

In the Vineyard

June 5, 2008

In this issue: VOTF awards Bishop Robinson the Priest of Integrity Award and more on Bishop Robinson's US tour; Fr. Tom Doyle reviews *The Power and the Glory*; VOTF National Representative Council minutes from the April 2008 meeting in PA; the end of an era arriving with the upcoming retirement of CTA's founders and co-executive directors Dan and Sheila Daley (see [SITE-Seeing, Etc.](#)); "With gifts large and small, parishes across the sprawling Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles are answering an appeal from Cardinal Roger M. Mahony to help the archdiocese dig out of the financial hole resulting from its multimillion-dollar legal settlements with victims of clergy sexual abuse" (see [DIOCESE/State Watch](#)); see *your* invitation from the VOTF National Prayerful Voice Working Group; VOTF New Hampshire audit finds "improved tone at the top" (see Carolyn Disco recap in [Affiliate News](#)).

NATIONAL News

VOTF president Dan Bartley presented Bishop Geoffrey Robinson with the VOTF Priest of Integrity award, noting the powerful source of encouragement that Bishop Robinson's witness provides the Church (click here for [full text](#) of the award and here for the [award's](#) definition and history).

The VOTF National Representative Council semi-annual meeting was held in April in Philadelphia PA. Click [here](#) for a summary of the minutes.

Need to catch up on our occasional one-pager "Focus"? Click [here](#).

SURVIVOR Community News

Barbara Dorris of SNAP notes the award of The Seal of Excellence by the Independent Charities of America. To read more about the award, go to <http://www.independentcharities.org/info.asp?Title=The+ICA+Seal+of+Excellence&sBody=BIA>.

PRAYERFUL Voice Working Group Invitation

From Gaile Pohlhaus, Chair of the VOTF Prayerful Voice Working Group

The readings for the Mass on the Ninth Sunday of Ordinary Time have a theme that should jump out at us in VOTF. The first reading from Deuteronomy reminds us to get our priorities straight. The second reading from Paul's letter to the Church in Rome tells us in a straightforward manner that it is our faith that saves us. The gospel reading clearly says our actions must be based in our faith so that they will bear fruit.

On what, then, should our actions in VOTF be based? Easy answer—our mission statement: *To provide a prayerful voice, attentive to the Spirit, through which the Faithful can actively participate in the governance and guidance of the Catholic Church.*

This will lead us successfully to our goals: To support survivors of clergy sexual abuse; to support priests of integrity; to shape structural change within the Catholic Church.

This invitation is for *you* to join the Prayerful Voice Working Group. The first commitment of the group is to recite faithfully the Prayerful Voice prayer each day at noon: “Jesus, Lord and Brother, help us with our faithfulness. Please hear our voice, and let our voice be heard. Amen”

If you or anyone you know is willing to make this commitment from their heart, please contact PrayerfulVoice@yahoo.com.

AFFILIATE Notes

Bishop Gerald Barbarito met with VOTF Palm Beach shortly after the papal visit. Why is this important? In part, this meeting matters because “VOTF National keeps the lines of communication open between Catholics in a diocese like Palm Beach and those in other parts of the country and the world ...” where similar challenges may exist. Click [here](#) for the complete VOTF message distributed to all members.

See Affiliate News – New Hampshire for Carolyn Disco’s report on the third annual audit of the NH diocese. **New Hampshire Attorney General Kelly Ayotte** and Associate Attorney General Kristin Spath spoke at a Voice of the Faithful meeting last month.

DIOCESE/State Watch

Los Angeles CA: Cardinal Mahony’s plea for help with the diocese’s multimillion-dollar legal settlement found generous response. “Blessed with a nest egg of nearly \$1.5 million, a Woodland Hills parish donated almost all of it, leaving just \$1,000 in its savings account. An Encino church offered a \$100,000 interest-free loan. And a Boyle Heights parish decided it could spare \$500 after ruling out the idea of raising money with tamale sales.” For the full story, see the *Los Angeles Times* at <http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/front/la-me-churches25-2008may25,0,5268357.story>.

