

In the Vineyard

January 25, 2007

“Good and Gracious God, we realize that the task we undertook five years ago is far from over and that like the early band of followers of your Son we often trip and stumble in our efforts to help. Open our ears and hearts to your Spirit and to the voices of survivors. We abandoned them in the past by not seeing what was happening to them and not being responsible for the actions of the Church. Guide us now so that we act with respect and not condescension, reality and not pretentious piety. Keep us strong in our love for you that we may continue the work to which you have called us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your son.”

VOTF Prayer on an Anniversary from VOTF secretary Gaile Pohlhaus

In This Issue:

VOTF National News: Vigils across the US marked the fifth anniversary of the *Boston Globe*'s revelations of clergy sexual abuse; this was a story that became a tome of abuse and cover up in the Catholic Church and it continues to be told. SNAP organized and led gatherings in 56 cities to commemorate the courage of the survivors who continue to come forward and bare the truth. VOTF affiliates also marked the anniversary. See coverage in *Five Years Later*, including VOTF Stan Doherty's scripture reflection.

- Don't miss <http://www.votf.org/Press/pressrelease/011807.html> for VOTF NH Carolyn Disco's excellent commentary on a response to New Hampshire Bishop McCormack's question, "Do you believe the survivors or do you believe me?" As Carolyn says, "It now happens that a documentary ... 'Hand of God' ... part of PBS' 'Frontline,' will give everyone a chance to judge for themselves before answering McCormack's question." [Note the new Frontline (PBS) site at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/handofgod/> for viewing "Hand of God" and other relevant links.] By the way, if you live in the Brownsville, Texas diocese, this may be your only opportunity to view the film on PBS. See <http://news.google.com/news?hl=en&ned=us&ie=UTF-8&ncl=1112849948> for coverage of that diocese-owned PBS affiliate station's decision against airing the scheduled film.
- Former VOTF executive director Steve Krueger and Boston's Cardinal O'Malley were on the same page on January 7 – literally. Each wrote an op-ed piece in the *Boston Globe*: "Rebuilding faith, five years on" by Cardinal Sean O'Malley is at <http://www.rcab.org/News/releases/2007/statement070107.html>; and "Unanswered questions linger" by Steve Krueger is at http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2007/01/07/unanswered_questions_linger/. If you would like to see a pdf of the *Globe* page featuring these commentaries, click here: http://www.votf.org/vineyard/Jan25_2007/jan07globe_editorial.pdf

National Representative Council November 2006 meeting minutes are [here](#); also, see [NRC resolutions](#) passed to date. The National Representative Council has a busy slate in the coming weeks. Representatives are discussing the merits of three proposals focused on survivor support and two proposals calling for better financial accountability. Texts of those proposals may soon be ready for membership-wide evaluation. Approximately two-thirds of the Regions represented on the Council are preparing for the biannual elections

to that body. The hope is to complete the elections by March. The Council also has sent to committees for evaluation a proposal from the Goal 2 Support Priests National Working Group.

Site-Seeing, Etc. will take you to the movies and to a parish's unique handling of an abuse allegation, deliver a sermon, recommend a book and more; **Diocese/State Watch** news from NY, MA, WA, and MO; and see **Financial Accountability: It Takes a Parish**.

Commentary

Theologian's Corner: Gaile Pohlhaus – “What’s Infallible? What’s Not?”

Asleep in 2002? “Archivist of Our Time: BishopAccountability.org”

“It Has Been an Honor” – Executive Director Ray Joyce says good-bye

“Remembering Dot Winslow” – reflections from friends

SITE-Seeing, Etc.

Commonweal magazine's Jan. 12 issue has an interesting, and instructive, take on the **Pope's listening style**: “Learning to Listen” by Francis X. Clooney, SJ, Parkman Professor of Divinity at Harvard University is at http://www.commonwealmagazine.org/print_format.php?id_article=1819.

Frank Douglas (NRC Region 13) notes **Public Broadcasting System coverage** of the clergy abuse story covering the past five years. [Part 1: Abuse Scandal Still Echoes Through Catholic Church](#); [Exposing the Scandal: Key Players](#); [The Aftermath: Church Reforms](#). Visit the Archives of PBS at www.npr.org.

