

In the Vineyard
August 23, 2007
Volume 6, Issue 16

Please send comments and inquiries to svancetrembath@votf.org (<mailto:svancetrembath@votf.org>).

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Disciples in Action (<http://www.votf.org/blog/covention/2007convention/>)

Convention Highlights: October 19-20 Providence, Rhode Island - Workshops begin Friday Oct. 19 at 4:00 pm.

Why Providence RI?

VOTF Treasurer Mary Freeman reflects on why Providence is a wonderful location for our convention. The Wall Street Journal recently rated it one of the ten best places to visit in the US. Read more (http://www.votf.org/vineyard/August23_2007/mfreeman.html).

Convention Liturgy

The liturgy as the "font and summit of the Christian life." The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy counsels us to prepare for Liturgy by pondering the readings in the days before the Eucharist. It also reminds those who minister that they too should be prayerfully prepared to gather, to hear God's Word and to participant in table fellowship. We are looking for help in preparing for our Convention Liturgy. Read More. (http://www.votf.org/vineyard/August23_2007/litergy.html)

John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY, and Fordham University Research Survey

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People issued by the USCCB in June of 2002 calls for an annual report that will track the actually implementation of the Charter. Researchers at these three institutions have selected to generate this report. Those researchers have asked for VOTF's help. Read more. (http://www.votf.org/vineyard/August23_2007/nrc_resolution.html)

The National Representative Council of VOTF has passed a Resolution on "Effective Church Financial Management Systems." Read more. (http://www.votf.org/vineyard/August23_2007/nrc_resolution.html)

Davenport, IA - A Bishop who shielded a serial predator has his name removed from University library. A courageous survivor looks to a Catholic institution for healing and finds integrity. Read more.

(http://www.votf.org/vineyard/August23_2007/stambrose.html)

Office Note: Looking for meaningful volunteer work? The VOTF National office can help! We have a menu of opportunities. Please call Millie Seaborn at 617-558-5252 or email at mseaborn@votf.org (<mailto:mseaborn@votf.org>).

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VOTF relies solely on the contributions of people like you to support its work.

Convention Highlights

October 19-21 Providence, Rhode Island
Workshops begin Friday Oct. 19 at 4:00 pm.

Why Providence RI? VOTF Treasurer Mary Freeman reflects on why Providence is a wonderful location for our convention. The Wall Street Journal recently rated it one of the ten best places to visit in the US.

Come early – Stay late, or better yet, do both.

Many of you may have to come a distance to join us in Providence for the VOTF Convention. Why not think about extending your time here and calling it a vacation. It will be the peak of the foliage season with all the beauty that it brings.

In the city of Providence there are many attractions to occupy your time. There is the mile of historic homes on the East Side, the state capitol within walking distance of the convention center, The Museum of Art at the RI School of Design, and Rhode Island's own little Italy on Federal Hill. The city is filled with blue ribbon restaurants and if you like fish, you won't be disappointed.

Rhode Island is small and manageable so if you have a car, drive a little north to the first cotton mill in the US built by Samuel Slater. Another option is to go to Newport and visit the mansions of the Gilded Age. On the other side of Narragansett Bay is the Birthplace of Gilbert Stuart, and also Roger William's plantation. Wherever you drive south of Providence, you will enjoy a beautiful coastline.

The State House in Providence is within walking distance of the convention center. Look at the top of the dome. There is a statue of the independent man. Our state motto is HOPE. May you be filled with hope about VOTF as you journey back to your affiliate.

Hope to see you there! Mary Freeman.

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As you prepare for our Convention we would like to ask for three kinds of help. First, we ask that all members ponder the readings for that Sunday and pray for both the Convention itself and for our organization's work.

The readings are:

Exodus 17: 8- 13

2nd Timothy 3:14- 4:2

Luke 18: 1-8

We shall open the Convention with this prayer:

"As long as Moses kept his hands raised up, Israel had the better of the fight, but when he let his hands rest, Amalek had the better of the fight. Moses' hands, however, grew tired; so they put a rock in place for him to sit on. Meanwhile Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Good and Gracious God, may our hands always be raised up by the support of others as we pray and move forward in helping survivors and the Church."