<p>NOTE: Several readers were unable to open the “Vineyard change” page in the last issue at http://www.votf.org/vineyard/May22_2008/office.html. The “change” referred to is that Peggie Thorp is stepping down as editor of <i>In the Vineyard</i>, effective June 30. The <i>Vineyard</i> will continue to be the VOTF communication channel it has been since 2002.</p>

Book Review and Books to Note

The Power and the Glory: Inside the Dark Heart of John Paul II's Vatican by David Yallop. Reviewed by Fr. Tom Doyle, O.P., J.C.D. Tom makes the following note about his review: "I was asked to review *The Power and the Glory* by David Yallop for a prominent independent Catholic publication. After completing a requested revision and shortening of the review, I heard nothing for weeks. Upon inquiry I was advised that it had been rejected because it was thought to be "biased." The review may well be biased but then most book reviews are. On the other hand this is a review of a book that is critical of the papacy of Pope John Paul II. The review is not critical of the criticism but is a positive assessment of a book that should be an integral part of any history of the Church under the late pope. TPD

ALSO note:

Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church: Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus by Bishop Geoffrey Robinson [first run sold out but can be pre-ordered at amazon.com].

Holding Bishops Accountable: How Lawsuits Helped the Catholic Church Confront Clergy Sexual Abuse by Timothy Lytton. Harvard University Press, 2008. For a review of this book, go to http://www.richardsipe.com/Books_of_Note/lytton.html. You may also want to visit <http://www.albanylaw.edu/lytton>.

Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection and the Mission of the Church by N. T. Wright. Harper, 2008. The Anglican bishop and biblical scholar is studied internationally for his New Testament expertise. This book is a "popular" overview of his lengthier and more academic treatment of the Resurrection. In *Surprised by Hope*, Wright fills a void in Christian conversation about "life after death and reveals how most Christians get it wrong – and why it matters."

SITE-Seeing, Etc.

Call to Action, in many ways the secular response to the promises of Vatican II, will have its first change of leadership since its 1976 founding by Dan and Sheila Daley. The couple will retire this year. For more information, see http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-call-to-action_bd01jun01,0,2045666.story.

VOTF Prayerful Voice chair Gaile Pohlhaus discovered this link to "Catholic Australia: Using the Media to Proclaim the Good News": http://www.catholica.com.au/brianstake/039_bt_010608.php

Donald Cozzens speaks again in favor of optional celibacy for the Roman Catholic priesthood. See <http://www.religionnews.com/>.

QUOTE for our time: “If the Catholic Church is to regain some credibility after the many scandals of sexual abuse, it must first learn to speak with humility, intelligence, realism and compassion about all aspects of human sexuality.” *VOTF president Dan Bartley noting one of Bishop Robinson’s prescriptions for a healthier Catholic Church*

BOOK Review

THE POWER AND THE GLORY: INSIDE THE DARK HEART OF JOHN PAUL II’S VATICAN by David Yallop. New York, Carroll and Graf, Publishers, 2007
530 pages.

Reviewed by Thomas Doyle, O.P., J.C.D.

“Few papacies have inspired so many myths as the reign of Pope John Paul II.”—*The Power and the Glory*, p. 152.

After reading the first chapter of this momentous and, at times, shocking book, one is led to the conclusion that not only few papacies, but few popes have been surrounded by as much myth and misconception as Karol Wojtyla, priest, bishop, cardinal, pope and in the minds and emotions of many, *saint*. Wojtyla’s life and 26 year papacy had already prompted devoted followers to begin calling him *John Paul the Great* within the first year after his death.