- If you missed the Jan. 16 PBS Frontline broadcast of “Hand of God”, you can view the film at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/handofgod/>.

The *Union Leader* notes “Abuse, but no scandal” in one parish. Why? Because secrecy is not part of the culture in this parish. Read more at <http://www.unionleader.com:80/article.aspx?headline=A+safe+church%3A+Abuse%2C+but+no+scandal&articleId=e3447f95-aae0-4a7d-925d-59e1becd96de>

The annual **MidWest SNAP Conference** will be held in Chicago Feb. 16-18. Visit www.snapnetwork.org for details or contact snapadmin@gmail.com.

Editor's choice: James F. Keenan, S.J., Boston College professor of moral theology, has written nothing less than a gift for Catholics of all ages. *Moral Wisdom: Lessons and Texts from the Catholic Tradition*, published by Sheed and Ward (2004) is both timeless and timely, accessible and informed, practical and reflective. Highly recommended.

Another perspective: A balanced and pastoral essay from Rev. Les Wicker, Senior Pastor at First Congregational Church of Naples, FL can be viewed at http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?BRD=2605&dept_id=592840&newsid=17688826&PAG=461&rfi=9.

Anything you always wanted to know about bishop selection (but were afraid to ask)? See the Pittsburg diocesan newspaper *Pittsburg Catholic* article at http://www.pittsburghcatholic.org/newsarticles_more.phtml?id=1835.

BishopAccountability.org also noted the five-year anniversary of clergy abuse revelations with a special issue of their newsletter *The Monitor*. See Commentary for a reprint of the recent issue that links to Jan. 6 and 7, 2002 *Boston Globe* coverage. If you would like to see a pdf of the *Globe* page featuring these commentaries, go to www.bishop-accountability.org

USA Today reports that Fr. Cozzens “tackles mandatory celibacy in a new book, calling it burdensome and unnecessary.” See http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2007-01-06-celibacy_x.htm?POE=click-refer.

Letter to editor takes exception to the use of the word “calculated” in Jan. 4 editorial.

QUOTE for our time: “Mercy is the willingness to enter into the chaos of another.” *Fr. James Keenan from his book Moral Wisdom (see commentary for book notes).*

DIOCESE/State Watch

Yakima, WA/ St. Louis, MO: According to coverage in *St. Louis Today*, what Archbishop Burke knew and when he knew it did not keep a former Yakima, WA priest from assignments to local parishes in St. Louis. No charges had been filed against the priest after the Yakima diocese turned over “about a dozen photos of boys, elementary school-age to teens, all naked ... The FBI and police investigated.” (*Yakima Herald Republic* at <http://www.yakima-herald.com/page/dis/311687021133961>); also, *St. Louis Today* at

<http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/metroeast/story/3141B431C69C6CF986257261001A8AC9?OpenDocument&highlight=2%2C%22Yakima%22>.

- Another Yakima incident involving a priest, the Catholic diocese of Yakima and an Episcopal diocese in Mexico is covered at length in the *Yakima Herald Republic* at [http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_product=YHRB&p_theme=yhrb&p_action=search&p_maxdocs=200&s_dispstring=Catholic%20diocese%20of%20Yakima%20AND%20date\(last%2030%20days\)&p_field_date-0=YMD_date&p_params_date-0=date:B,E&p_text_date-0=-30qzD&p_field_advanced-0=&p_text_advanced-0=\(\"Catholic%20diocese%20of%20Yakima\"\)&p_perpage=10&p_sort=YMD_date:D&xcal_useweights=no](http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_product=YHRB&p_theme=yhrb&p_action=search&p_maxdocs=200&s_dispstring=Catholic%20diocese%20of%20Yakima%20AND%20date(last%2030%20days)&p_field_date-0=YMD_date&p_params_date-0=date:B,E&p_text_date-0=-30qzD&p_field_advanced-0=&p_text_advanced-0=(\). For the full story, you will be asked to register.

