

# In the Vineyard

December 6, 2007

**IN This Issue:** Shreveport LA – building a **model for openness** in US dioceses?; welcome words from **Cardinal Ouellet** in Canada; Edwina Gateley to conduct a **June 2008 retreat**; good news for the **VOTF national officer elections**; Boston College C21 program offers an **online (free) course** that focuses on Advent; **VOTF Advent Prayer**; a thought-provoking essay on the priesthood written by John Shuster, “VOTF and Sexual Politics in the Priesthood”; and more.

## NATIONAL News

**VOTF National Officer elections are coming up.** Nominations are coming in and we invite your participation. Click here for details.

See recent press releases from VOTF National; Board of Trustees meeting minutes of March through October 2007

[http://www.votf.org/Who\\_We\\_Are/trustee\\_meeting/index.html](http://www.votf.org/Who_We_Are/trustee_meeting/index.html);

- Office note: VOTF National Executive Director Donna Doucette was interviewed by her home state newspaper. See the story in the Louisiana paper the *Advocate* at <http://www.2theadvocate.com/features/11986796.html>.

## AFFILIATE Notes:

It's not too late!!! CHRISTMAS CARDS SALE TO BENEFIT SURVIVORS

VOTF Winchester MA continues a 5-year tradition with the sale of a brand new line of Christmas cards to benefit the survivors of clergy sexual abuse. Cards sell for just \$15 for a package of 12 cards. We are selling 4 different cards: You can buy 12 cards with the same design or a mixed package with 3 cards of each of the 4 designs. Each card has the VOTF web address on the back. You can buy cards at any weekly affiliate meeting in Winchester on Monday nights, or by visiting the group's [website](#), and printing and mailing the order form with your payment. Thank you for your support! If you have any questions, contact Bob Morris at [rmorrirotf@aol.com](mailto:rmorrirotf@aol.com) or Marge Bean at [margebean@verizon.net](mailto:margebean@verizon.net)

**VOTF Region 9 has a new web site!** To visit VOTF in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska , go to <http://www.freewebs.com/votfregion9>. Congratulations to National Representative Council (NRC) David Biersmith and team for making this happen. That brings the number of affiliates with their own web sites to 36 – and counting! To visit other parts of worldwide VOTF (Australia and Ireland also have sites), go to [http://www.votf.org/Parish\\_Voice/pvlinks.html](http://www.votf.org/Parish_Voice/pvlinks.html).

**VOTF Boston MA:** The affiliate praised the Archdiocese of Boston for steps taken toward financial transparency. **Thomas J. Healey**, senior fellow at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and treasurer of the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management, writing in the *Boston Globe* says this is a message “**the Church can ill afford to ignore.**” For the full commentary, go to [http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial\\_opinion/oped/articles/2007/11/28/silver\\_lining\\_for\\_struggling\\_dioceses/](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2007/11/28/silver_lining_for_struggling_dioceses/).

## **DIOCESE/State Watch**

**Shreveport LA:** Dare we say the following is a **sign of the times**? “Accountability was on the minds of more than 100 Catholic officials who gathered Wednesday at the Shreveport Convention Center for the Conference of Chancery and Tribunal Officials. Clergy and lay people came from at least 11 dioceses in three states to network and explore the possibility of lifting the attitude of secrecy that has been part of the church's culture.” See the *Shreveport Times* for the full story at <http://www.shreveporttimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2007711290332>

John Zucchi, a professor of history at McGill University, writing in the *Montreal Gazette*, said of **Cardinal Ouellet's recent letter to parishioners** of the Quebec province in Canada: “*Ouellet's statement is a challenge to his own church members. He asks them whether they want to continue to stay in the catacombs pretending everything is just fine, or to be present in society once again with something truly new to say to the men and women of our times.*” See the full text of the commentary at <http://www.canada.com/montrealgazette/news/story.html?id=0c500028-a07a-4a78-a8ae-2d017d04794a>. For the full text of the letter, which was published in daily newspapers throughout the province, go to <http://www.catholicregister.org/content/view/1302/849/>.

## **SITE-Seeing, Etc.**

Church of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Center opportunity: You won't even have to leave your desk for this **Boston College online “course”** – it's free, geared to Advent and has no assignments other than what you might assign yourself. Visit the e-classroom at <http://www.bc.edu/sites/c21online/tutorials/birthofjesus/>. [You do need a computer that has sound for some of the material, which is presented as a narrative voice-over with a display. But there are handouts you can print or read on-screen.]

- Another online opportunity for Advent reflection is available at <http://www.followingthestar.org/>.

Fr. Tom Doyle has sent along a thought-provoking essay on the priesthood written by John Shuster, a married Roman Catholic priest in Seattle WA. Here's a link to the text [http://www.votf.org/vineyard/Dec6\\_2007/shuster.html](http://www.votf.org/vineyard/Dec6_2007/shuster.html); we don't know how long the page will be up, so click now to read “**VOTF and Sexual Politics in the Priesthood.**”

Several VOTF members have noted their enthusiasm for a **new book by Robert Blair Kaiser**. Read a little about *Cardinal Mahony: A Novel* at <http://www.robertblairkaiser.com/>, including Eugene Kennedy's favorable commentary.

**SAVE the DATE!!** For a retreat with the ever-energized and energizing **Edwina Gateley** on June 7, 2008 at Marstons Mills MA (on Cape Cod). If you have ever heard Edwina speak, you will expect this day to be filled to capacity quickly. To learn more about the day's focus and to protect your interest in this opportunity, go to [http://www.peaceoncapecod.org/40696\\_One\\_Light\\_GATELEY.pdf](http://www.peaceoncapecod.org/40696_One_Light_GATELEY.pdf).

**Andrew Greeley** registers a worrisome consideration with regard to the work of US bishops' researchers on the "cause of pedophilia." See the *Chicago Sun-Times* of Nov. 21 at <http://www.suntimes.com/news/greeley/660477,CST-EDT-greel21.article>.

A Milwaukee WI priest writes on "**The Other Health Crisis: Why Priests Are Coping Poorly**" in *Commonweal* magazine, November 23. Go to [http://www.commonwealmagazine.org/article.php3?id\\_article=2068](http://www.commonwealmagazine.org/article.php3?id_article=2068).

**Eugene Kennedy** (former priest and professor of psychology at Loyola University) gives Catholic voters (and bishops) something to think about. See the *Chicago Tribune* at <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/chi-oped1118bishopnov18,0,2720548.story>.