Even John Paul’s most ardent supporters, including those clamoring for his fast-track canonization, would have to agree that his life and reign as pope were not without significant controversy. In spite of the massive superhuman aura surrounding him, critical studies of his papacy and his theology have come forth from reputed scholars. Nothing however, comes close to the detailed and critical examination that David Yallop concluded and which resulted in this book. The author’s widely acknowledged investigative skills are at their best in his fearless quest to discover the real Karl Wojtyla and the unvarnished truth about the Vatican that he shaped and dominated as Pope John Paul II. Yallop devoted eight years to research, interviewing knowledgeable sources and probing deeply into the reality of the man and the papacy that dominated the Catholic Church for a quarter century.

This book will shock and enrage the ardent supporters of the late pope yet one must honestly ask if the adulation and emotional attachment is actually for the carefully crafted larger-than-life image as opposed to the man himself. David Yallop’s detailed study of just about every aspect of John Paul II’s personal and public life leave no other conclusion than that the adoring faithful were really enamored of an image and not reality.

Even those who have been highly critical of the late Pope’s reign, characterized by some as “autocratic,” and of his apparent efforts to redefine the memory and spirit of Vatican Council II will be uncomfortably surprised at Yallop’s well researched and solidly supported de-mythologization of Karol Wojtyla’s early years in Poland, first under Nazi

and later under Communist occupation. He first flattens the notion, no doubt created by Vatican spinmeisters, that young Karol was an active participant in Polish partisan activities to protect Jews from the Nazis. No such thing, according to Yallop's research. Instead, the future pope "*actively attempted to persuade others to abandon violent resistance and trust in the power of prayer.*" (P. 239). Even more shocking are the results of the author's interviews with several Jewish authorities who said straight out that there are no records of Wojtyla doing anything to protect or save Jews during World War II.

Although it is widely believed that Pope John Paul II was the single most important force in the collapse of the Soviet Union, there is no lack of serious foreign policy experts, historians and political scholars who would dispute such a claim. Yallop's chapter 3, "A Very Polish Revolution" puts the pope's role in a much dimmer light, portraying him as highly cautious and retreating to reliance on prayer rather than decisive action. If one takes this rendition of the late pope's non-role in the demolition of Communism and mixes it with his tacit approval of military dictatorships in Argentina, Chile and El Salvador as well as his negative reaction to liberation theology, one can only wonder at the veracity of the claims that this man was a world class human rights advocate.

Other reviewers of this book claim that the most "explosive" chapters present the author's exhaustive research into the complex Vatican financial scandals and the papal and Vatican response to the clergy sexual abuse revelations that began in the U.S. and quickly became an international reality. Although the two prominent financial sagas, the so-called *Banco Ambrosiano* debacle that began in the 70's and featured Roberto Calvi and Archbishop Paul Marcinkas as leading players, and the Martin Frankel insurance fraud of the 90's, are complex and difficult for the average person to follow, Yallop lays both out in clear and logical terms. The theme throughout, which puts the pope in the middle of it all, is that money has a powerful way of blurring the line between integrity and greed for the denizens of the Vatican.

While I admit to being perplexed by some of the complex details of the Vatican's financial wheeling and dealing, the clergy sexual abuse phenomenon is something I am only too well aware of in painful detail. People have reacted to the clergy abuse scandal, now in its third decade, with wonder, anger, rage, shock and disbelief. A constant question has been, *Why has the Pope done nothing to stop it?* The question is certainly valid given the harsh reality that Pope John Paul II knew in detail about what was happening in the United States from the outset of the first revelations in 1984 and 1985. For eight years after the first explosion in 1984, the Pope said nothing. Then in 1993 he issued the first of 12 public statements, all of which said about the same thing. His theme was that clergy abuse was evil, the priests who did it were sinners, the poor bishops who had to put up with it were suffering and the victims needed prayer. The papal master spin doctor, Joaquin Navarro-Valls, stated in 1994 that this was primarily an American problem and then parroted the papal line that western secularism, materialism and sensationalism had a lot to do with exaggerating the problem. Within a year the Irish government fell because its leader had been implicated in the obstruction of justice in the notorious Brendan Smyth affair. But much more explosive was the exposure of Hans Hermann Groer, the Cardinal Archbishop of Vienna, as a sexual abuser turned prince of

the church, in mid-1995. This man had been appointed from nowhere by John Paul II in 1986, according to some, largely because of his promotion of Marian devotion. The pope not only did nothing when the scandal first broke, but, according to Yallop's research, was outraged at the Austrian bishops for failing to keep the lid on the terrible publicity. In spite of it all the proof was conclusive, and Groer was not only forced to resign but ordered not to perform any public functions as a cardinal or bishop.

