

In the Vineyard

December 20, 2007

"It is in the Spirit that we eagerly await the justification we hope for, and only Faith can yield it." Gal. 5:5

VOTF National sends [Christmas greetings](#) to all of our readers with thanks for your engaged and engaging correspondence throughout the year.

In this Issue: A focus on one of the three 2007 VOTF Priest of Integrity Award recipients; Affiliate Highlight is VOTF Long Island NY as they plan to commemorate the Dec. 28 Feast of the Holy Innocents in true VOTF spirit; book review on *If the Man You Love Was Abused: A Couples Guide to Healing*; Fr. George McCauley introduces readers to his book *Eddie's Dream*; St. Louis Archbishop Raymond Burke blocks interfaith service; Dutch Catholics are resolving the "priest shortage" (see SITE-Seeing, Etc.); and more. T

VOTF NATIONAL

See [VOTF National News](#) for introductions to our two new members of the VOTF Board of Trustees.

VOTF [comments](#) on the USCCB National Review Board's five-year report on Church handling of the clergy sex abuse. What follows is a **worthy five-years later comment from Chair of the NRB Judge Michael Merz:**

Chair of the NRB Judge Michael Merz said of the report, "Church efforts for prevention, healing, and vigilance will be demanded for the rest of our days.... The price of this crime is steep both in the pain felt by victims and the shadow cast on the reputation of innocent Catholic priests. Most priests never have abused a child or even someone's trust in them, but they bear shame by association. It's not right, but that's the fact."

And speaking of priests ...

VOTF National Priest Support Working Group continues its coverage of the priests of integrity who were honored at the Providence Convention. Meet Delaware's Fr. Richard Reissmann at [VOTF National Priest Support Working Group](#).

SURVIVOR Community Notes

Believe it or not, you can still order Christmas cards (and support survivors) from the VOTF Winchester MA affiliate. Remember that Christmas enjoys 12 days for the exchange of good wishes! Go to www.votfwinchester.org or contact Bob Morris at rmorrisvotf@aol.com or Marge Bean at margebean@verizon.net.

AFFILIATE Highlight:

The VOTF Long Island NY affiliate is commemorating the Dec. 28 Feast of the Holy Innocents in an action-grounded way. Here is part of the message they distributed recently:

At the 9:00 a.m. Mass, we will be leafleting at the Rockville Centre train station. We will cover the 7:35, 8:02, 8:16, 8:33 and 8:51 a.m. city-bound trains.

The purpose of our handouts will be to provide information about the proposed legislation to extend the statute of limitations for reporting child abuse, which will also provide a one-year “window” for those abused in the past to pursue legal action.

You may have heard that this legislation is anti-Church and/or anti-Catholic. It is neither. However, it is Pro-Child Protection-and it WILL provide justice to holy innocents throughout New York State. Please wear red to honor holy innocents everywhere.

If you would like to join us for Mass only, please do. Your presence at any vigil, even for a short period of time, sends a message of solidarity to the diocese and to your brothers and sisters in Christ. For additional information, go to www.votf-li.org.

DIOCESE/State Watch

Boston MA: The Boston Area VOTF Council noted the Dec. 13 anniversary of Cardinal Bernard Law’s resignation by joining with members of SNAP (Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests) for a vigil. Participants who braved the snowstorm that day read a list of 205 Boston-area priests and members of religious communities who were credibly identified as sex abusers by the organization Bishopaccountability.org. Read the affiliate’s statement [here](#).

Bridgeport CT: The much-publicized and sad story of Darien CT pastor Michael Jude Fay has another chapter – a sentence of 37 months in prison for the theft of over \$1 million from his parish. See http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/05/nyregion/05priest.html?_r=1&n=Top/Reference/Times%20Topics/Subjects/P/Priests&oref=slogin.

Davenport IO: For \$37 million, the Davenport, Iowa, diocese has agreed to settle the claims of more than 150 victims of sexual abuse. The agreement includes a requirement that the bishop apologize personally to any victim who requests a personal apology. For this story, go to <http://www.saukvalley.com/articles/2007/12/04/news/national/297920182687611.txt>.

Also, see VOTF National press release here:
<http://www.votf.org/Press/pressrelease/120407.html>.

St. Louis MO: St. Louis Archbishop Raymond Burke blocks interfaith ecumenism. See the *St. Louis Dispatch* at
<http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/religion/story/F85994DE2D2AF9C2862573AF001896CD?OpenDocument>.

