

## In the Vineyard

July 27, 2006

“I assure you, wherever the good news is proclaimed throughout the world, what she did will be spoken of in memory of her.” *Mt. 26:6-13. July 22 was the feast of Mary of Magdala, first witness to the Resurrection. See more in Commentary.*

### In this issue:

#### National/Int'l News:

**VOTF president Mary Pat Fox addressed SNAP's** national convention on July 22 and reaffirmed the VOTF commitment to survivors. In addition, see Mary Pat's comments on VOTF's time at the SNAP gathering in Commentary - "A Good Day with SNAP".

**SAVE THESE DATES** for the 2007 VOTF National Convention: October 19-21, 2007. Details in the works!

The **VOTF Campaign for Accountability** pages are full of resources for *your* involvement in your own parish and diocese. Read here and let us know how things are going in your diocese.

The US Congress has taken a significant step toward the efforts of VOTF and others when the House joined the Senate in passing legislation for a convicted child molester data base. According to a July 26 Associated Press report in the *New York Times*: "The House passed and sent to President Bush legislation establishing a national Internet database designed to tell law enforcement and community officials where convicted sex offenders live and work." For the full story, go to <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/26/washington/26child.html?ref=washington>.

Also:

- Transparency progress in the Boston Archdiocese was noted recently: "In recognition of the excellence of the Boston Transparency Project, the Leadership Roundtable awarded its inaugural *Best Practices Award* to the **Archdiocese of Boston, MA**, for producing the first ever consolidated report of the financial health of that Archdiocese." Read more in Diocese/State Watch.
- **Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate** offers a number of subscriptions to various publications that frequently provide perspectives on issues germane to VOTF's campaigns. For example, the Spring 2006 issue has an article on the degree of importance that Mass-attending Catholics place on financial accountability. Go to <http://cara.georgetown.edu/pubs/TCR.html>.
- A significant change in Pennsylvania's abuse laws, recommended by the scathing grand jury report on the **Philadelphia archdiocese** almost a year ago, has made it as far as the House, but appears to be stalled in committee. For the full story on the *Times Leader* web site, go to <http://www.timesleader.com/mld/timesleader/news/15098192.htm>.

- **Office Note: VOTF says good-bye to Aimee.** After two years of working with VOTF, Aimee Crevice Harriman will be leaving VOTF in her official capacity as Organizer, Trainer and Convocation Implementation Team member. She has accepted a position with Citizen Schools at Revere Middle School in her new home of Houston, Texas. There, she will be serving as the Campus Director of a dynamic after-school program targeting 100 underprivileged youth. Her last day with VOTF will be July 28th. Aimee led the Many Hearts Many Hands Parish Voice training and was integral in the evolution of the Campaign for Accountability and its implementation as the organization moves toward more coordinated, national actions and provides more tools for local actions to further meet our mission and goals. We thank Aimee for her dedication, creativity and enthusiasm and wish her all the best.

**Diocese/State Watch: Bridgeport, CT** – Ten years apart, two incidents of large sums of money disappearing from a parish demonstrate an important tale of two parishes; **Santa Rosa, CA** update – the response to the abuser priest that got away on Bishop Walsh’s watch is not dying down; **Spokane, WA** – settlement offer in abuse cases reduced by \$10 million; **Boston, MA** SOL reform legislation still “hanging in there”; **Toledo, OH** parish closings not being taken lightly by parishioners; an update on retired **Bishop Dupree (Springfield, MA)** who had been out of the public eye since allegations of sexual abuse arose in 2004; **Rome, Italy** – Associated Press reports that the **Vatican** showed a \$12.4 million surplus in 2005, its best in eight years; **Portland, OR** – the first US diocese to seek bankruptcy protection from sexual abuse claims, need not liquidate a trust fund to pay those claims.

**What happens to a bishop** who excommunicates an “uncooperative” parish and its new pastor? For Bishop Burke of St. Louis, MO, it means a seat on the Vatican’s highest court. See <http://www.belleville.com/mld/belleville/news/state/15014736.htm>. The “Whispers in the Loggia” blog at <http://www.whispersintheloggia.blogspot.com/> suggests that “Burke’s appointment to the high court could be seen as a vindication for the canonical strategy he employed in the case of St Louis’ St Stanislaus parish. In December, following the refusal of the parish’s board of directors to acknowledge the archbishop’s right of governance over the Polish ethnic parish, Burke excommunicated the five members of the board, as well as the priest the laypeople had hired to serve the parish.”