Spokane, WA: The Spokane Diocese has filed a \$48 million settlement as part of a bankruptcy plan. The *Spokesman Review* reports: “Spokane Catholics will be asked to participate in one of the largest – and most controversial – fundraisers ever attempted in their diocese's history: \$10 million to pay lawyers and victims of priest sexual abuse. Unlike past campaigns, they won't have a choice: Failure to raise the money could mean the sale of their churches and schools. After more than two years of legal wrangling and mounting attorney fees, a \$48 million settlement to end the Roman Catholic Diocese of Spokane bankruptcy was filed Thursday.” For the full story, click on the title “Diocese files settlement” at <http://www.spokesmanreview.com/news/cover.asp?pubdate=1/5/2007>. You will be asked to register. Subscribers can access coverage on this story in the January 5, 2007 issue of the *New York Times* at http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/05/washington/05brfs-DIOCESETOPAY_BRF.html?ex=1169269200&en=a0c22c1da84a3f53&ei=5070.

Boston, MA: VOTF Boston reports on second meeting with archdiocesan leadership. See [Affiliate News](#) for the Boston VOTF newsletter recap.

New York, NY: The *New York Times* reports: “The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York yesterday issued a final list of 21 parishes that will close” Subscribers can view the Jan. 21 story at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/20/nyregion/20churches.html>.

- Consider FutureChurch’s initiative Do Not Stifle the Spirit! Go to <http://www.futurechurch.org/sopc/donotstiflethespirit.htm>.

FIVE Years Later

Witness in Peoria

From John Ryan, VOTF Peoria, Illinois, national chair of the priests’ support working group.

I was with some remarkable people yesterday across the street from the Cathedral in Peoria while Bishop Jenky was inside celebrating the 10:30 am mass on the Feast of the Epiphany. I was there with some survivors and family members to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the breaking news in the *Boston Globe* of the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church.

Arriving around 10:45 am before the others, I noted the presence of a Security person in front of the Cathedral, who occasionally strolled around the corner looking this way and that as if on the alert about something. She eventually just took up her post on the steps of the Cathedral. While waiting, I walked by her into the foyer of the Cathedral in time to hear the stirring gospel of the three Magi, followed by the opening remarks of Bishop Jenky who preached the homily. He opened with a statement about the difference between excellent and mediocre schools, and I left a couple of minutes later wondering how the bishop was going to link back in his homily (if at all) to the gospel message.

Back outside, I was joined by five others, three of whom were survivors and two spouses. We gathered together across the street on the corner, and I noted they had brought vigil candles along with some hastily prepared signage and pictures of themselves and the priest who abused them when they were around ten years old. Having heard their stories at one of the SNAP meetings in Peoria late last year, these pictures brought everything back to me in a most vivid and poignant way.

The plan was to wait until mass had ended, and while parishioners were exiting the church, we would hold up the signs and pictures, and also, recite petitions as a prayer of the faithful aloud holding the vigil candles. While waiting, one of our members had need to use a restroom, and was refused admission to the Cathedral by the security person. Before and after that, several other individuals freely entered without interference. We also noted the presence of a police car, which slowed down when passing us by as if to let us know that they were here. Because there had been no announcement of our meeting until I notified those on my VOTF distribution listing 24 hours earlier, we concluded that someone on my listing may well have been the one to notify the chancery of this event. We speculated that inside the church, an announcement would be made at the end of mass alerting the attendees that a protest group was outside and that they should avoid any contact with us. In fact, as people left the cathedral, very few looked at us much less came within 30 feet of us. Those who looked, looked hard and long, as lookers look when taking in the scene of a horrible accident. We did audibly greet some who came within earshot, but only got the hard stern looks in response.

As a non-survivor, it gave me some inkling of the way survivors must feel when being shunned, as they have been shunned, not only by the Sacred Pastors (bishops), but also by most priests and laity. It brought home to me how successful the bishops, and in particular Bishop Jenky, have been in convincing the faithful that the survivor community is a threat to the welfare of the church and is to be shunned and avoided at all costs. It is one thing for the bishops to act from such a flawed perspective as ministers of the gospel and shepherds of the flock. It is another to see it reflected in the faces of the faithful Catholic laity, some of whom may well be friends and neighbors.

