

**VOTF National Representative Council Resolution on
A Paper on the Basics of Church Finances and Financial Accountability
Version 6.6—March 18, 2007**

Achieving financial transparency and accountability in the Catholic Church requires qualified lay persons to work with pastors and bishops to build financial management systems that provide improved internal financial controls, full disclosure of financial information, and effective oversight. Greater participation by lay persons in the management of Church finances, a necessary structural change, requires increased awareness and knowledge of current Church financial practices.

Therefore, VOTF will design, develop, and disseminate a paper on the basics of Church finances and financial accountability.

The paper will be designed to motivate and assist lay Catholics to participate in the management of Church finances. The paper's primary target audience will be VOTF affiliates and members participating in VOTF's financial accountability campaign. Secondary target audiences are all VOTF members and all American Catholics.

The paper will expand on the general and specific recommendations in the VOTF National Representative Council resolution on "Effective Church Financial Management Systems," dated March 18, 2007. The paper will, to the greatest extent possible, identify and reference existing Church financial references and best practices (e.g., from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management).

The proposed contents of the paper will include but not be limited to:

1. Parish finances (e.g., parish financial councils, disclosure of parish financial information, safeguarding parishioners' contributions)
2. Diocesan finances (e.g., diocesan financial councils, disclosure of diocesan financial information)
3. Other related, key issues (e.g., Catholic Conferences, diocesan bankruptcies, parish closings, parish ownership, parish and diocesan financial management best practices)

The proposed implementation approach for the paper is to:

1. Identify and recruit a lead person to coordinate the paper's design and development
2. Identify and recruit a writing team of volunteers from across VOTF, plus subject matter experts as needed
3. Identify and recruit a review team, including members from the VOTF Board of Directors, Officers, the National Representative Council, and the Financial Accountability Advisors
4. Develop an annotated outline, schedule, and writing assignments
5. Provide for peer reviews for all drafts
6. Provide for formal reviews by the review team

7. Publish the paper on the VOTF Website
8. Publish updates to the paper as experience on VOTF's financial accountability campaign and feedback on the paper is received.

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