BOOK Review/Alerts:

VOTF's Pat Gomez reviews *If the Man You Love Was Abused*. See [Book Review](#).

Fr. George McCauley has written and published *Eddie's Dream*. Fr. George has written a brief reflection on the book – see Commentary “Hanging in There with Eddie.” To order *Eddie's Dream* or to learn more about it, go to Fr. McCauley's web site at www.somethingmorepublications.org. If you would like to review *Eddie's Dream* for the *Vineyard*, please submit 500-600 words to pthorp.ed@votf.org.

SITE-Seeing, Etc.

In an earlier *Vineyard*, we noted the publication of *Confronting Sex and Power in the Catholic Church: Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus* by Geoffrey Robinson, retired Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney, Australia. We have just learned that The Liturgical Press will be publishing the U.S. edition of that book, which sold out its first printing in Australia within days. While awaiting that publication date, you may be interested in [reading a review](#) published in the National Catholic Reporter, or in an interview with [Bishop Robinson](#) himself.

A *Vineyard* correspondent noted this news report about the Vatican's ruling of credibility in allegations against two Ohio priests. Go to <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/22048837/>.

<p>CORRECTION: The Edwina Gateley retreat is to be held in West Yarmouth, MA (on Cape Cod) not Marstons Mills as reported in the Dec. 6 <i>Vineyard</i>. The Center in Marstons Mills is sponsoring the retreat. Information is available at http://www.peaceoncapecod.org/40696_One_Light_GATELEY.pdf</p>
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Have you seen “Focus”? Our twice-monthly one-page newsletter identifies one indication of progress and one of an ongoing problem in our Church. You can access the current and past issues of “Focus” from the home page of our web site at www.votf.org.

Thomas Healey, treasurer of the **National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management** at its inaugural Best Practices Award urges diocesan transparency http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2007/11/28/silver_lining_for_struggling_dioceses/. Healey's good news: “A new managerial mindset is starting to take hold around the country as parish and diocesan leaders recognize that

excellence in temporal affairs can lead to a church that's better equipped to fulfill its spiritual mission.”

National Catholic Reporter notes a unique **response to the priest shortage** from our fellow Catholics in the Netherlands. See http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2007d/121407/121407x.htm. Dutch Catholics are seeing the future with courage that has concluded the following: “because the Eucharist is the essence of Christian community, that community therefore has a right to it. And if the hierarchy fails to bestow that right from above, local communities can claim it from below.”

A rather long QUOTE for our time but we think it bears repeating. This excerpt is from our first December issue in 2002:

It is hard to believe that a year ago we embraced this season without a VOTF! Today we not only embrace the organization and its continuing ability to maintain new and vibrant dialogue, but we embrace many new friends in far-flung places. Hundreds of you have written over the past month of your unwavering interest in and support for *In the Vineyard* and the endless work of VOTF. It means more than you can know. Your words and voices make a unique carol and we thank you for that sweet sound!

In the 1940s, E. B. White wrote a reflection about the Christmas season, "The Distant Music of the Hounds." In it, he decried the preoccupation with noise and bustle that seemed to be the lot of mankind in those raw post-war years. He had come across one of those little trumpets that hunters used to hear "the distant music of the hounds." He said, "The miracle of Christmas is that, like the distant music of the hounds, it penetrates finally and becomes heard in the heart - over so many years, through so many cheap curtain-raisers."

JoAnne Nowak from our Andover, MA VOTF "heard" something recently in some Advent material distributed at her parish, St. Robert Bellarmine. She wrote, "We read that Advent isn't rooted in nostalgic remembrance of the birth of a baby nor in the longing for the second coming but in the coming of Christ into our daily lives. When we take the tradition and enter it fully, we become Advent, the people in and through whom Christ comes."

COMMENTARY

Fr. George McCauley, S. J. is a former teacher at Fordham University (New York City NY) and editor of SJ New York. He comments on his newly published book Eddie's Dream, available for ordering at www.somethingmorepublications.org.

Hanging in There with Eddie

I wrote this book over a lot of years, amazed at the mob of characters taking shape around me. Some I liked, some I found boring, others intriguing. I spent one entire summer

creating a fictional religious order, inventing a history for it, supplying it with a mission, giving it its own spiritual jargon, and actually picking sites for a fictional college and university it ran. It got kind of scary, to the point that I called up an experienced Irish novelist friend and said, “Bob, this is weird: the Christian Fathers seem somehow more real to me than my own Jesuit order!” “Relax,” Bob said, “it happens all the time.”