Yallop's chapter "Beyond Belief" is a highly detailed and fact-intense short history of the clerical sex abuse problem and how it was handled during the reign of John Paul II. The stories of clergy abuse and hierarchical cover-up abound so it is not necessary to repeat them here. Suffice it to say that Yallop's rendition of the multi-faceted and totally tragic sex abuse saga is not only factually correct but his reasons as to *why* the pope remained impotent are on target. He best sums it up with a short sentence on the papal silence: "*He brought with him... to the Vatican practices that he had embraced throughout his life as a priest. They included an intense pathological hatred of any revelation that indicated the Catholic Church was not a perfect institution... All dissent must be kept behind closed doors, whether of church politics, scandalous behavior or criminal activity.*" (P. 314). The clergy sex abuse scandal contains ample doses of all three and the late pope appears to have sacrificed open advocacy for living children in favor of tacit protection of a non-living structure. He never publicly apologized to the countless victims and he consistently refused to ever meet with them. Perhaps the most egregious of his responses to the scandal was the much-publicized short-circuiting of the canonical process investigating accusations made against the celebrated founder and superior general of the Legionaries of Christ, Marcial Maciel-Degollado. That disastrous intervention plus the rehabilitation of Bernard Law by making him Archpriest of St. Mary Major Basilica convinced abuse victims that the pope cared little for them and much for the Church's hierarchical aristocracy. Yallop's description of the facts confirms this conviction.

The Power and the Glory is a book that had to be written, not to support the mythological anti-papal or anti-Catholic forces, but because the Church and contemporary culture sorely need a reality check on the hagiographic forces that have gone out of control and threaten to seriously distort a vitally important chapter of modern-day history. This book had to be written for the good of the Church as well. John Paul II was well on the way to becoming a cult figure....far removed not only from historical reality but from the role of pope as *pastoral father* and not *supreme emperor*. His memory and the good he did is much better served if remembered as it actually was and not through the lens of myth. "*His obituaries abound with myths, fantasies and dis-information*" says Yallop. "*The cult of personality which John Paul so reveled in, focuses precisely on the man but at great cost to the faith.*"

This book is about much more than Pope John Paul II. It is about the grave scandals that have been so much a part of the contemporary Church. It is about the thinly veiled political aspect of the Church that has confused earthly power with the propagation of the Word. It is about the actions, inactions and questionable responses of the late pope and the Vatican bureaucracy he created to these scandals and to the socio-cultural forces at work in the modern world. Finally, it is about a model of "Church" that has grown

increasingly at odds with the vision of Vatican II or perhaps worse, it is about a model of “Church” that has always been there, yet reduced in recent times to lurking in the shadows, waiting to be once more empowered.

We have seen in the era of John Paul II a dramatic rise in the power, influence and presence of the papacy, a rise described by its followers as a one approaching the peak of perfection of what papacy and Church ought to be. Yet with this rise, propelled by John Paul, there came the need to deny, cover or convert anything that threatened his image of the Church as *perfect society*. David Yallop may not have helped John Paul II’s cause for canonization, whether or not such a step is even relevant in today’s world. But he surely has helped the People of God by reminding us that the center and focus can never be on any leader no matter how fascinating, dramatic or colorful. It must always be grounded in the Church as People of God and not as Kingdom of the Few.

Walking with Bishop Robinson

Bishop Robinson’s book is *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church: Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus* and is available at book stores and amazon.com.

