

In the Vineyard

June 28, 2007

“If the unfinished business of the sexual abuse crisis in Roman Catholicism had to be expressed in one word, a theologian and a canon lawyer agreed today, it would be ‘accountability.’” *From National Catholic Reporter coverage of Catholic Theological Society of America meeting as reported at <http://ncrcafe.org/node/1166>.*

NATIONAL News

Good news in Delaware: A landmark win for **protecting children** in Delaware arrived as the state senate passed SB 29 unanimously. See DIOCESE/State Watch below.

Survivor Community Notes: It’s not too late to attend/support SNAP’s annual convention. Go to www.snapnetwork.org for details. [Also, see what a few seconds and a few clicks can do for survivors – Ohio SNAP leader and VOTF member Claudia Vercellotti shares an idea in **Survivor Community News** in this issue.]

SAVE THE DATE: The **2007 VOTF convention**, “Disciples in Action,” October 19-21 in Providence RI. Watch the July issues of *In the Vineyard* for program, speakers and registration information.

Read the recent **VOTF letter to US bishops** [here](#) and the Summer/Fall [action plans](#) from the 2005 Convocation Implementation Team.

VOTF president Mary Pat Fox’s statement to membership on the Sunday June 24 *New York Times* coverage of the VOTF call for ecclesial **review** of mandatory celibacy; also note the VOTF Northern California statement at <http://www.votf-sf.org>. [Subscribers can access the NYT text at http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/24/us/24voice.html?_r=1&oref=slogin; the text is also available at <http://voicefromthedesert.blogspot.com/>.]

What can VOTF learn from the Catholic Worker Movement? See VOTF Cleveland Jack Rakosky’s **Book Review** in this issue.

- Want a jump start on summer reading AND a short course on the Catholic intellectual tradition? You can do no better than the excellent current issue of *Resources* – the Boston College Church in the 21st Century Center’s publication. See more in **Summer Reading** below.

Literally, VOTF was “at the table” on June 9 for the Fordham University conference on **“Leadership in the U.S. Catholic Church”**. Voice of the Faithful was the only reform group represented on the dais with two places on the agenda: VOTF president Mary Pat Fox participated in a panel on the clergy sex abuse crisis alongside the researchers conducting the “Causes and Context” study; David O’Brien, VOTF Trustee and Loyola Professor of Roman Catholic Studies at the College of the Holy Cross, was a panelist on

“New Movements”. [Click here](#) to read Mary Pat’s talk; also read another take on the conference from Fr. Paul Berube, “Discoveries in the Bronx,” in Commentary.

DIOCESE/State Watch

Good news in Delaware: A landmark win for **protecting children** in Delaware arrived as the state senate passed SB 29 unanimously. See the joint VOTF Delaware and National [statement](#) and the details of this success story at <http://www.delawareonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070620/NEWS/70620060>.

- Also note the [VOTF resolution](#) for the “reform of laws to strengthen the protection of children from sexual abuse” at http://www.votf.org/Who_We_Are/nrcresolutions.html; NRC Representative Bob Schwiderski adds, “The VOTF affiliates in Minnesota also have a legislative initiative for protecting our children in support of [HF 1239](#) and [SF 1096](#) addressing sexual abuse recovery and prevention.”
- As reported in an earlier issue, the **USCCB National Review Board** has a new chair: "Judge Michael R. Merz, of Dayton, Ohio, has been named chair of the National Review Board (NRB) by Bishop William S. Skylstad, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Merz's appointment became effective June 1. He succeeds Patricia O'Donnell Ewers, Ph.D. as chair. He was named an NRB member in 2004. For details go to <http://salt.claretianpubs.org/sjnews/2007/06/sjn0706c.html>

DIOCESE/State Watch inside: **Portland OR** archdiocesan release of previously unavailable documents relating to clergy abuse of children; abuse charges against a **New Jersey** priest cleared by the Vatican; the **Los Angeles** diocese ordered to release documents; the **Cleveland OH** diocese ordered by a federal judge to release documents; **VOTF Long Island NY** saddened by allegations against a priest whose support was singular and valued in the Rockville Centre diocese; a retired **Vermont** priest testifies to the longtime diocesan policy of protecting pedophile priests from prosecution and protecting itself from lawsuits; **VOTF Chicagoland** press release on principal’s termination.