Why I wrote this book seldom entered my conscious mind. First, there was the sheer pleasure of writing scenes where you, the reader, could walk in and suddenly you’re in the middle of a scene where everyone looks, feels, and sounds *real* — like they were there *before* you arrived. Second, given the time span I was dealing with, my mind recoiled at the prospect of trying to make sense of it all — or indeed of anything. We’re talking the Great Depression, WWII, Korea, the burbs, the civil rights movement, Sputnik, Elvis, JFK, Vietnam, the Beatles, the Golan Heights, *Humanae Vitae*, MLK, Vatican II, Reaganomics, perestroika, 9/11, dissent within Catholicism, gays, the women’s movement, the changing of religious life and the departures from it, the embattled image of priesthood and the Age of (and aging of) the Laity.

I did my thinking about these things through Eddie — without, I hope, making him me, or me him. We share one common characteristic: We’re both priests and neither of us is stupid. Not “stupid/as in brains,” but “stupid/as in a stupor,” that is, impervious to the dynamics of human projections, whereby people unconsciously draw others into *scripts running in their own heads* that are traceable to their *own* anxieties, yearnings or feelings of resourcelessness, and then assign to *others* roles that don’t belong to them and put pressure on them to behave or react accordingly. My experience of consultation with groups around issues of power, authority and leadership taught me a lot about projections, but perhaps not much more than the average parent, teacher, shop boss or authority figure learns over time. But with priests it’s hairier — because *God* is in the mix.

But no sweat. Neither Eddie nor I are stupid enough (stupid/as in brains) to worry about handling the projections. They go with the territory. In fact, Eddie gets a mind-blowing creative realization one day: “Hell, he thought, if people can load *me* up with their lousy projections, why can’t they do the same to *God*?” That moment sets Eddie off on a marvelously quixotic campaign to change the world — a campaign that’s simultaneously funny, wily, frustrating, smart, sad, yet full of warmth. He takes on not only the predictable arbiters and poobahs of acceptable religious language, but also the people crouched there in the pews who see certain perks to that posture. *Nobody* is perfect.

Eddie tries to peel away every insulting, crazy, sloppy, misleading, demeaning image of God, Jesus and Co. that there is. If there was a benchmark to success, Eddie would probably tell you – it’s when you finally can *really* believe that God is nicer than you are!

Inevitably, his campaign crashes and he walks away from it with dignity. So why did I write this book? I’d have to say that I got to like Eddie and felt I should stick it out with him to the end. That’s what creators do, don’t they?

***VOTF Board of Trustees Chair Bill Casey introduces new Board members
Jayne O'Donnell and Dan Sullivan***

During the summer, two long-standing members of the VOTF Board of Trustees completed their terms--David Castaldi and Maura O'Brien, both from the Boston area. In June and August, respectively, Jayne O'Donnell and Daniel Sullivan joined the Board.

Jayne resides in West Hartford, Connecticut, and was a founding co-facilitator of the Greater West Hartford VOTF in June 2002. Since then, she has been active in regional and national VOTF events in addition to her local activities. Jayne is currently part-time Director of Religious Education, and former part-time Director of Development, at St. Timothy Middle School in West Hartford. Jayne graduated from Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart with a B.A. in Religious Studies, and she earned a J.D. degree from the University of Connecticut.

Dan resides in New Canaan, Connecticut, and is vice-chair and a director of the VOTF affiliate in the Bridgeport diocese. Dan spent over 20 years as a Corporate and Securities Attorney in the financial services industry after serving as an officer with the Army Corps of Engineers. He has also served as General Counsel for a number of firms and has served on several Boards of Directors. Dan has been active with numerous community non-profit organizations. Dan graduated from Georgetown University with A.B. and J.D. degrees.

Both new Trustees bring a wealth of experience and commitment to VOTF to their 3-year terms on the Board. During 2008, the Board of Trustees expects to fill three more positions as terms of service expire. The National Representative Council will elect members to fill two of these positions. Members can access the full list of Trustees from the VOTF website (www.votf.org) by clicking on Who We Are; Officers, Trustees, and Incorporated Documents.