**COMMENTARY: We are rich in affiliate Best Practices! To “change the Church,”** we must know its “story” – This month’s AFFILIATE Best Practice I is part of that story: For the FOURTH consecutive year, **VOTF North Shore, Lynn and Seacoast, MA affiliates** are collaborating with the Dept. of Theology, Boston College to continue their “Faith Formation Program.” Read more in Commentary – “Affiliate Best Practice: Working *With* Our Faith”; Best Practice II goes to **VOTF St. Joseph’s, Ellsworth, ME** as they launch a series of discussions about women in the Church. They will use texts of then-Cardinal Ratzinger and Hans Kung. See more in Commentary – “Women in the Church: Then and Now.” Also in Commentary, the Catholics Speak Out initiative just under way – the **Report Card project**. Read “Honoring Mary of Magdala”; and VOTF president Mary Pat Fox comments on **SNAP’s national convention**, held last weekend in New Jersey. See “A Good Day with SNAP”

**Letter to editor:** responses to Tom Groome's 2002 question put to VOTF; "What do you MEAN 'change' the Church?!"

**Book Reviews:** Susan Troy, VOTF Boston, MA on *A Voice of Their Own: The Authority of the Local Parish* by William Clark A. Clark, S.J., Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota; Catherine McKeen, VOTF Long Island, NY on *Church Ethics and Its Organizational Context: Learning from the Sex Abuse Scandal in the Catholic Church*, edited by Jean M. Bartunek, Mary Ann Hinsdale, and James F. Keenan.

**Commentary:** Best Practice I – "The Loving Christ, and We His Disciples" from VOTF North Shore, Lynn and Seacoast, MA affiliates; Best Practice II – "Women in the Church: Then and Now" from VOTF St. Joseph's, Ellsworth, ME; "Honoring Mary of Magdala"; "Thinking About the SNAP Convention" – VOTF president Mary Pat Fox.

**QUOTE for our time:** "Human dignity can be realized and protected only in community." from *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy*, U. S. Catholic Bishops, 1986

### **DIOCESE/State Watch** (and a note on Vatican finances)

**Rome, Italy:** According to Associated Press, "**The Vatican** released its best financial report in eight years, saying it had a surplus of 9.7 million euros (\$12.4 million) in 2005 despite extraordinary costs of 7 million euros (\$8.9 million) for the funeral of Pope John Paul II and the election of his successor." Read more in the *Boston Globe* at [http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2006/07/13/vaticans\\_finances\\_best\\_in\\_8\\_years?mode=PF](http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2006/07/13/vaticans_finances_best_in_8_years?mode=PF)

**Bridgeport, CT:** The *Stamford Advocate* reports: "Money goes missing from an affluent Catholic church in Fairfield County. Parish insiders suspect the pastor. They take the matter to the Diocese of Bridgeport. The scenario describes an ongoing case at St. John's in Darien -- and one at St. Mary's in Greenwich a decade ago. The cases are similar in that large sums of money disappeared over several years. The cases are different because, in Darien, the parish insiders went outside the diocese for help. In Greenwich, they did not." For more on this story, go to <http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/news/local/scn-sa-priest2jul17,0,5062494.story?coll=stam-news-local-headlines>.

- VOTF Bridgeport, CT has new leadership. Go to [http://www.connpost.com/news/ci\\_4059068](http://www.connpost.com/news/ci_4059068).

**Santa Rosa, CA:** VOTF's Cindy Vrooman updates the Santa Rosa letter daily and sends it to Bishop Walsh as well as the chair of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. If you would like your name added, go to [www.votfnorthbay@sbcglobal.net](http://www.votfnorthbay@sbcglobal.net).

- According to the *San Diego Union Tribune*, “Prosecutors launched an investigation into whether Roman Catholic church officials committed a crime by waiting several days to alert authorities of sex abuse allegations against a priest who may have fled to Mexico.”

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/state/20060714-1334-ca-churchabuse.html>.

**Spokane, WA:** The *Seattle Post Intelligencer* reports, “The Catholic Diocese of Spokane can raise at least \$35 million to divide among victims of sex abuse by priests and may have to ask parishioners to contribute if more money is needed, Bishop William Skylstad said in his latest letter to church members.” Bishop Skylstad originally offered \$45 million to 75 victims, but the offer was rejected by a federal bankruptcy judge because it did not deal with all the identified victims. According to the news account, “There may be 60 to 70 additional victims.” For more details, go to

[http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/277243\\_spokanechurch12.html](http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/277243_spokanechurch12.html).