<p>Reminder: The <i>Vineyard</i> will be covered for the months of July and August by VOTF vice-president Sally Vance-Trembath. Until September, please send your comments, inquiries and concerns to Sally at svancetrembath@votf.org. Happy Summer '07 to all! <i>PLT</i></p>

SITE-Seeing, Etc.

For subscribers to *National Catholic Reporter*: The **Catholic Theological Society of America** (CTSA) has picked up their own drive for financial accountability among our bishops (<http://ncrcafe.org/node/1170>) but its outgoing president warns against CTSA’s

public criticism of Vatican and bishops (<http://ncrcafe.org/node/1172>). John Allen provides comprehensive coverage of the CTSA meeting.

Thought-provoking **commentary in *Newsweek*** magazine by Marcus Borg:
"Without questioning, faith is idolatrous. Just as patriotism without questioning risks becoming idolatrous nationalism, so faith without questioning risks becoming idolatrous religion. To explain: when faith is defined as unquestioning acceptance of 'tenets or traditions,' whether drawn from the Bible or doctrine or both, then the object of faith is no longer God, but the tenets and traditions themselves. Something other than God has been given an absolute status - which is what makes it idolatrous."
<http://tinyurl.com/36o98w>

COMMENTARY

“Discoveries in the Bronx” – Fr. Paul Berube, Newburyport MA

Book Review - Cleveland VOTF's Jack Rakosky reviews Mark and Louise Zwick's book *The Catholic Worker Movement: Intellectual and Spiritual Origins* Paulist Press, New York/Mahwah, New Jersey, 2005.

SUMMER reading suggestions:

- *Resources* is the publication of the **Boston College Church in the 21st Century** Center. It is published “in partnership with the publications” from which the articles in *Resources* have been selected. These include *America*, *Commonweal*, the *Tablet*, “Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education,” “Current Issues” (published by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, *Origins*, and the “Woodstock Report.” The current issue has particular import in the voices it gathers on the subject of the Catholic intellectual tradition. As Margaret Steinfels says, “It is not an oxymoron!” Not only has the three-year-old Center gone a great distance toward validating Steinfels’ observation but *Resources* recaps some of the thinking Catholics may be missing in the Center’s many public lectures and discussions. For more information about the Center and/or for your FREE copy of *Resources*, go to <http://www.bc.edu/church21/publications/c21resources.html>.
 - The C21 program since its inception is in your hands with the publication of a series of volumes covering the broad range of issues touching our faith community. To order one book or the whole series, go to <http://www.bc.edu/church21/publications/c21bookseries.html>.
- A new book from VOTF Bridgeport CT's Joe O'Callaghan – ***Electing Our Bishops: How the Catholic Church Should Choose Its Leaders*** (Rowman and Littlefield, 2007) is available at Amazon.com. Joe is a frequent speaker on the subject and history of bishop elections, which has been a primary focus of the VOTF Bridgeport CT affiliate. Joe will also be a speaker at the VOTF Convention in Providence RI, Oct- 19-21, 2007.

- *Voices from the Council* by Michael Prendergast, ed. M. D. Ridge (Pastoral Press, August 2004, available at amazon.com). As editor (and VOTF member) Ridge says, “The book presents a series of interviews/memoirs by people from the six inhabited continents who were at the Second Vatican Council — bishops, newsmen, musicians, and the lone woman, Sr. Mary Luke Tobin — and brings those heady days into amazing perspective.”
- Jason Berry (long-time VOTF member and supporter) and Gerald Renner wrote *Vows of Silence: The Abuse of Power in the Papacy of John Paul II* (Free Press 2004, available at amazon.com). This book was responsible for a reactivation of the canon case filed by Maciel’s victims, which resulted in Maciel being asked by the pope to undertake a life of prayer and repentance. Jason is now working on a film based on the book. For details, visit <http://voicefromthedesert.blogspot.com/2007/06/jason-berrys-film-on-marcial-maciel.html>.
- By Boston College professor of theology James Keenan, an elegant consideration of Catholic moral tradition – and how to develop your own – *Moral Wisdom* (Sheed and Ward, 2004). Available through Amazon.com.
- From Walter Ciszek, an unforgettable story of faith, priesthood and ministry, *He Leadeth Me* (Ignatius Press, 1995). Available at Amazon.com.

QUOTE for our time: “Tradition is the record of a community’s conversation over time about its meaning and direction. A living tradition is a tradition that can raise questions about itself.” Margaret Steinfeld, as noted in *Resources*, Spring 2007 at <http://www.bc.edu/church21/publications/c21resources.html>.