I asked the wife of one survivor in our group how she would feel if Bishop Jenky were to come across the street after mass and greet the group, stretch out his arms and embrace them, and invite them join him for coffee and donuts in the chancery. After her first surprised look upon reflecting on this unlikely prospect, she stated that it would be wonderful to be received and acknowledge in such a manner.

There was some media presence, and attempts to interview the survivors were thwarted due to the cathedral bells ringing (deafeningly loud) from the end of the mass until just a few minutes after we disbanded, a total of forty uninterrupted minutes of deafening bell ringing!!! I cannot imagine that is a standard practice and that the people living in the nearby community would tolerate such a din. Talk about noise ordinances!!!

Being with these remarkable people was a grace, and I cannot say enough about their courage and witness. Believe what you want to believe about this scandal, but please do

not forget that the real ongoing scandal is the manner in which the hierarchical church, and the rest of us, have responded to the needs of those most harmed by it all.

I paste below a statement from a Denver SNAP leader Jeb Barrett that I think expresses very well just what it is that survivors want to hear from church leadership, and I would add, with the full support of the faith community:

”What we victims of sexual abuse by clergy and our families need to hear from priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and the pope is something like this: ‘We were wrong in what we did, what we allowed to happen, for covering up criminal acts against children, for continuing to place protection of sexual predators above the protection of children, for not reporting crimes to civil authorities, for not reaching out to victims and their families, and for shunning those we have harmed. We have not been healers and reconcilers or protectors of children. What can we do to make it right? How can we ever compensate you, the Church and society for the harm we have done?’ We have yet to hear anyone among Catholic hierarchy take this vital step toward reconciliation, followed by proactive restitution.”

Catholics in 56 cities across the country participated in vigils to mark the 5th Anniversary of the start of the *Boston Globe’s* “Spotlight Series” on the clergy abuse scandal. This Pulitzer Prize winning newspaper series was the force that brought the scandal to national and international attention and marked the beginning of Voice of the Faithful. The weekend’s events were covered by hundreds of newspapers, TV and radio stations all over the US. In addition, NPR featured the scandal in a 3-part series that aired on January 11, & 12. (From VOTF *Focus*)

- For more info on the NPR series [click here](#).
- For information on how you can participate in VOTF’s Campaign for Accountability – Protecting Our Children [click here](#).

“Hand of God” is a microcosm of countless working class Catholic childhoods spent in Catholic schools from elementary school through college and growing up in loving, religiously devoted, close-knit families. Up to a point, the Cultrera story crosses your own in countless ways. After that point, it casts in stunning relief what has been wrong in our Church and how, like an abuse experience, it seeps into the rest of our Church’s life. We encourage our readers to take the opportunity to view the entire film at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/handofgod/>.

Reflection for the Catholic Liturgical Readings

Is 62:1-5 / Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 7-8, 9-10 / 1 Cor 12:4-11 / Jn 2:1-11]

01/14/07 (<http://www.usccb.org/nab/011407.shtml>)

Stan Doherty

In the late-1970s the Australian government recognized that the natural resources (wildlife, water, land) in many of its provinces were vulnerable to exploitation and that it

could never afford to staff a comprehensive network of rangers to protect those resources. If regular folks in the local communities did not assume ownership of their local resources and did not feel empowered to monitor those resources faithfully and consistently, there was little that the federal government could do beyond providing unenforceable laws.

The government decided wisely to study what was already working in the provinces by way of informal volunteer stewardship and conservation programs before inventing new ones. Turns out that there were many successful, multi-generational stewardship programs working in the provinces – they just didn't get a lot of attention or press. The volunteers in those programs who stayed involved for years and decades did so because they felt that they “owned” the problem of managing resources and acted out of some familiar virtues – hope, persistence, and patience. The Australian government did not need to “empower” them or “authorize” them in any legalistic way; these resilient little groups had already discovered in themselves and in one another the ultimate authority for doing the work – conviction that it was the right thing to do. Sustainable, grassroots devotion to a cause is always bottom up.

Our readings this weekend zoom in on the theme of self-empowerment through God-given gifts. In our first reading from Isaiah, we hear that “The Lord delights in you and makes your land His spouse.” Saint Paul in Corinthians argues, “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit ... to each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.” In our gospel we see Jesus reluctantly, but firmly, reveal His power by performing His first public miracle.

