


*“Don’t ask if the Church can change.  
It can; it has. YOU are that change.”*

*-- Margaret Roylance, VOTF Member since 2002*

Here’s how YOU, through  
Voice of the Faithful,  
helped change the  
Catholic Church in 2010

**VOICE**  
OF THE FAITHFUL



You *joined your voice* with more than 35,000 other Catholics around the world to support survivors of clergy sexual abuse. Together, we:

- ❖ Observed a National Vigil of Sorrow on [Good Friday](#) in Boston, New York, Washington, Chicago, Philadelphia and elsewhere.
- ❖ Supported Catholics in [Ireland](#) who confronted report after report about sex abuse their bishops covered up.
- ❖ Worked to reform U.S. state statutes of limitation that often prevent the prosecution of child molesters. Then we posted a [guide](#) to help others seeking to reform SOL laws.

## You helped survivors find their voices and you helped others to hear them.

- ❖ On Laurel Cable TV Network, VOTF leader Bill Casey hosted interviews with three survivors of clergy sex abuse. We then distributed the [video](#) via emails and our web site.
- ❖ Our [Bridgeport](#) CT affiliate created a dramatic reading, “Bless Me, Father, for I Have Sinned,” from diocesan documents ordered released by the courts—and helped the public better understand the scope of clergy sex abuse.

*“I come from a family ... where 11 of us were abused by priests. May this small donation help others such as my brothers/sisters.*

Your voice called for lay input into the selection of local bishops—a path President Dan Bartley described to the world on [CNN television](#).

- ❖ Steered by our *Voices in Action* Bishops Initiative team, we mailed the proposal for [local bishop selection](#) to the Pope and to every bishop in the United States.
- ❖ We followed up with a pilot project in the Manchester NH diocese, then sent those recommendations to the U.S. papal nuncio and asked him to send them to Rome.
- ❖ We started working with diocesan Catholics in Chicago to prepare recommendations in 2011 for the next bishop to be appointed there.

From the [VOTF Letter](#) to Pope Benedict XVI:

Participation of all members of a local church, clergy and laity, in the selection of their new bishop was regarded as a *sine qua non* by the Fathers of the Church throughout the first millennium and well into the second ... nothing prevents you from restoring to the laity a substantive role in the recommendation processes held in their archdioceses and dioceses prior to your appointment of new bishops.

*“Keep up the good work on the Bishop Selection process. We really need drastic changes in the way bishops are chosen.”*

*– A priest in Illinois, VOTF member since 2003*

VOTF leaders and members in 2010 were seen and heard not just on CNN:

- ❖ National Public Radio in CA and NH
- ❖ Television shows in Boston, New York, and Washington
- ❖ BBC television and radio
- ❖ Radio and television in Ireland
- ❖ Newspapers around the world

In 2010, you also joined your voice with others to call for accountability.

Our Catholic Certification of Accountability asked every bishop seeking donations for the annual diocesan fund to certify that he would:

- ✓ Report all clergy sex abuse allegations immediately to civil authorities
- ✓ Guarantee child-protection training for all church employees
- ✓ Resign if he knowingly transferred a pedophile priest to a new assignment.

The form is titled "VOICE OF THE FAITHFUL" in large purple letters, with a circular emblem containing a stylized lowercase "f" in the center. Below the title is the subtitle "CATHOLIC CERTIFICATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY" in red. The text reads: "By accepting and depositing the enclosed donation, the leader of this diocese...". Below this are three numbered conditions:

- (1) Agrees to report any allegations of clergy sexual abuse immediately to civil authorities;
- (2) Guarantees that all diocesan and parish employees undergo Safe Environment training in conformance with the guidelines developed and approved by the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops in 2004 in an effort to prevent the clergy sexual abuse scandal from happening again;
- (3) Agrees to request the resignation of any archbishop, bishop, or other religious leader, including himself, who knowingly transferred or transfers a pedophile priest.

Below the conditions are three lines for "Signature", "Donor Name", and "Address", each followed by a horizontal line. A large, faint circular emblem with a stylized "f" is overlaid on the bottom right of the form. At the bottom right, it says "© Voice of the Faithful 2010".

Sometimes you had to emphasize the point ...

*“My position is simple. I want assurance that the Diocese of Raleigh will abide by the common sense conditions outlined in the Voice of the Faithful’s Catholic Certification of Accountability. If the Diocese won’t provide that assurance, regardless of reason, my wife and I will not provide financial support.”*

*– From a VOTF member since 2004*

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By accepting and depositing the enclosed donation, the leader of this diocese...