Second, we ask for Eucharistic Ministers. If you are willing to serve in this way please contact Sally Vance-Trembath at [<vancetrs@mac.com>](mailto:vancetrs@mac.com).

Third, we ask for suggestions for the Prayers of the Faithful. Please send your suggestions to Gaile Pohlhaus at gaile.pohlhaus@villanova.edu.

John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY, and Fordham University Research Survey

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People issued by the USCCB in June of 2002 calls for an annual report that will track the actual implementation of the Charter. Researchers at these three institutions have selected to generate this report. Those researchers have asked for VOTF's help.

Here is their description of the help they need:

"We seek information and assistance from members of VOTF for two purposes: first, to help us frame the questions we are asking of those in positions of responsibility, and, second, to better understand the phenomenon of disclosure of victimization. With regard to the first of these objectives, we are interested in gaining an understanding of the structural and leadership factors within the Roman Catholic Church that framed the institutional response to the child sex abuse crisis. We will concentrate on identifying changes in organizational structure and leadership within the American Catholic institutions, the changing relationship of parishioners and lay leaders within established episcopal authority, the shifting normative culture within the Church regarding gender roles and sexuality, and the awareness and response to clergy sex abuse. □ In our second objective, we seek to understand why individuals came forward to report the abuse when they did. The topic is covered in the final section of the survey, which contains demographic questions (e.g. gender, age, race) along with some questions about your political attitudes and levels of community participation. These questions will help the research team understand if some types of people were more likely than others to become involved in activism on behalf of survivors of abuse. This will also help us to understand what role VOTF has played in helping people of various backgrounds to speak out, and any subsequent impact these organizations had on the Church's response."

The National Office encourages all members to participate in this survey.

(Eileen—this is the way the link comes up on my computer.)

<file:///Users/vancetre/Library/Mail%20Downloads/VOTF%208-20.htm>

VOTF National Representative Council Resolution on Effective Church Financial Management Systems

Recent media disclosures and an important university study provide compelling evidence that secrecy, ineffective internal financial controls, inadequate disclosure, and insufficient oversight characterize the financial activities, records, and reports of too many Catholic parishes, dioceses, and Catholic Conferences (the public policy and lobbying arms of the Church).

Establishing effective Church financial management systems will provide the financial transparency and accountability necessary to solve these problems. Moreover, 89 percent of American Catholics want a substantial voice in the financial decisions of their Church (the *National Catholic Reporter*, September 30, 2005).

Therefore, VOTF calls on lay Catholics to work in partnership with pastors and bishops to provide the responsible management of Church financial resources that justice and good stewardship demand.

Background. The Center for the Study of Church Management at Villanova's School of Business reported in January 2007 that 85% of U.S. dioceses responding said that they had uncovered embezzlement schemes over the past five years. More than 10% reported that the amounts stolen exceeded half a million dollars. The study reported that the Catholic Church has some of the most rigorous financial guidelines of any denomination, but found that the guidelines were often ignored in parishes. Some of the cash that goes into the collection plate does not always get deposited into the church's bank account because of high-living clerical life-styles or embezzlement or both.

In January 2007, the Diocese of Bridgeport, Conn., removed the pastor of a Greenwich, Conn., parish over the expenditure of some \$500,000 without proper documentation. That follows the revelations last year that a prominent Darien, Conn., priest, Michael Jude Fay, had walked off with \$1.4 million to bankroll a luxurious lifestyle of New York trips and Florida vacations with a male friend. In Virginia, a priest was accused of stealing \$600,000 to help support a woman who may be his wife, while last September two Palm Beach, Fla., priests were arrested for allegedly stealing \$8.6 million from their parish. In Boston, priests' trust has been shaken by pension fund mismanagement.

On January 18, 2007, the Accounting Practices Committee, a group of lay experts who advise the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), called for tighter internal controls over finances in the nation's more than 19,000 parishes.