Vatican II reminds us that through baptism we are all ordained (informally) to minister as priests, prophets, and kings. If you're waiting for higher authorities to televise the ceremony in which we faithful Catholics are all officially “empowered” from above to save our church, you're going to need a new Tivo. Jesus minced no words when He told us, “The Kingdom of God is within you!” If we could only believe that we the faithful own this problem the way that the Australian conservationists owned their problem, we would see that we possess the God-given gifts to forge appropriate and lasting solutions. There are millions of Catholics and Christians and believers of all sorts throughout the world for whom Plan A involves praying and waiting for some otherworldly miracle to take place. Our readings this weekend suggest that Plan B should be on the table as well – roll up your sleeves and you fill those empty water jars – the Spirit within you and beside you will help you when you need it.

Archivist of Our Time: BishopAccountability.org

This is the letter BishopAccountability.org distributed to mark the fifth anniversary of clergy sexual abuse revelations. Note the point that Terry McKiernan makes: “...documents show that the archdiocese received its first known warning about Geoghan **over fifty years ago** in 1954.”



Monitor | Five Years Ago | The Article that Rocked Catholicism

January 6, 2007

Dear Friend,

On this date five years ago, an article in the *Boston Globe* brought the centuries-old abuse crisis in the Catholic church into the Internet age. Read again [the powerful *Globe* article on accused priest John Geoghan](#), with links added by BishopAccountability.org to original documents from Geoghan's personnel file, including the remarkable [exchange between Cardinal Medeiros and Margaret Gallant](#).

Those documents show that the archdiocese received its first known warning about Geoghan **over fifty years ago** in 1954. The public learned about him when the mother of three survivors filed the first suit in 1996, and in 2001 [Kristen Lombardi wrote a groundbreaking article in the *Boston Phoenix*](#).

We are resuming regular emailings of our *Monitor* newsletter to bring you breaking news, document features like this one on Geoghan, and new postings of diocesan documents from California, Texas, Massachusetts, and elsewhere. We will post over 10,000 pages of diocesan files in the next year. I hope that you'll remain a subscriber to the Monitor by [clicking here](#).

My assurances to you: We will never give or sell your email address to anyone, and we'll fully protect your privacy. At any time, you may choose to stop receiving the *Monitor* by clicking on the "SafeUnsubscribe" link at the bottom of this email.

[Visit BishopAccountability.org](#)

Happy New Year to you, and thank you for your continued caring and interest.

Sincerely,

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BishopAccountability.org

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phone: 508-479-9304

web: <http://www.bishopaccountability.org>

If you would like to see a pdf of the *Globe* page featuring these commentaries, go to www.bishop-accountability.org

Financial Accountability – It Takes a Parish

Financial mayhem in US dioceses is worse than many have thought; as reported in the Jan. 4 *Vineyard*, a recent study details reasons for serious concern. For more on this story,

see the *Stamford Advocate* at <http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/news/local/scn-sa-nor.diocese4jan08,0,7060876.story?coll=stam-news-local-headlines>.

- To see the Villanova Report in full, go to

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* notes: “St. Louis Archbishop Raymond Burke is considering taking over bookkeeping for all 197 parishes in the archdiocese, modernizing a structure that's lasted for centuries.” Go to

<http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/religion/story/B1B68ACEAC838A60862572610017CADF?OpenDocument&highlight=2%2C%22archbishop%22+AND+%22Burke%22>.

Good news! A *Palm Beach Post* editorial reports a financial accountability success story in which VOTF played a significant role. Go to

http://www.palmbeachpost.com/opinion/content/opinion/epaper/2007/01/16/a14a_diocese_edit_0116.html.

Richmond, VA: VOTF’s Mike Curley notes: “The Diocese of Richmond is back in the news with a priest who embezzled about \$600,000 from two rural parishes. Seems Richmond parishes are not audited and can open bank accounts under a church's name with only one signature.” See the TimesDispatch.com site at

http://www.timesdispatch.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=RTD/MGArticle/RTD_BasicArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1149192767009.

