

## **Workshop Descriptions**

### ***Degrees of Transparency: The Good, the Bad, and the Confusing in Diocesan Financial Accountability***

**Room 15 – Facilitator: Margaret Roylance, VOTF Trustee**

Last year, workshop attendees got a first-hand look at parish financing gone awry, from a case study of financial malfeasance in a Montana parish. This year, we look south, to southwestern Florida where financial statements are posted online but don't tell anywhere near "the whole story."

See how you can use our new web-accessed Diocese Finances database to learn where a diocese stands financially. Compare the reporting and transparency completed by dioceses of similar sizes. Get tips on what to look for in a financial statement. And see how putting it together raises serious questions about real-estate transactions and the use of an "off the books" foundation in the Diocese of Venice, Florida.

It's your money. Not just because YOU donate it to the Church, but because you donate expecting the parish and diocese to responsibly administer those funds for charitable purposes.

### ***Towards Healing the People of God***

**Room 14 – Facilitators: Bill Casey, former VOTF Board Chair; Fr. James Connell, Catholic Whistleblowers**

For the child who is sexually abused by a priest, for the child's family and loved ones, the wounds never fully heal. The scars left behind, on families, on the community, on the entire body of Christ, remain. This workshop explores the potential for Healing Circles to help those who seek healing.

The Healing Circle is not an end in itself, nor will it complete healing in its participants, but it can enable those harmed to continue, or to begin, a healing journey. Voice of the Faithful and its partners began offering this model of Restorative Justice last year for anyone harmed by clergy sexual abuse or by the malfeasance of hierarchical leaders in response to it. We are building on the success of our first Circles, held in in Boston and Alexandria.

This workshop will explore the what, why, and how of a Healing Circle, facilitated by Bill Casey, former VOTF board chair with experience in restorative justice, and Fr. James Connell, a founder of Catholic Whistleblowers. Attendees of the VOTF 2014 Assembly will recall them from our informative panel discussion on the principles of Restorative Justice.

### ***Let's Talk About It: Can Clergy & Laity Speak to Each Other As Equals?***

**Room 16 – Facilitators: Bill Murphy, VOTF Winchester MA Affiliate; Fr. Leo Shea; Retired Assistant U.S. Attorney Mary Beth Carmody**

Lasting Church reform will be possible only when clergy and laity can work together, recognizing each other's gifts and perspectives. But clericalism pervades the Church at all levels. It's not just bishops who insulate themselves from the voices of lay people and, sometimes, their own priests. It's not just the priest or pastor who assumes license to overrule all other input and ignore parishioners' voices. It's also lay people with a "Father says" or "what will Father think" attitude.

All of us, in large ways and small, contribute to problems of clericalism.

How do we balance respect for each other without blocking the openness, and honest "plain speaking," necessary for dialogue and learning to work together?

Let's talk about it!

Let's all learn how to bridge the divide and work together.

### ***Survivor Support: A Discussion with Fr. Thomas Doyle***

**Room 17 – Facilitator: Fr. Thomas Doyle, Canon Lawyer**

Fr. Doyle reprises and broadens his survivor support workshop from the 2014 Assembly. Tom's level of experience with and knowledge of the clergy sexual abuse scandal, including the criminality of its coverup, is unsurpassed. An expert in the canonical and pastoral dimensions of clergy sexual abuse, Tom has worked since 1984 directly with victims, their families, and high-ranking Church officials. Equally unsurpassed is his passion for the rights of survivors.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about where we are today, what hope there is for the future, and what we can do to support survivors.

Fr. Tom Doyle's *Bibliography of Selected Sources Related to Clergy Sexual Abuse, Ecclesiastical Politics, Theology and Church History* is available at [votf.org](http://votf.org).

## ***Your Voice for the Synod on the Family***

### **Ballroom A – Facilitators: Mary Freeman and Pat Gomez, VOTF Trustees**

Although Pope Francis has initiated a move towards more inclusive leadership, we still saw only a miniscule number of lay people speaking briefly at the 2014 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the Family last October. In October 2015, the Ordinary Synod of Bishops on the Family takes place, and we want lay voices, unfiltered, to be heard on family issues.

This workshop will develop voices to “make room for”—in addition to considering the two questions posed during the Assembly’s general session, you will gather in small groups to discuss family life questions in depth. Through our discussions of the intersection of family life and Church teaching, we expect our voices to coalesce around certain experiences and opinions valuable to the life of the Church.

We have waited much too long to be asked about our faith and its impact on our lives and on how we are all individually and collectively “family.” At this workshop, we will gather our voices as a way to foster an inclusive Church responsive to all the People of God.