**Boston, MA:** Hope for critical Statutes of Limitation Reform legislation before the MA session ends on July 31<sup>st</sup>. The Judiciary Committee bill, H 5131, is presently in the House Steering Committee waiting to move to the House floor for a debate and vote. The hope is that representatives will be offering amendments on the House floor to strengthen the legislation so it reflects a “zero-tolerance” policy and not just a “less tolerance” policy for these crimes. This means that it would include Repeal of the SOL for civil actions which are needed so that 95% of victims can seek justice and make known the names of sexual predators. Stay tuned!

- The Archdiocese of Boston was honored with an inaugural Best Practice recognition by the Leadership Roundtable (<http://www.nlrcm.org/history.htm>), which is comprised of 225 senior executives from the worlds of business, finance, law, academia, philanthropy, nonprofits and Church ministry, working together with over forty bishops to offer Church Leaders the resources, skills and talents of the laity for the good of the Church.” To read more about the Boston award, go the archdiocesan website at

<http://www.rcab.org/News/releases/2006/statement060630.html>.

**Springfield, MA:** According to the *Republican*, Bishop Dupre is “still in treatment.” The Springfield newspaper reported on July 22: “Dupre was accused of sexually abusing two minors when he was a parish priest more than 10 years before he was installed as the diocese's bishop in 1995. Dupre was indicted by a Hampden County grand jury in September 2004 on two rape charges stemming from the abuse accusations. Hampden County District Attorney William M. Bennett chose not to pursue the charges because the criminal statute of limitations had expired.” For the full story, go to

<http://www.masslive.com/search/index.ssf?/base/news-1/115355443696240.xml?nnts>.

**Toledo, OH:** Parishioners spoke out against so many parish closings without any parishioner involvement. “Protesters urge more openness by diocese” appeared at [Toledoblade.com](http://Toledoblade.com),

<http://toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060717/NEWS10/607170343/0/NEWS>.

**Portland, OR:** Associated Press reported on Katu.com News: “A federal bankruptcy judge has ruled that the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland cannot be forced to liquidate a \$36 million trust fund to pay any claims resulting from sexual abuse lawsuits against priests. The decision Thursday by U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Elizabeth Perris was considered a victory for the archdiocese, who two years ago became the first Catholic diocese in the United States to seek bankruptcy protection from priest abuse lawsuits.” For full story, go to <http://www.katu.com/news/story.asp?ID=87747>.

## COMMENTARY

### BEST Practice I – “The Loving Christ, and We His Disciples”

#### VOTF North Shore, Lynn and Seacoast, MA affiliates

Since the beginning of VOTF, the VOTF North Shore, Lynn and Seacoast affiliates have offered this series of faith-sustaining and nurturing opportunities in collaboration with the Dept. of Theology at Boston College. It remains one of the most successful testaments to the organization’s commitment to “keep the faith.”

**On Sundays, September 24, through April 22, 2007,** 6:30-9:00 pm, the VOTF North Shore, Lynn and Seacoast Affiliate, in collaboration with Boston College, Department of Theology, will hold its annual Faith Formation program on Sunday evenings once each month. This year's program is entitled "The Loving Christ, and We His Disciples." What follows is excerpted from the program brochure and seems to be a model for other parishes and dioceses with access to Catholic scholarship.

#### Program

1. September 24: *The church we want to become.*  
Thomas H. Groome, Ed.D. (Immaculate Conception, Newburyport).
2. October 15: *Jesus’ gospel of love in Mark and Matthew.*  
Thomas L. Leclerc, M.S., Th.D. (St. Rose of Lima Church and Hall, Topsfield).
3. November 5: *Jesus’ gospel of love in Luke’s Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.*  
Thomas L. Leclerc, M.S. Th.D. (Holy Family Parish Hall by St. Joseph Church, Amesbury).
4. December 10: *Jesus’ gospel of love in John’s Gospel and Epistles.*  
Thomas L. Leclerc, M.S., Th.D. (St. Rose of Lima Hall, Topsfield).
5. February 11: *Jesus’ gospel of love in Paul’s Epistles.*  
Thomas L. Leclerc, M.S., Th.D. (St. Rose of Lima Hall, Topsfield).
6. February 25: *Social justice issues: Living Jesus’ gospel of love today.*  
Kenneth R. Himes, O.F.M., Ph.D. (St. Rose of Lima Hall, Topsfield)

7. April 15: *Mary the Mother of Jesus, and Mary of Magdene: Models of Faith.*  
Mary Ann Hinsdale, I.H.M., Ph.D. (St. Pius V, Lynn).