Many of the recommendations of the Villanova Center for the Study of Church Management, as documented in *Internal Financial Controls in the U.S. Catholic Church*, (<http://www.villanova.edu/business/assets/documents/excellence/church/catholicchurchfinances.pdf>) and of the bishops' Accounting Practices Committee (<http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2007/07-015.shtml>) have been incorporated in the

general and specific recommendations that follow.

General Recommendations.

1. VOTF strongly advocates the establishment of sound financial management systems, policies, procedures, controls, and practices at all levels of the Catholic Church, including parishes, dioceses, and Catholic Conferences, that provide enhanced financial accounting, full disclosure of financial information, and effective oversight.
2. Policies, procedures, controls, and practices should be documented, maintained current, available on the Internet, and provided to Church members upon request. Documentation should include a detailed description of financial controls, tools, standards and procedures.
3. At all levels, financial statements should be prepared on a consistent basis from year to year, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), published on a timely basis including comprehensive and informative footnote disclosure. Disclosure of financial information should be accurate, detailed and comprehensive.
4. At all levels, policies should be implemented to guard against fraud and embezzlement, protect whistleblowers (e.g., by establishing communication channels for church workers to report suspected irregularities or fraudulent activities while protecting their anonymity), and report all suspected cases of fraud to law enforcement authorities.
5. At all levels, policies and procedures should be designed and implemented to provide effective oversight, with significant participation by knowledgeable lay persons, in the development, monitoring, and improvement of financial management systems.
6. At all levels, high priority should be given to identifying and correcting deficiencies in current financial systems. Specifically, VOTF recommends that initial improvements to parish, diocesan, and Catholic Conference financial systems be completed by December 31, 2008.
7. Catholic conference financial policies should ensure full disclosure of all expenditures for legislative initiatives.

Specific recommendations for parishes, dioceses, and Catholic Conferences:

Parishes. Parish financial management systems should provide for:

1. Effective parish finance councils, as required by canon law. The council should include members with knowledge and experience in parish finances and/or financial management (e.g., financial managers, accountants, or business

- managers and owners). Members of the council should represent a cross section of the parish community and include members that are elected by the parish community.
- 2 Thorough training for parish finance council members relative to their roles and responsibilities.
 - 3 An open budgeting process that solicits input from all members of the parish community.
 - 4 Effective security controls over all revenue and disbursements, especially with respect to cash and cash equivalents. Examples of such controls include church ushers securing money in tamper proof bags with numbered seals; rotating money-counting teams; separation-of-duties standards, such as ensuring that bookkeepers recording the funds aren't the ones counting and depositing them; pre-numbered receipts; and two signatures on checks for large disbursements.
 - 5 A system of internal controls, including those to prevent embezzlement.
 - 6 Preparation of annual audited or compiled financial statements by an independent CPA in conformity with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and made available to the parish community.
 - 7 Full, supplemental disclosures including:
 - a. Monthly or quarterly financial reports including a balance sheet and income statement (receipts and disbursements.)
 - b. Preparation of an annual budget (approved by the parish finance council) that is made available to the parish community.
 - c. Annual report to parishioners from the parish finance council containing:
 - i) the names, brief background, and expertise of parish finance council members; ii) dates when the council met; iii) date(s) when the approved parish financial statements and budget were made available to parishioners during the preceding fiscal year and when they will be made available during the current year.
 - d. Periodically, but at a minimum, every 5 years, a detailed statement itemizing the estimated fair market value of assets owned by the parish.

Dioceses. Diocesan financial management systems should provide for:

1. Diocesan financial councils including members with experience and expertise in financial management (e.g., financial managers, accountants, business managers). VOTF recommends that diocesan financial councils include significant representation by persons elected by parishioners, parish councils, parish finance councils, priests and religious communities.