For some of the media coverage on the Bishop’s tour, see the following:

- http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2008/05/31/defying_hierarchy_bishop_urges_change/.
- <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0802769.htm>
- From Gaile Pohlhaus, see Bishop Robinson on “Faith Matters Now”: <http://abcnews.go.com/Video/playerIndex?id=4922240>; skip over the next segment and see the rest of the interview and Richard Gaillardetz' response at <http://abcnews.go.com/video/playerIndex?id=4922281>
- <http://ncronline3.org/drupal/?q=node/1087>

If you haven’t already heard Bishop Robinson, here are his remaining venues – to the best of our knowledge:

June 5, Cleveland OH, FutureChurch/chris@futurechurch.org, or emily@futurechurch.org

June 7, Seattle WA, CTA/: tombethill@comcast.net

June 10, San Diego CA, Univ. of California Faculty Club/Richard Sipe, Fr. Thomas Doyle and Patrick Wall at awrsipe@san.rr.com

June 11, VOTF CA Orange County CA/sdzida@dcslaw.com

June 12, Culver City CA, CTA; IHM; VOTF; Dignity/ Tom Honoré at 310-559-7577

June 13, San Francisco Ca, VOTF San Francisco/robt.rowden@sbcglobal.net

VOTF National Representative Council minutes

April 2008

Summary Minutes National Representative Council Meeting Philadelphia PA April 25-27, 2008

The meeting at the Renaissance Philadelphia Airport Hotel was called to order at 7:10 pm on Friday, April 25. After introductions two special announcements were made because elections would have to be held at this meeting. Bill Culleton resigned from the Steering Committee in order to put all his time and energy in finding a new job, since his job had been eliminated. Sheila Peiffer also resigned from the Steering Committee since her husband had been transferred and she would be busy moving and looking for a new job. The Chair noted that elections would be held on Sunday morning and Reps should consider submitting their names in nomination.

Preliminary Reports from Ad Hoc Committees

Preliminary reports were made by chairs of four separate Ad Hoc Committees. Final reports are due in 30 to 60 days.

Report from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Accountability of Religious Orders

Representative Ron DuBois delivered the report in the name of the committee. The committee had done research on documents from the USCCB, the National Review Board (NRB); the Conference of Religious Superiors of Men (CMSM); the Leadership Conference of Religious Women (LCWR); the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA); and a company that manages risk concerning issues of sexual abuse, Praesidium Services, Inc.

According to the Vatican comments on the Essential Norms produced by the U.S. bishops for dealing with sexual abuse by priests and deacons, Religious Institutes of priests and deacons are, "mutatis mutandis" subject to the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, also produced by the U.S. bishops. CMSM has employed the services of Praesidium Services to provide training and a set of 28 Standards: 10 for prevention of sexual abuse; 11 for responding to allegations of sexual abuse and 7 for supervision of members of Religious Institutes who have abused minors.

The Committee submitted a series of 11 tentative recommendations for actions by Voice of the Faithful and its Affiliates around the country and the world.

Discussion centered on next steps, many of which are contained in the recommendations. It was recommended that a committee be established to follow up on the work of this ad hoc committee. It was also pointed out that the recommendations include actions that can be undertaken by Affiliates in their local parishes and dioceses.

Report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Membership Requirements and Due Process for the Denial or Removal of Someone from Membership

Representative Chuck Miller presented a very preliminary report that just looked at current policies concerning membership and removal of members. None of these policies concerned denial of membership or removal of a person from membership.

Discussion focused on creating criteria for membership, such as a commitment to the mission and goals of VOTF and the inclusion on applications of a street address and an email address. We need to find better ways of communicating with our membership. Also included was a call for due process for the exclusion from membership and the removal of a person from membership. The committee will continue to work on this.