8. April 22: *Handing on the faith to the next generation.*  
Theresa O'Keefe, Ph.D. (St. Mary's, Lynn).

*For further information, please contact:* Jim Callahan at [jcall2@comcast.net](mailto:jcall2@comcast.net); Vince Guerra at [vfgmd@aol.com](mailto:vfgmd@aol.com); Eleanora Paciulan at [emlpac@comcast.net](mailto:emlpac@comcast.net); Mo Donovan at [maujane@gis.net](mailto:maujane@gis.net); or Carl Greenler at [greenie@2ndamendment.net](http://greenie@2ndamendment.net).

## Best Practice II – “Women in the Church: Then and Now”

### VOTF St. Joseph’s Church, Ellsworth, Maine

Another testament to VOTF’s commitment toward revitalizing our Church is the upcoming Fall schedule of discussions on women in the Church. The VOTF St. Joseph’s Fall Discussion on “Women in the Church: Then and Now” will be held at St. Joseph’s Church, Ellsworth, Maine by the VOTF affiliate there. Their promotional text is as follows:

#### A Church History Pop Quiz

1. Our church accepts women. True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
2. Our church rejects women. True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
3. Our church is ambivalent about women. True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_

*Not sure of your answers?* This discussion group will help us put the questions into historical perspective. From Mary the mother of the Lord to Mother Theresa, women have always played a significant role in our Church. Over the centuries, however, the roles they played varied according to the times in which they lived. This fall our discussion group will explore the various functions women have exercised in our Church over the last 2,000 years. As a basis for our discussions we will use two documents; “*Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World*” by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (available at [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20040731\\_collaboration\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20040731_collaboration_en.html)) and *Women in Christianity* by Hans Küng (available at amazon.com).

**Place:** St. Joseph’s Parish Hall, **Time:** Sundays: 9:15 - 10:15 a.m.

**Dates:** 29 October—Women in Earliest Christianity; 5 November—Women in the Early Church; 12 November—Women in the Church of the Middle Ages; 19 November—Women at the Time of the Reformation; 26 November—Women in Modernity and Post-modernity

Contact Bob McAteer at [alibobm@adelphia.net](mailto:alibobm@adelphia.net).

## Honoring Mary of Magdala and her sisters in faith

*Women who anointed Jesus* is excerpted here from “Women in the Lectionary” by Sr. Christine Schenk, csj of FutureChurch. The FutureChurch web site is a rich source of scholarship and user-friendly materials. Visit [www.futurechurch.org](http://www.futurechurch.org).

One of the most consistent and ironic lectionary omissions is one in which a woman takes the prophetic role of anointing Jesus' head (Mt. 26:6-13). Even though he promises, "I assure you, wherever the good news is proclaimed throughout the world, what she did will be spoken of in memory of her," most of us have never heard about the woman who seemed to understand Jesus' Paschal mission best.

In Matthew's Palm Sunday passion account (Year A), we see that even though the passage begins with the woman anointing Jesus, the lectionary omits these verses (26:6-13). The optional short version also concludes just before the mention of the faithful women who had followed Jesus to Jerusalem from Galilee. The Gospel reading for Wednesday of Holy Week repeats the Palm Sunday reading, again excluding the woman's anointing. The Palm Sunday passion reading from Mark's gospel in Year B again makes the anointing by a woman and the witness of women at the cross optional. Lastly, John's account of Mary of Bethany anointing Jesus at a banquet served by Martha, is not included in the reading of the passion on Good Friday but is only read on a weekday ...Monday in Holy Week.

The anointing passages we do hear about are those in which the woman is a penitent sinner who washes Jesus' feet with her hair. Our daughters and sons hear about this woman every year on Thursday of the 24th week in OT and on the Eleventh Sunday in OT (Year C). They may never hear about the prophetic woman who anointed Jesus' head to strengthen him in preparation for his passion. This reinforces the unfortunate notion that women and sin are invariably linked. How often do we hear about Peter the repentant sinner even though he surely qualifies, as would Matthew the tax collector and Paul the tentmaker?