2. An open budgeting process that solicits input from parish councils, parish finance councils, and other members of the diocese.
3. A system of internal controls, including those to prevent embezzlement.
4. Preparation and issuance of audited financial statements conducted by an independent CPA in conformity with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). VOTF recommends that the CPA firm be changed periodically (e.g., every 3-5 years)
5. Diocesan policies should include a conflicts of interest policy and require selection of the diocesan auditor by a person other than the diocesan chief financial officer.
6. Financial accounting and reporting systems should comply with the existing guidelines in the *Diocesan Financial Issues* document approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. In addition, we recommend the use, as appropriate, of the work products of the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management and VOTF's Structural Change Working Group, and other best practices (e.g., Business Administration - Best Parish Practices published by the Archdiocese of Chicago).
7. Full, supplemental disclosures including:
 - a. A description of the ownership/affiliation structure of all diocesan and parish entities.
 - b. Receipts and disbursements of diocesan appeals and appeals of all diocesan-related entities.
 - c. A description of the pension plan for priests and other Church workers including financial statements, vesting rules, actuarial assumptions and portfolio performance.
 - d. Financial disbursements to other Church entities, including the Vatican.
 - e. A schedule of financial support provided to and by Catholic Conferences for lobbying activities, including with regard to legislation designed to extend, temporarily suspend, or eliminate civil or criminal statutes of limitations on child sexual abuse suits, reporting child abuse, or other legislation designed to protect children from sexual abuse.
 - f. Payments to and contracts with public relations firms and a description of the activities for which these firms were engaged including amounts paid to defeat legislation designed to extend, temporarily suspend, or eliminate civil or criminal statutes of limitations on child sexual abuse suits, reporting child abuse, or other legislation designed to protect children from sexual abuse.
 - g. Costs and detailed information associated with all insurance policies, and any amounts invested in self-insurance programs.

- h. Description of lawsuits and liability claims filed against the diocese, the costs of defending such claims, including fees paid to lawyers, any amounts paid to claimants, and receipts from insurance companies in settlement of claims.
- i. The number, names, and costs associated with each known, admitted, or credibly accused priest and/or other church worker who has been credibly accused of sexual crimes against children and vulnerable adults and who are still receiving financial support from the Catholic Church.
- j. Periodically, but at a minimum every 5 years, a detailed statement itemizing the estimated fair market value of assets owned by the diocese.

Catholic Conferences. Catholic Conference (and other similar Church lobbying organizations) financial management systems should provide for:

1. Full annual disclosure, on a line item by line item basis, of all receipts and sources of receipts for all legislative initiatives. Full annual disclosure, on a line item by line item basis of all expenditures made for legislative initiatives. The disclosure of expenditures should include, but not be limited to, payments made to legal, lobbying and public relations firms as well as the purpose of such expenditures.
2. Full annual disclosure of the amount of financial or other support each state (or inter-state) Catholic conference receives from each diocese.

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Bishop who shielded a serial predator has his name removed from University library. A courageous survivor looks to a Catholic institution for healing and finds integrity. (link to story. I have Barb Ickes permission to copy the story as long as we credit the Quad City Times.)

Last week in the Focus we reported on the actions of the former President of St. Ambrose, Ed Rogalski in facilitating healing in the Church. In the *Focus*, I concentrated on the actions of the Board at St. Ambrose in removing the name of bishop who shielded a predator from its library. I focused on St. Ambrose as a signal example of what Catholic institutions should be. There are other facets to the story. In 2006 Rev. Mark Powell, a graduate of St. Ambrose (class of 1980) wrote this letter to the Board.

"As an alumni of St. Ambrose College and as a survivor of clergy sex abuse when the diocese was under the direction of former Bishop Gerald O'Keefe, I would like to request that the current Board of Directors of St. Ambrose rename the library and remove the former bishop's name. The Father Herman Strub Memorial Library would be a wonderful replacement.

With the news reports of how Bishop O'Keefe covered up and obstructed justice against child predators who were ordained priests, it is immoral for the university community to honor this man any longer. It is a slap in the face of all who suffer.

As his successor, Bishop Franklin said, "Prior bishops are no longer living to explain their decisions," he said. "All I know for certain is that, in fact, we failed to protect children from harm. I am profoundly sorry and I express deep apology to the victims from the entire Catholic community."