***VOTF National Priest Support Working Group – Fr. Richard Reissmann, VOTF Priest
of Integrity***

The Providence Convention provided the opportunity to honor three Priests of Integrity, each of whom will be highlighted in *In the Vineyard*. Father Richard Reissmann, from Delaware, honored us with his presence and encouraging words at the presentation ceremony.

Carlene Sandella, Director of Worship at Saint John-Holy Angels Parish in Newark, Del., introduced Fr. Reissmann to the audience. She was one of several nominators who know Fr. Reissmann not only as a friend, but as someone who has worked with him for 19 years. She spoke with humor and deep respect for his humility and for his dedication to the victims of clergy sexual abuse.

Father Reissmann is the only priest in his diocese who was willing to support VOTF in his parish, and who is a member himself. His testimony before the Delaware State

Legislature is credited with helping in the unanimous passage of Senate Bill 29, the strongest bill protecting children. The bill eliminated the two-year statute of limitations and provided a two-year “look-back” window.

As Sister Maureen Paul Turlish, SNDdN, writes, “Long a supporter of the rights of the disenfranchised, Reissmann, a priest of 44 years in the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington, Delaware, spoke out early and often against the sexual abuse of children in Delaware and especially when it was perpetrated by his own brother priests. He was the only one to speak out so forcefully and with such depth of integrity behind his voice.”

In his remarks, Fr. Reissmann stated that his decision to testify produced one of the most rewarding moments of his ministry. He affirmed that an absolute docile laity is not good for the Church, and that we, too, are integral actors in speaking out on issues of justice in charity and love. He ended his remarks by saying that he is most grateful for this award, and that he is a better priest for his involvement with VOTF. His greatest prayer is that VOTF not be simply a dot in history and that we will continue to be moved to decisive and bold action--slowly, carefully and with wisdom. For, as he concluded, “There is much to do and we’ve only just begun.”

Book Review

If the Man You Love Was Abused: A Couples Guide to Healing by Marie H. Browne, RN, PhD and Marlene M. Browne, Esq. (Adams Media Corp. 2007). Available at Amazon.com.

The authors are a mother-daughter team and have worked with childhood sexual abuse survivors as a therapist and as a lawyer. They draw on diverse areas of expertise and extensive experience of counseling adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse to collaborate on this sensitively written couples guide to healing. The sobering quote from Socrates cited on the book’s forward, “There is only one good, knowledge, and one evil, ignorance” presents the book’s objective – to demystify the effects that childhood sexual abuse can have on adult relationships while simultaneously offering a concrete and supportive approach toward self-care for the partner of a survivor.

Utilizing a straightforward style, the authors succinctly present a plethora of clinical information on the effects that childhood sexual abuse can have on the victim – effects that range from personality disorders to problematic social and sexual behaviors.

The tri-fold partition of topics ensures that this book can serve as a reference and guide to healing adult relationships. Part one defines issues about childhood abuse, including: how events can leave a scar and how the degree of scarring depends on who was the abuser; how to recognize symptoms and coping styles; and how healing can happen. This book addresses the particular pain of those abused in childhood by clergy and offers insight into how victims of clergy sexual abuse are affected spiritually, emotionally, psychically

and physically. Here, the authors write of VOTF as an organization that is supportive of survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

Part two focuses on sustaining a union while being a partner in healing and simultaneously looking inward to learn self-care and understand one's own coping style. In other words, to love one's man without losing oneself.

Part three, titled "Legacy of Abuse," focuses on the adult relationship itself, including these topics: fatherhood and children, parenting styles, what to tell your children, remembering it is your partner's story and decision to disclose, mandatory reporting and legal issues. This last section reiterates that it takes time to personally overcome the trauma of a loved one's sexual abuse and that this road is different for each individual, couple and family. This section ends with a "Do" and "Don't" list that couples can use to make their bond stronger by increasing mutual trust and intimacy through communication. On a positive note, the authors assure us that it is possible to overcome the trauma of childhood sexual abuse, noting that 80% of adult survivors function very well, in part because they have received help in healing.

Although the intended readers of this book are partners of men who have been sexually abused in childhood, reading this book can give anyone a deeper understanding of the psychological trauma experienced by survivors and how we might be partners in their healing. It can be excruciatingly difficult to reveal one's pain or emotions when trust has been damaged early in life. Yet, telling others about one's painful experience can help deal with the past and bring healing to both survivors and their adult relationships.

Patricia T. Gomez, Ph.D., Developmental Psychologist and VOTF National Representative Council member