- Another project under way is the **Report Card Project** (<http://womensjusticecoalition.org>). It is part of the Quixote Center's program "Catholics Speak Out," which encourages reform in the Roman Catholic Church and adult responsibility for faith. In particular, the project works towards equality and justice within the Church and dialogue between the laity and hierarchy on issues of sexuality, sexual orientation and reproduction. The Report Card Project will rate the U.S. bishops' progress on meeting certain measurable benchmarks to hold the bishops accountable for their [promise](http://www.usccb.org/laity/words.shtml) (<http://www.usccb.org/laity/words.shtml>) to find alternative ways for women to exercise leadership in the Church. For more information, visit <http://www.quixote.org/cso/>.

## **A Good Day with SNAP**

*SNAP's national convention was held last weekend in Jersey City, NJ. VOTF president Mary Pat Fox addressed the gathering on Saturday. The text of her talk is on the VOTF website. What follows is Mary Pat's assessment of her day with SNAP.*

### **SNAP Conference Recap**

Of the 300 persons at the SNAP national convention held in Jersey City, New Jersey this past weekend, over 50 were members of Voice of the Faithful.

The main speakers included: Jason Berry, Marci Hamilton, Bishop Tom Gumbleton, Tom Doyle, and Richard Sipes. The discussion picked up by the press was that of Bishop Gumbleton because a few members questioned his culpability as a bishop in knowing what had gone on and not telling anyone. Bishop Gumbleton, in his response to the questions posed from the floor and later Tom Doyle, in his address, explained how one could be in the midst of a problem like this and not be “in the know.” Bishop Gumbleton talked about how the positions he held were not in administrative jobs where he would have known about priests’ assignments or their discipline. According to Tom, once they figure out what you will not stand for, you get “frozen out.” It caused me to remember times when I was not “in the know.” It was usually when people were doing something unethical or a bit shady and knew I would not approve, condone or be a part of it. That is how you keep a secret quiet – you only let those in who will be incriminated along with you. They then have “skin in the game” and risk themselves along with you if they talk. I found Bishop Gumbleton to be a humble man trying to help support a cause that he believes is working for justice - SNAP.

I was honored to give a short [speech \(LINK here\)](#) in the main tent. In addition SNAP provided us with a room for a breakout session called “VOTF Caucus.” We had 30 VOTF members attend including Barbara Blaine, National Director of SNAP, and VOTF members from NY, Chicago, IL; New Jersey; Minnesota; Arizona; Boston, MA; and Philadelphia, PA. Everyone shared the work they are doing on the Campaigns for Accountability. It was great to hear that so many are doing so much in this regard; we are improving statutes of limitations in many states and financial accountability in dioceses – a step at a time. VOTF members are making things happen. We also had a few prospective members join the group because they were interested in the campaigns.

Being in the company of so many brave people was a humbling experience and a privilege. It also re-inspired me in the work we share. We learned a lot about each other – that always makes for a very good day.

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

### **A Voice of Their Own: The Authority of the Local Parish**

by William A. Clark, S.J.

*Reviewed by Susan Troy, VOTF Boston, MA*

In his book *A Voice of Their Own: the Authority of the Local Parish*, William A. Clark has written a powerful, inspiring, contemporary, ecclesiology based on a rich theological and practical examination of the life and authority of the local parish, of the authority of concrete human experience. Clark articulates the experience of so many Catholics who find the “real” church, the “genuine” church, to be the church they experience/experienced at the parish level. Clark helps us see that the universal Church is embodied in every local parish, and that every local parish defines the universal Church. Mutual respect and a renewed sense of mission should flow from this understanding.

Clark’s theological discourse is grounded in the real life experiences and observations of three local parish communities, St. Joseph’s in Biddeford, Maine, St. Thomas Aquinas in Kingston, Jamaica, and St. Matthew’s in Dorchester, Massachusetts. Clark states in his introduction, “As *social* foundations for Catholicism, the importance of such local groups is...perhaps self-evident. To emphasize their *theological* importance is the purpose of this book.” These are parishes of which Clark has been a member, a believer, and an observer as theologian, priest and as a Catholic. His thesis is grounded in, and continually underscored by, his focus on and respect for the lived experience of specific communities and his personal involvement with these communities. This contemporary ecclesiology is grounded in the authority of faith communicated and lived out in parish community, the authority of the faithful gathered as church.