- (1) Agrees to report any allegations of clergy sexual abuse immediately to civil authorities;
- (2) Guarantees that all diocesan and parish employees undergo Safe Environment training in conformance with the guidelines developed and approved by the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops in 2004 in an effort to prevent the clergy sexual abuse scandal from happening again;
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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Donor Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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In 2010, you called on all Catholics, from the pews to the pulpits, to take more responsibility for local church ministries and management.

*Become a 21st Century Disciple* sets out 10 ways every Catholic can help reform our Church.



BECOME A  
21ST CENTURY  
DISCIPLE

*“We think the two new pamphlets are very clear and to the point. They are attractive and will catch people’s attention. Love the images of an open window in the church and a list of 10 things to do.”*

*– Affiliate in Florida*

**VOICE**  
OF THE FAITHFUL

*Working together  
to keep the faith  
and change the Church*



Lay input in 2010 also propelled the planning of the American Catholic Council—a gathering in June 2011 inviting all the Baptized to assess our Church's needs and future.

Hundreds of you participated in listening sessions in your affiliates, in your parishes, in your regions, to comment on the agenda for this historic gathering.



In 2010, through the Emily & Rosemary Fund for Women in the Church, you helped us award \$20,000 to two women who unfairly lost their ministry positions and faced financial hardships.

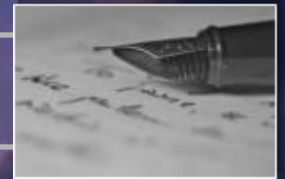
As the hierarchy continues to limit pastoral roles for women in the Church, your support for the Fund in 2011 can help other women who face injustice simply for answering the call to ministry.

With our *Voices in Action* Teams, you also ...



organized prayer vigils

wrote letters to editors



hosted speakers at affiliate meetings

supported survivors at hearings



worked on our women's initiatives

## Our work on a Blueprint for the Future continues:

- ❖ Child Protection/Support Survivors Team hosts a forum on our web pages for the stories of survivors and notes from their families and friends.
- ❖ Local Action Team works on an affiliate tool kit for future action and develops guidelines for pastoral and finance councils.
- ❖ Spiritual & Communal Growth Team continues to post devotional and prayer services, and leads an intercessory prayer group in praying for the success of other Voices in Action projects.

*“May your voice be strengthened as we move into an era of new challenges for us all.”*

*– VOTF member, Valhalla NY*

## A Blueprint for the Future

- ❖ Universal Church Reform Team hosts committees for the bishop selection project, the women's initiative, and priest support.
- ❖ Affiliate Liaison Team works directly with affiliates across the country to help spread each success and new idea from the one to the many.
- ❖ We've also developed a guide for assessing and then implementing proposals at the local level—from discerning the best approach to setting up meetings to contacting media at the appropriate time to finalizing the action and reporting its results.

We concluded 2010 with cash operating reserves equal to about five months normal operating expenses. This marks a significant turnaround from the precarious situation we faced in July 2009.

Your support plus rigorous cost-controls and new efficiencies led to this turnaround—and it ensures that your voices remain strong during this critical period in our Church.




We post our annual [Financial Statements](#) on the web pages, along with links to the forms we file with the IRS. Both are reviewed and then finalized by independent auditors.

And if “auditor speak” sounds confusing, we also post a [simplified review](#) of what it takes to keep the lights on as a national organization.

You know from our letters and e-mails during the year that, in spite of our accomplishments, we have much more work to do.

- ❖ Revelations about sex abuse occur almost daily.
- ❖ Parishes continue to close.
- ❖ Dioceses declare bankruptcy.
- ❖ Our children abandon our Church ...

Yet the hierarchy continues to focus on cosmetics rather than addressing the needs of a 21<sup>st</sup>-century Church beset by self-inflicted wounds.

The image features two hands, one from the left and one from the right, reaching towards each other in a gesture of support or prayer. They are positioned in front of a large, arched window of a church, through which a bright, cloudy sky is visible. The lighting is dramatic, with the hands appearing as dark silhouettes against the bright light from the window. The overall mood is one of hope and spiritual connection.

YOU are the answer to these and  
other problems in our Church.

**VOICE**  
OF THE FAITHFUL

You changed the Church in 2010.

Now change it again in 2011.

We may not yet see the end of our renewal, but we can be confident in our hope:

*“For in hope we were saved. Now hope that sees for itself is not hope. For who hopes for what one sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait with endurance.”*

*Rom. 8:24-25*

VOTF web site

Voices in Action Campaign

Donate to VOTF

In the Vineyard

Focus

*Keep the Faith; Change the Church*