I would be willing to accept this apology if the name of the individual responsible for so much suffering is eliminated from St. Ambrose, now and forever.

Rev. Mark J. Powell
St. Ambrose College

Class of 1980
Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis"

Columnist Barb Ickes chronicled the story this way:

<http://www.qctimes.com/articles/2006/09/21/opinion/letters/doc4511add875d25363161091.txt>

Take former bishop's name off Ambrose library

By Rev. Mark J. Powell | Thursday, September 21, 2006

As an alumni of St. Ambrose College and as a survivor of clergy sex abuse when the diocese was under the direction of former Bishop Gerald O'Keefe, I would like to request that the current Board of Directors of St. Ambrose rename the library and remove the former bishop's name. The Father Herman Strub Memorial Library would be a wonderful replacement.

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http://www.qctimes.com/articles/2006/09/21/opinion/columnists/barb_ickes/doc451226a8db681472960451.txt

Hoping to Take Away the Honor

By Barb Ickes | Thursday, September 21, 2006

Mark Powell doesn't want money. All he ever wanted was "to be whole again."
The 46-year-old Chicago native works as a hospital chaplain in the Indianapolis area. Although he once was a seminary student at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, he left the Catholic Church several years ago and now is a Protestant minister.

But he has something more to do in Davenport.

When Powell was a 17-year-old student at St. Ambrose, he said, he was sexually abused by Father Bill Wiebler, a priest at the time at Our Lady of Lourdes in Bettendorf. Wiebler has since been defrocked by the church after numerous allegations of sex abuse.

Powell said he went to Bishop Gerald O'Keefe, head of the Davenport Diocese at the time, to report the abuse.

"I was told to keep things quiet," he said. "I'm aware personally of O'Keefe's involvement in keeping such things quiet."

And now Powell is asking that O'Keefe's name be removed from the library at St. Ambrose.

"The actions of Bishop O'Keefe let down the entire Diocese of Davenport," he said Wednesday. "I don't think that should be honored."

Almost 10 years ago, Bishop William Franklin, current bishop of the Davenport Diocese, dedicated the college's new \$8.5 million library, which was named for the retired O'Keefe. He died in 2000.

It would be two more years before the sex scandal in the Catholic Church would break in Boston. When that happened, Powell did what many Catholics have done. He began to face his past.

In December 2002, he made contact with the Davenport Diocese.

"I told them, 'I don't want to sue you guys,'" he said. "I expect to get counseling.

"I want to be whole again. I didn't want their money."

Almost four years later, Powell said, he can declare the counseling a success. He would find further peace, he believes, in the renaming of the O'Keefe Library.

"I live with it (the abuse) every day," he said. "I will for the rest of my life.

"It's part of my history. The reality is that these abuses occurred systematically and were covered up by the bishops.

"That was the sin - that was the crime. They put predators with children."

While Powell does not accuse O'Keefe directly of abusing children, he said he is certain the bishop was an accomplice. He enabled the priests to continue to go after little boys and young men, even though he was aware of the children's suffering.

He had not yet spoken directly with St. Ambrose officials when college

President Ed Rogalski said that he would welcome a meeting with the alum.

"Mr. Powell is an Ambrosian, a graduate of our university, and I would welcome the opportunity to sit down and talk with him," he said. "Certainly, St. Ambrose and the Davenport Diocese have a shared history and an ongoing association, but the two are separate organizations and operate independently.

"As such, the names of campus buildings are St. Ambrose's responsibility."

Powell was so encouraged Wednesday by Rogalski's response that he almost immediately made a phone call to Davenport. Afterward, he reported in an e-mail:

"I just got off the phone with President Ed Rogalski. He was gracious and compassionate. Our 10-minute conversation ended with the promise that he would take the matter next month to the Board of Directors.

"I truly believe this small action is a big sign to me and other survivors that the Diocese and the University have stood with the victims of clergy sex abuse."

Rogalski confirmed that he intends to take the matter to the board.

Powell said the college president also asked whether any of the sexual abuse occurred on the St. Ambrose campus. Powell answered that it did not.