Stamford, CT: The *Stamford Advocate* reports that a pastor resigned this week after “a preliminary financial audit uncovered more than \$500,000 in spending that the Bridgeport Diocese is trying to account for, officials said yesterday.” See

<http://www.stamfordadvocate.com:80/news/local/scn-sa-diocese3jan21,0,6698584.story?coll=stam-news-local-headlines>.

The USCCB is also concerned about financial accountability. Go to <http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2007/07-015.shtml>.

COMMENTARY

What’s Infallible? What’s Not?

VOTF national secretary Gaile Pohlhaus, independent theologian

[n.b., the words truth(s) and teaching(s) are used interchangeably in the following essay.]

All Church teaching is important but it is not all infallible. Even the earliest of Church fathers and mothers would agree with this statement. It is only since the decree of Papal Infallibility was promulgated by the First Council of the Vatican (1870) that Catholics have PRESUMED THAT ALL TEACHINGS ARE ON EQUAL FOOTING. Nevertheless it was the Second Council of the Vatican (1962-66) in its Decree on Ecumenism (11.e) that said: “When comparing doctrines with one another, theologians should remember that in Catholic doctrine there exists a ‘hierarchy’ of truths, since they vary in their relation to the fundamental Christian faith.”

Of these truths/teachings only two are preeminent and all others flow from these. I quote from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (par. 234): “The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in God's self. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the ‘hierarchy of the truths of faith’” (*General Catechetical Directory*, par. 43). The whole history of salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reveals God to men "and reconciles and unites with himself those who turn away from sin.” Thus the first of these truths is the Trinity itself and the second, which immediately flows from it, is the doctrine of the Incarnation/Resurrection, which is the way God chose to reveal the divine nature and the ultimate example of the Law of Love.

Again quoting from the *Catechism* (pars. 88-90): “The Church's Magisterium exercises the authority it holds from Christ to the fullest extent when it defines dogmas, that is, when it proposes, in a form obliging the Christian people to an irrevocable adherence of faith, truths contained in divine Revelation or also when it proposes, in a definitive way, truths having a necessary connection with these.

“There is an organic connection between our spiritual life and the dogmas. Dogmas are lights along the path of faith; they illuminate it and make it secure. Conversely, if our life is upright, our intellect and heart will be open to welcome the light shed by the dogmas of faith. Jesus then said to those Jews who believed in him, ‘If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free’” (Jn 8:31-32). In addition, we find: “The mutual connections between dogmas, and their coherence, can be found in the whole of the Revelation of the mystery of Christ” (*Lumen Gentium* par.25); and, "In Catholic doctrine there exists an order or hierarchy of truths, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith” (*Unitatis Redintegratio Decree on Ecumenism* par. 11).

Although there exists no definitive list of the truths which must be held, the magisterium (teaching authority of the Church that included ordained persons and theologians until approximately the 1980's and now seems to be used exclusively to mean ordained persons; I am using the word in the older and more traditional sense) is agreed that the Apostle's Creed and the Nicene-Constantinople Creed should be included. These are traditionally called Dogmas and also include the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Mary of Nazareth.

Doctrines are teachings which have not yet been called dogmas but are almost universally held by the magisterium and the faithful. The sacraments would probably be on this list although explanations of the sacraments would not be (e.g., real presence of Christ in Eucharist is on the list but transubstantiation is not).

Next are those truths that are *virtually* revealed. Not virtually as in the sense of computers but those that can be derived rationally from dogmas and doctrines. These are sometimes referred to as the ordinary teachings of the Church and deal with things found in the culture or science of the time. These ordinary teachings are sometimes called “probable truths.” An example here might be “It is good to say the Rosary.” Note this does not teach that we *must* say the Rosary; it simply addresses the worthiness of such an action. Another example could be “It is good for priests to be celibate.” Notice here that this cannot be derived from dogmas or doctrines but is the result of lived experience over the first 1,000 years of the Church. Thus celibacy became a discipline within the Roman Catholic Church.