SURVIVOR Community News

[Claudia Vercellotti has an idea: In the spirit of protecting children anywhere, we might protect children everywhere. Claudia started the first Ohio support group for victims of clergy sexual abuse and went on to help with the launching and support of four other chapters within SNAP. She also worked extensively on Ohio Senate Bill 17 and alongside VOTF members and leaders John Bender, Tom Byrnes and Kris Ward.

This effort is about a street sign that sends the wrong message. David Clohessy’s op-ed makes the case at <http://toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070530/OPINION04/705300310.>]

From Claudia Vercellotti: We've asked people to print David Clohessy’s op-ed, sign it and send it to the Mayor's office, the City Councilman whose district this is in and the Toledo Mud Hen's. At \$1.23 total cost (the cost of 3 stamps, we think that this is the best way to send the message that this sign needs to come down for all of the reasons and then

some, contained in David's commentary. We think with the help of VOTF, we could give the Pahl family (the family of the murdered woman religious) some added measure of peace, while helping crime victims too.

Claudia Vercellotti, VOTF Member & SNAP Leader, Toledo, Ohio

Print, sign and send the op-ed and your opinion to those identified below:

Link to the op-ed

Mayor of Toledo, Ohio

Carleton S. Finkbeiner
One Government Center
640 Jackson
Suite 2200
Toledo, Ohio 43604
Phone: 419-245-1001
Fax: 419-245-1370

Michael D. Ashford *(Represents the district where the sign is located)

District 4 (D)

Toledo City Council
One Government Center, Suite 2120
Toledo, Ohio 43604
Phone: 419-245-1050
Fax: 419-245-1072

Joe Napoli

General Manager
Toledo Mud Hens (feeder team for the Detroit Tigers)
Fifth Third Field
406 Washington Street
Toledo, OH 43604
Phone: 419-725-HENS

DIOCESE/State Watch

VOTF Long Island NY: VOTF Long Island NY saddened by allegations against a priest whose support was singular and valued in the Rockville Centre diocese. Newsday.com reported: "A Long Island priest who has been vocal in urging a healing of divisions in the church over the sex abuse scandal is himself being investigated for an allegation that he sexually abused a 10-year-old boy more than a decade ago, officials said Thursday night.

The Suffolk district attorney's office said it received a May 31 letter from the Diocese of Rockville Centre attorney saying there had been an allegation that the Rev. Gerald

Twomey abused the boy 'in the period of 1994-95.'" The VOTF Long Island press release of June 9 said: "We are shocked and saddened by this allegation made against Fr. Twomey. It is no secret that he has been supportive of LIVOTF from the beginning. Fr. Twomey was one of the few priests in the Rockville Centre Diocese to openly stand with us. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge that the allegation against him is a serious one; and if proven to be true, his conduct was reprehensible.

Based upon the limited information available to us at this time, we believe that the Diocese of Rockville Centre has acted appropriately in this matter and [we] are in complete agreement with diocesan spokesperson Sean Dolan's statement in which he noted, *'I think it is irrelevant whether you support one point of view or another. We just continue to pray for all those involved in the situation.'*" Peggy O'Neill, Phil Megna (Co-chairs - LIVOTF)

New Jersey: "The Rev. William J. Dowd, a popular Bergen County priest who was accused in 2002 of sexual misconduct with minors, has been cleared by church officials in Rome. The decision means the 67-year-old Dowd can wear clerical garb, celebrate Mass and represent himself as a Catholic priest for the first time in more than five years. But he won't be reassigned to St. Luke's in Ho-Ho-Kus, where he had been pastor and where some parishioners had rallied to his defense." See the on-line New Jersey *Herald* at

<http://www.northjersey.com/page.php?qstr=eXJpcnk3ZjczN2Y3dnFIZUVFeXkzJmZnYmVsN2Y3dnFIZUVFeXk3MTUwNDkyJnlyaXJ5N2Y3MTdmN3ZxZWVFRXl5Mg==>.

Richmond VA: "A man's attempt to hold the Roman Catholic Diocese of Richmond financially liable for his alleged childhood abuse by two priests was rejected by the Virginia Supreme Court on Friday."

http://www.wvec.com/news/topstories/stories/wvec_local_060807_richmond_diocese_299aecdd.html.

Portland OR: The *Oregonian* noted the release by the Archdiocese of Portland of over two dozen previously secret documents relating to clergy abuse of children. The Portland Archdiocese became the first in the US to file for bankruptcy protection in the face of mounting allegations. Read more at

http://blog.oregonlive.com/breakingnews/2007/06/archdiocese_releases_secret_do.html.