"St. Ambrose was to me a safe haven," he said. "That's how it should be for young people."

And a library should be a place of hushed silence. But not like this.
Barb Ickes can be contacted at (563) 383-2316 or bickes@qctimes.com.

http://www.qctimes.com/articles/2006/10/10/opinion/columnists/barb_ickes/doc452b3f6530448524261254.txt

Victim's Request is Considered

By Barb Ickes | Tuesday, October 10, 2006

The phone call went to Indianapolis Friday afternoon, right after the meeting. Someone from Davenport was letting the Rev. Mark Powell know that the board of directors at St. Ambrose University agreed to study his idea. A subcommittee is to spend the next several months "examining" whether the O'Keefe Library on the St. Ambrose campus should be renamed.

Powell, an Ambrose alumnus and former seminary student, asked for the name change. He was sexually abused, he said, by several priests during the late 1970s and early 1980s and reported the molestation to then-Bishop Gerald O'Keefe of the Davenport Diocese.

"I was told to keep it quiet," Powell said. "The actions of Bishop O'Keefe let down the entire Diocese of Davenport.

"I don't think that should be honored."

At the time the library was dedicated in O'Keefe's name about 10 years ago, O'Keefe already had given sworn depositions related to sex-abuse cases and lawsuits against the diocese. In those statements, he disclosed his knowledge of the decades of abuse.

At that time in 1991, O'Keefe said he still believed that he had no obligation to report the sexual abuse of children to authorities. He also said that he would not have sent a priest to a psychologist for counseling for pedophilia if he had known the psychologist was required by law to report his crimes.

O'Keefe died in 2000.

Immediately after Powell disclosed to St. Ambrose President Ed Rogalski that he was told by O'Keefe to keep his sexual abuse quiet, Rogalski said he would ask the college board whether the library should be renamed.

"Among the actions the St. Ambrose University Board of Directors took at its Oct. 6 meeting was to consider a request of the board to rename O'Keefe Library," college spokeswoman Jane Kettering said Monday. "The renaming request involves serious issues that merit further discussion and inquiry by the board.

"A board subcommittee will look into this matter more thoroughly and report their findings at the spring meeting. The board looks forward to addressing the matter fully at its March meeting."

Powell immediately was told of the board's decision.

"I think it's a good sign," he said Monday. "The final decision is what will be noteworthy, but this is a good process."

He was told that part of the process of deciding whether to remove O'Keefe's name from the prominent campus building will be considering what new name to give it. Although he said he does not expect to be consulted on the renaming, he said he could name several priests associated with St. Ambrose who would be worthy.

"There's Father Herman Strub, and I also have a lot of respect for Father Edmond Dunn," he said. "Even a joint name would be great."

One of the priests that Powell has accused of molesting him is the defrocked Father Bill Wiebler, who died Sept. 30.

"He died on my 47th birthday," Powell said. "The respect and consideration I've been shown in this through the people at St. Ambrose, which is a place I loved, has been a wonderful, cathartic process for me."

Barb Ickes can be contacted at (563) 383-2316 or bickes@qctimes.com.

<http://www.qctimes.com/articles/2006/10/12/opinion/opinion/doc452d533b7da76398005054.txt>

St. Ambrose Board Responds Compassionately

By Quad-City Times | Thursday, October 12, 2006

St. Ambrose University Board of Trustees didn't flinch from a tough decision. The board responded quickly and admirably to a request from a former seminarian to change the name of the school's library, now named for the late Davenport Bishop Gerald O'Keefe. Mark Powell, now a Protestant chaplain in Indianapolis, told the board he was a victim of sexual abuse by three priests. He said the incidents were reported to O'Keefe, who told Powell to keep quiet. Court depositions confirm that O'Keefe was aware of repeated allegations of sexual abuse involving priests under his supervision.

St. Ambrose board members know the bishop much more deeply and named the library based on those memories of his years of service and abiding faith. Nevertheless, the board immediately accepted Powell's request and promised to actively consider it.

We commend their immediate consideration. It demonstrates an empathy for the abuse victims that is welcome in this time of healing.