAUSES.

NEW YORK CITY IS INDEED FORTUNATE
TO HAVE SUCH A DISTINGUISHED AND SENSITIVE
CHURCHMAN -- A LEADER IN BOTH PRAYER AND
PROGRESS.

MAY HIS FUTURE YEARS BE AS BLESSED
WITH FRUITFUL ENDEAVOR FOR BOTH HIS CHURCH, HIS
PARISHIONERS, HIS STATE AND HIS COUNTRY,
AS HAVE BEEN THE PAST 20 YEARS WHICH WE
CELEBRATE TONIGHT.

-- 000 --