And finally there is what is called “non-revealed” truths. These are teachings which are commonly accepted by the magisterium. There is little agreement about which teachings of the Church fall into the third and fourth categories and sometimes even the second. The categories themselves have existed at least from the time of Saint Augustine. Sometimes these non-revealed truths are called “possible truths.” An example here would be any references to the approved apparitions of Mary and the Saints. What the Church declares about these apparitions is that they do not contradict Church teaching.

How revealed and non-revealed truths are *lived in faith* is what conscience is all about – a subject for a future column.

It Has Been an Honor

Executive Director Ray Joyce bids a fond farewell to his position at VOTF

As some of you know we lost a wonderful volunteer to cancer earlier this week. Dot Winslow dedicated two days a week to helping out at the VOTF national office ever since there was an office. Her smile, enthusiasm and no-nonsense approach helped us manage a myriad of details. She will be sorely missed. It has been an honor to serve Dot and the many committed VOTF members these past 21 months. While I leave VOTF as Executive Director today, I bring with me the enduring gift of having known people like Dot and the many with whom I have had the great privilege to work - in person, by phone and online.

I’m pleased to have been able to assist with the national convocation in 2005 and the resulting Campaign for Accountability; some improvements in communications to our membership such as *FOCUS* and *Voice Matters*; a more balanced budget; sound elections of the NRC and Officers; and better database and IT support to help the NRC and affiliate leaders connect with members in their areas. Within the next month the redesigned website will be live and our annual report will follow shortly. More important, I’ve so much enjoyed working with a tiny but powerful staff, indefatigable office volunteers, and a dedicated group of VOTF volunteer leaders including Officers, Trustees, NRC representatives, Working Group members, and local affiliate heads. As you know, VOTF is 99% volunteer driven and you’ve accomplished so much in 5 short years: increased awareness of survivors and the childhoods they lost, lay education on our rights and

responsibilities as laity, reform of sexual abuse laws, and greater financial accountability, just to name a few. Of course, we all want to see more progress more quickly given the state of our Church, but I'm confident VOTF's success will continue given the solid foundation you've provided.

Although my understanding of the institutional Church has been forever changed by my experiences here, my faith in God has been strengthened in what I've seen of God's work in your hands, the hands of the laity - working on justice for survivors, working to support priests of integrity, working for true reform in our beloved Church.

I depart with two quotes that I try to live out each day. One is from Henri Nouwen's *The Inner Voice of Love*: "Dare to love and to be a real friend. The love you give and receive is a reality that will lead you closer and closer to God as well as those whom God had given you to love." The other is from St. Augustine: "Nothing conquers except truth and the victory of truth is love."

Peace,
Ray

Ray Joyce

Remembering Dot Winslow

Dot Winslow personified the VOTF volunteer in her cheerful, unflagging support for the VOTF mission and goals. Her recent death leaves the office and the organization poorer. Her time with VOTF leaves all of us richer.

From Alice Campanella, VOTF National office staff

Dorothy Winslow was the quintessential VOTF volunteer. She was committed to VOTF from the very beginning, and for five years Dot came to the office twice a week. Neither rain, nor sleet, nor snow deterred her from performing her duties. She was always upbeat, meticulously groomed and never a complainer; even as her illness prevented her from eating, she never considered not coming to help us out.

Dot loved her parish (St. Susanna's) and Fr. Steve had a special place in her heart. She was constantly giving of her time and talents: she went to her local elementary school and read to the kindergarteners; she brought an abandoned dog into her home even though she already had a dog that she adored; and if a friend was ill she was the first to provide meals. Dot personified love in action – consistently bringing her spirit, energy and goodness to places of need. Her concrete, unassuming way of living the Gospel speaks volumes about who we are and strive to be as people, as an organization and as Catholics. Dot will certainly be missed.

From Mary Ann Keyes, VOTF founding parish voice coordinator

Dot was one of those people you always loved to see coming through the door at work. She was passionate about her involvement with the movement. She helped start an affiliate at St. Susanna's in Dedham, and after hearing Bill Gately, a survivor, speak at a VOTF meeting, she felt she had **to do something** and committed to volunteering at the VOTF office. Many wonderful people have been drawn to Voice of the Faithful and Dot was one I am grateful to have known.