Preeminence is given to the “authority” of interpersonal relationships within the local parish, relationships that he describes as foundational to any theology of church, since all “church” is grounded in the Gospel life of Jesus Christ. The only models for structure found within the Gospels are the “structure” and “authority” of faith, a structure of discipleship and of friendship within community. Think of the defining “structures” of Jesus’ public life; communal meals, shared prayer, shared work, instructing disciples and followers under the stars, on the mountain side, from their workplaces, in their homes, on the road.

There is an implicit authority in Clark’s own scholarship. This “authority” is the genuine admiration and respect Clark demonstrates as he continues to observe and experience a parish faith community. Clark’s thesis is that the local parish community is the genuine embodiment of the universal church; that to understand what it means to be “church” we must look to the local parish. It is the local parish that “informs” what it means to be church in the world. Clark’s theology of parish, of local community, rests in part on the theology of Karl Rahner, and the so-called “ecclesiology from below.” However, this is not a denial of the hierarchical church or of the universal church. Rather, Clark offers a hermeneutic of local ecclesiology informing and enriching an understanding of the universal nature of the church. The universal church’s reality is its life lived out in each and every local parish community; otherwise, our understanding of church would just be a series of dogmatic proclamations. Church “on paper” is not church. The local parish

community is where faith is formed, this is where Christ is met and understood, this is where teachings are received and incorporated. The local parish is not just one part of the whole, but, in the real world represents the entirety of “church.”

Clark’s view comes at an important point in the history of church, especially in the US. It adds a great deal to the ongoing discussion of authority—the *sensus fidelium*, the magisterium, and the relationship between the two. We see that one cannot exist without the other, and that a closer theological examination of the real life of the local parish community would strengthen the discussion and strengthen the understanding in contemporary society of the place of the universal church. A new found respect for the voice of the people from within the parish community would go far to restore trust within the contemporary church after the revelations of clergy sexual abuse of children.

Clark’s book offers *Voice of the Faithful* much reassurance for the strength of its mission statement. From the very beginning VOTF insisted on being a voice of the faithful, a voice from within the church. Catholics have understood intrinsically that the very life of the church in the world was being threatened by the fact of the abuse scandal, by the autocracy of clericalism, by the reality of decades of decline in mass attendance and vocations. Nonetheless, members of *Voice of the Faithful* proclaimed that this church was still their church, and stepped forward to do the hard work to reform, heal and go forward together.

In Clark’s case studies, we find that the church can only be understood as it struggles and flourishes in context. What does it mean to integrate the next wave of immigrants into your parish? What does a government’s social policy have to do with your understanding of your need to build up the reign of God? What are the gospels saying to you today as you struggle with relationships, with basic needs, with crisis? The context for church is the real world. Given this example, Clark necessarily “elevates” the importance of the “faithful” in being a determining factor in defining the universal church and as being the source of genuine authority. This is not a relativistic theology. The opposite is true. *Foundational for Clark is simply and profoundly the acceptance of the truth of God’s radical gift of grace to each person. Therefore, each person carries that grace and can put that grace into action in the world.*

*A Voice of Their Own: The Authority of the Local Parish* should be required reading for all Catholics concerned about the church, in particular by every Catholic parish pastor, every seminarian and every lay minister.

## **Church Ethics and Its Organizational Context: Learning from the Sex Abuse Scandal in the Catholic Church**

Edited by Jean M. Bartunek, Mary Ann Hinsdale, and James F. Keenan

*Reviewed by Catherine McKeen, VOTF Long Island, NY*

As Voice of the Faithful emerged in 2002 in response to the sex abuse scandal, it defined reform of church structures as one of its major goals. Now four years later, with an end not yet in sight, the case for reform continues to be built.

Paul Lakeland, religious studies professor at Fairfield University, puts it bluntly: “It is beyond dispute that the scandal pointed to a crisis in the episcopacy. Poor leadership in dealing with the scandal has led to the kind of public scrutiny to which bishops are not accustomed.”

That public scrutiny has been painful for everyone in the church. But it has also inspired a number of high-level conversations intended to help the Catholic community map a way forward. The present volume adds to that effort. It gathers together essays from 19 gifted scholars who participated in a 2004 conference organized within the Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century project at Boston College. All participants were asked to explore the question of professional ethics for church ministers.