Cleveland OH: According to the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, "A federal judge has ordered the Cleveland Catholic Diocese to turn over reams of financial records, including information about a bank account controlled by former Bishop Anthony Pilla and payments made to the family of a clergyman after he was accused of molesting students." For the full text of this story, go to

<http://voicefromthedesert.blogspot.com/2007/06/cleveland-diocese-ordered-to-disclose.html>.

Vermont: According to WCAX-TV News, Vermont's "Roman Catholic Diocese had a longtime policy of protecting pedophile priests from prosecution and protecting itself from lawsuits. The testimony came from a retired priest who worked with four bishops

on church policy including new policies aimed at preventing priest sex abuse.” For the full story, go to <http://www.wcax.com/Global/story.asp?S=6698956&nav=4QcS>.

VOTF Chicagoland press release: The firing of an elementary school principal after she objected to parish/diocesan handling of a child abuse allegation has galvanized many who think *first* of protecting our children. Read more on this story (from WBBM 780 Chicago radio station), go to <http://voicefromthedesert.blogspot.com/2007/06/principal-fired-over-criticism-of-sex.html>. The VOTF Chicagoland press release follows:

June 9, 2007 – Chicagoland Voice of the Faithful, a lay Catholic organization, is outraged by the recent firing of Our Lady of the Westside School principal Barbara Westrick after she spoke out against the Archdiocese of Chicago's mishandling of the recent sexual abuse allegations against a priest at the school.

"Instead of losing her job, Westrick should be held in esteem for her courage in standing up and speaking out against abusive priests and those who protect them," said Chicagoland VOTF president Sandy Stilling-Seehausen.

As a school principal, Ms Westrick is required by law to report any and all suspicions of sexual abuse to proper authorities. Upon learning of such abuse, she went to her superiors. When they failed to act to protect additional children from further abuse, she called the police. Now she is being punished for her proper actions.

VOTF Chicagoland finds the action taken against Ms. Westrick reprehensible and stands in support of her, said Stilling-Seehausen: "Ms. Westrick should be held up as an example of someone willing to put themselves and their careers at risk to stand up for the protection of children. She is a model that some in the Chicago Archdiocese should take a lesson from."

BOOK Review

Jack Rakosky of VOTF Cleveland OH

The Catholic Worker Movement: Intellectual and Spiritual Origins. Paulist Press, New York/Mahwah, New Jersey, 2005

Mark and Louise Zwick write in their book, "The Catholic Worker was and is a lay movement without official status in the church and without formally defined leadership." According to the authors, Dorothy Day has been called "the most significant, interesting and influential person in the history of American Catholicism" and "the most outstanding lay Catholic of the twentieth Century." They also say that co-founder Peter Maurin was described as "the best-read man that he had ever met" by the Jesuit who edited *America* magazine at the time. "He can cram more truth into your cranium at high speed in a single hour than any ordinary person in a week," said John Moody of Moody's Investors. His obituaries were found not only in the *Industrial Worker*, which was on the

government's list of subversive organizations, but also on the front page of the Vatican newspaper.

VOTF may be able to learn much from the strengths and weaknesses of the Catholic Worker movement. Mark and Louise Zwick are the founders of the Houston Catholic Worker called Casa Juan Diego as well as the founders and editors of the *Houston Catholic Worker Newspaper*. In this book they do much to document two strengths of the movement. Broad intellectuality and deep spirituality were combined with constant and persistent activism.

Although Dorothy Day remains the better known public face of the Catholic Worker movement, she always acknowledged that Peter Maurin was her primary teacher. Peter had been a Christian Brother for a few years in France. He then became a member of a lay movement for greater involvement in the world that used small study groups. Peter was very strong on both intellectual and spiritual formation. He liked the 100 Great Books program that was widely publicized in the 1930's and felt that the Catholic Worker ought to have a similar list of books. Peter was both a peasant and a scholar. He saw the integration of study and work as essential to Christian life. Monasticism, especially Irish monasticism with its emphasis upon intellectual and physical labor, provided the model for "making laborers out of scholars, and scholars out of laborers," or as we might say, making doers out of thinkers and thinkers out of doers.