From Angela Tragos, VOTF office manager

I came to Voice of the Faithful last year in May to fill the position of office manager at the national office. I did not realize that I would develop a relationship with such a beautiful kindred-spirit—Dot Winslow. She became to me in a short time the grandmother I never had. Every Monday and Friday we sat at the conference table in the national office working on projects and talking about anything and everything in life from who I was dating to her dogs. Dot never missed any of her volunteer days. Even when she was not well, she still came to help me get thank you letters folded and stuffed into envelopes. Dot's commitment, loving nature, and fiery passion when it came to reforming the Church made me feel glad to call myself a Catholic. I got the sense from her that despite all her hard work and devotion, she still felt like she was not doing enough to make the church a more loving institution. This made no sense to me because it was her hands—the work she did with her hands—that contributed to so much of what VOTF has become and accomplished in the past five years. If anything, I am not so sure that the institution of the Catholic Church was good enough for Dot. May God hold her in God's hands now. I love you Dot.

LETTER to the editor

The following letter responds to the Vineyard's Jan. 4 introductory text to "Five Years Later" coverage

Yes, the situation in the Catholic Church regarding sexual abuse of minors, even one child, is horrible, outrageous, unacceptable! But, I take strong issue with those in the VOTF, (see P. Thorp's comments in the last issue), that hold that these horrific situations result from a "calculated, long standing practice in the Catholic Church of clergy sexual abuse of children."

How can we, how can VOTF, in fairness, in honesty, in justice, in good conscience, in good Christian values, paint an entire church, an entire clergy, all bishops, all Cardinals, all Popes, the entire clergy, with such an "over the top" set of accusations?

While taking a firm stand against the violations by *SOME* clergy and *SOME* bishops and a system which permitted or allowed such outrageous acts -- even one act -- can we not,

as VOTF member Mary Scanlon recently stated, “speak out against injustice and intolerance” even in the statements made, or positions taken, by some in the VOTF?”
Francis J. Tepedino, San Diego, CA.

PS: My wife doesn't believe you would ever put these dissenting comments in your "Letters to the Editor." Who knows?

[Ed note: Francis makes a fair point, which is why the text in question referred specifically to “**some** bishops and priests.” (bold added)]

AFFILIATE Update – VOTF Boston, MA

SUMMARY OF JANUARY 16TH MEETING WITH RCAB VICAR GENERAL

Attendees:

Fr. Richard Erikson, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia
Fr. Robert Kickham, Secretary to the Cardinal
Sr. Marian Bathos, CSJ, Cabinet Secretary for Regional Services
Terrence Donilon, Cabinet Secretary for Communications
Dorothy Kennedy, President of the BAVOTFCouncil
Sheila Connors Grove, Vice-President of the BAVOTFCouncil
John Hynes, Founding President BAVOTFCouncil
Elia Marnik, Member of the Board of Directors, BAVOTFC Council

On August 4th, 2006, after repeated requests for a meeting, our Council representatives met with Cardinal O'Malley and his staff. At the end of that meeting, we agreed to a second meeting with archdiocesan officials which took place on Tuesday, January 16th, 2007.

Fr. Erikson said he was speaking for the Cardinal and himself when he started the meeting by noting how impressed they are by the work we are doing for the Church as VOTF members. We are pleased they recognize our work.

We spoke initially on a new proposal to collaborate on staffing parishes in the future and suggested a pilot project to begin this effort. It is our belief that parishioners should participate in choosing our pastors.

We again spoke about our primary concern, the protection of children. We presented a template for a program to inform every parishioner about parish and diocesan policies, practices, and programs that are in place and designed to insure the safety of children, young adults, and adults.

We asked again to include on the RCAB website a registry of priests who have substantiated allegations of sexual abuse against them. At present, Fr. Erikson believes the announcements already made in these cases are adequate but he understood the

breadth of our request and promised it will be reviewed again.

There was mutual agreement to meet again. In the meantime, we will follow up on some items. We ran out of time to discuss the VOTF ban and are writing a letter asking for a formal answer to this issue.

The meeting was very interactive, with Fr. Erikson taking the lead for the archdiocese. He was forthright and listened. He wants to continue our interaction. Time will tell if this bears fruit. In the meantime, there is still much we can do.