Scholars who typically focus on theology or ecclesiology were joined by experts in disciplines such as law, sociology, history, organization studies, and other social sciences. The essays make fascinating reading as the perspectives shift, for example, from seeing the church as guardian of sacred truths and apostolic legitimacy to seeing the church as institution operating in a secular, democratic environment.

Jean Bartunek, professor of organization studies at Boston College, argues that faced with threats to image and power, organization leaders typically resort to silence, denial – and in the case of the Catholic hierarchy – refusal to recognize or collaborate with laity. Michelle Dillon, sociology professor at the University of New Hampshire, describes the church’s response to claims of abuse as more focused on the preservation of economic and legal capital than on moral and pastoral truth. Several others see the church’s mission as deeply compromised by revelations about the inner workings of ecclesial bureaucracy.

Another group of essays explores ethical standards and training for ministers and church leaders. James Keenan, Boston College professor of theological ethics, attributes the abuse scandal and crisis to the lack of training in professional ethics in seminaries, divinity schools, and schools of theology and to a clerical culture bereft of basic professional norms for due process, confidentiality, or open discussion of problems. “The cultures that form our leadership,” Keenan writes, “often resist professional ethical standards.”

Other essays weigh in on the pros and cons of ethics training and professional codes of conduct for church ministers.

The essays that close the book examine what constitutes an “ethical church culture.” James Post, cofounder and former president of Voice of the Faithful and management professor at Boston University, believes the abuse scandal brought into the light a clerical culture of secrecy, privilege, and power that shaped the behavior of clergy and bishops and showed as well fundamental disparities between clergy and laity about ethical

conduct in such situations. “In short,” Post writes, “the entire scope of church life is ripe for reexamination.”

Patricia Chang, research professor in sociology at Boston College, sees a professional code of ethics for priests as “problematic” partly because of unequal relations between diocesan priests and bishops and partly because such a strategy would reinforce the idea of ordained professionals as an insider group within the church. Chang deplores an organizational culture which excluded laity from the definition of the church’s primary interests. What’s needed now, she argues, is a “relational ethics that includes all the peoples of the church.... Only when the organizational culture shifts toward seeing the laity as part of ‘us’ rather than ‘them’ will the bureaucratic culture begin to reflect the interests of the entire church rather than simply the ordained.”

These essays take us to yet another level in our understanding of our church, and this is useful as far as it goes. I would like to have seen an analysis of the chilling effect of the *Virtus Model Code of Pastoral Conduct* designed for the bishops by the National Catholic Risk Retention Group, Inc. which most dioceses adopted in 2002. To protect itself and its assets, a diocese may require everyone in ministry – ordained, religious, lay volunteers and employees -- to endorse a code of conduct. Still, the *Virtus* model seems to exempt bishops from the same requirements and certainly leaves untouched the smoldering issue of their role in a scandal that will impact the church’s mission far into the future. Here then is matter for another conference.

### **LETTER to the editor**

“To answer the question Tom Groome asked in 2002 [*In the Vineyard*, June 29 – “What do you MEAN ‘change the Church?’”], I came up with another question and a possible answer. The question has to be, "At what point did *the Church* need to change? The answer lies in an old movie title, ‘Back To The Future.’ I believe if we take a good hard look at the STORY of the early Church, we will find the blueprint for the future.

1) Nowhere can it be found where Jesus said, ‘Though art Peter and upon this rock I build my (Catholic, Protestant, Baptist, whatever) church.’

2) I'd be willing to wager that at least 10, maybe 11, of the twelve apostles were married and the small group of women (who in case anyone looked closely were the first to discover and SEE the risen Jesus) were simple (as in "unless you become as one of these"), thinking, everyday, non-pomp-and-circumstance individuals.

The rest as they say is history. I say let's repeat history!" *Earl Gervais, New Orleans, LA*

“Tom Groome’s question would necessarily be answered differently today than it was in 2002. In fact, it is answered differently every year that it is asked; we are changing as ‘church’ all the time because the ‘church is us’, so to speak. We are called in many directions under many circumstances. I believe a timeless answer might be that if we continue to live our faith – each of us – then and only then will we see change. Living our

faith inheres that we fight injustice – toward the survivors of abuse, toward our good and persevering priests, toward women and toward the disenfranchised everywhere in a world (and a Church) that seems to have made compartmentalization an altar.” *Name withheld on request*