The book documents the Catholic Worker's varied intellectual interests including: writings that supported its communitarian personalist philosophy, the Liturgical Movement because of Virgil Michel's emphasis upon the connection between liturgy and social justice, the history of Christianity because of its evidence for Christian nonviolent thinking and practice, and the social teachings of the Popes. Their intellectual interests stood them well in dealing with bishops (who were ignorant of many of these things) and average Catholics (the Catholic New York police were reluctant to arrest people with signs proclaiming papal teaching). Ultimately their homework on the history of nonviolence paved the way for the papacy's current view that the possibility of a just war is unlikely.

Both Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day believed that the most important thing to do was to be a saint. This book documents the extensive list of spirituality employed within the Catholic Worker movement including monasticism, Franciscan, Jesuit, and Carmelite spirituality. They brought all this together to support their movement. Again it was helpful in dealing with bishops (the New York chancery did not want to be known for having persecuted a saint) and laity, as well as for their own personal edification.

The issues of labor, poverty and violence that spawned the Catholic Worker movement are very different from the issues of child sexual abuse and accountability that spawned VOTF. However our issues like their issues involve everyone, not just the Church. The exploitation of children and lack of management accountability by large institutions are national and international issues. They deserve all the intellectual and spiritual resources that we can assemble.

The communitarian personalist philosophy was at the heart of the Catholic Worker movement. It emphasized both individual personal responsibility (doing something not just talking and complaining) as well as working together locally in houses of hospitality. The Catholic Worker national organization was a very loose one, mainly using the *Catholic Worker* newspaper. Their organizational philosophy and practices merit close study by VOTF. See my more extended review essay “Blowing the Dynamite of the Church: What Can VOTF Learn from the Catholic Worker Movement?” on the VOTF Cleveland website <http://www.votfcleveland.org/>.

COMMENTARY

Discoveries in the Bronx

From Fr. Paul Berube, senior priest in residence at Immaculate Conception parish,
Newburyport MA

Someone once told me that a retired priest should just keep moving because it's a bit more difficult to hit a moving target. So that led me to the Bronx to make three discoveries. The first was pointed out by a New Yorker priest friend through whose struggling parish we were traveling on a bus. “We are now on **Boston Post Road,**” he said, pointing to the street sign, and added, “It begins down around Wall Street where most of it has been absorbed by Manhattan's avenues”. I reminded him that it was just another thing we shared because Boston Post Road (Rte. 20 MA) also transected my parish in Wayland.

But why go to the Bronx? It certainly wasn't for baseball. After Johnny Pesky signed a baseball for me in 1947, I went to “de-tox” and was cured before the whole thing was taken over by big bucks. No, I went there to discover that I was the only Boston priest at a conference held at and sponsored by Fordham University on “*Leadership in the U. S. Catholic Church.*” One other Bostonian was present as moderator, Tim Muldoon, Director of the Church in the 21st Century Center at Boston College. As an eternal, if not optimist then at least idealist, the conference did not disappoint. It quickly became evident that clerical leadership at this time is a quest that only Don Quixote would pursue. Not being from La Mancha, I concurred with the suggestion that the **Voice of the Faithful (VOTF)** belongs in the 21st Century American Catholic Hall of Fame. Mary Pat Fox, president of VOTF, served on a panel that looked at the clergy sex abuse scandal's impact on dioceses.

Both there and elsewhere, I've recently been struck by the word “conversion.” Coincidentally, a “change of heart” was equally urged by the departing leader of the American Catholic Theological Association, which was meeting in Los Angeles. This is a critical time for the American Catholic Church. It's not a time for wimps nor prophets of doom. It's a time for bold ideas and inclusive leadership. Above all, it may well be the

time for women and men - the laity- to emerge as leaders. That's what Americans do best.

The third discovery was right there in the quad near the University Chapel. I could not believe my eyes...it was a revelation, almost miraculous-like. Presiding over the space is a large sculpture, the bust of a 19th Century layman: Orestes Augustus Brownson.* The work of Boston sculptor Samuel J. Kitson, it honors the greatest layman to emerge from the American Catholic Church of his time. A Vermont Yankee convert, a patriot and above all a defender of the faith, Brownson was an intellectual giant leading an immigrant but universal Church in a new land. There is hope if we will but encourage and provide space for our young people. At last, there is the Leadership. *Fr Paul*

[*Brownson was many things before his conversion to Catholicism – a Presbyterian, a Universalist and a Transcendentalist. As a preacher, labor organizer and writer he had a sizable following in Boston and in New York City. A Google search will provide additional background. For a quick beginning, go to <http://www.bartleby.com/65/br/Brownson.html>. For more information, try <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03001a.htm>.]