Report from the Ad Hoc Committee on a Lay Synod

Vice President, Janet Hauter, presented a preliminary report in the name of the committee. She noted that they had three tasks: 1) outline the purpose of the Synod; 2) identify people to serve on a larger Synod planning committee; and 3) convene an organizational meeting. The purpose of the Synod is to fulfill the right and duty of the faithful to participate in the governance of our Church. The tentative theme is Pentecost 2010: Finding our Voice – Back to the Future (Renewing/Transforming our Church. Time line is Spring/late Summer 2010 depending on availability of a venue. Location would be Central U.S., perhaps Chicago. Guiding principles: VOTF as a catalyst; time and opportunity for the Spirit, for enlightenment, for dialogue; respectful differences of opinion; atmosphere of co-responsibility; inclusion of survivor/crisis issue.

Discussion centered on who would be invited. Answer: all Catholic groups whether progressive, central or conservative, including clergy and bishops as well as lay people. Concern was expressed about the cost of such a venture, with the observation that VOTF simply does not have the financial resources.

Report from the Ad Hoc Committee to Study VOTF Policy Toward the National Review Board (NRB)

Representative Pat Gomez made this presentation on behalf of the committee. The committee has reviewed documents and reports issued by the NRB and the Office of Child and Youth Protection (OCYP), including the 2007 Annual Report on the Implementation of the Charter and the Status Report of the NRB, December 2007. They

are in continual conversations with Judge Michael Merz, Chair of the NRB, Teresa Kettelkamp, Executive Director of the OYCP and Jim Kelly, Fordham University and researcher involved with the John Jay “Cause and Context” study.

Current focus and disappointment is with how compliance with the 17 articles of the Charter is unfolding. Several dioceses are non-compliant, especially with Article 12, to maintain safe environment programs and codes of conduct. The committee made a series of eight recommendations that can be found in an attachment. Also an appendix is attached outlining the steps taken as a result of various audits.

In the discussion, suggestions were made to get the Affiliates involved, and perhaps to continue the work of this committee under the auspices of the Protecting our Children Working Group. In response to the recommendation that VOTF become involved in raising funds for the Causes and Context study, Board of Trustees Chairman, Bill Casey, expressed concerns that he could not see that as a role for VOTF.

Report by President, Dan Bartley

The Church is at a crossroads in the U.S. and we need to move decisively to wake up the Catholic in the pew. We plan to build on the publicity we received with the ad in the NY Times on the occasion of the papal visit to increase our media presence and improve our image.

We need to shift to a new image. We should be realistic and, at the same time, hopeful about our Church. We need to continue our message that the Church has many challenges and VOTF has solutions. The bishops are still not held accountable and the laity are still not involved as they could be.

Our media outreach at the time of the papal visit was impressive. We reached an audience in about 230 major newspapers and had several calls for interviews with both print and electronic media. New members and new money have come in as a result. We will continue to use the quotes from Pope Benedict to press the bishops.

We need to find new ways to engage our members. We should be surveying our members and ask them what they think we should be doing and how we should work. And, finally and most importantly, we must remain a Spirit-centered organization. We are doing God’s work and we must remain prayerful and hopeful. We will be moving forward with a carefully designed strategic plan.

In the discussion the question of the resolution on the Role of Women in the Church was brought up. Representatives wanted a clear statement from Dan about the Officers’ concurrence with the resolution. Dan responded that the Officers had concurred, but with several conditions. People asked for a wider publication of the results of the ad campaign. Also mentioned was a need for continued communication so that we are not interfering with one another’s work. Finally, it was noted that strategic planning should include all three centers: the Board, the Officers and the NRC.

Discussion on How We Communicate with Our Members

Representative Jim Beyers presented his concerns that we are not able to communicate effectively with all of our members, especially since so many of them do not have email addresses. We need to find ways to get printed materials to our members without email addresses. Since we can't afford postage, we should ask for people to subscribe to a printed newsletter.

In the discussion, Representatives suggested that we work hard to get as many email addresses from our members as possible. We should ask our Affiliates to send complete addresses of their members to the National Office. The Long Island affiliate sends out quarterly newsletters and asks people to respond with contributions to cover the expenses. They almost always receive more than the costs of the printing and mailing.

We also need to get out wide distribution of the news about the ad and the election of our new officers.

Saturday, April 26, 2008

The meeting opened at 8:30 with a reflection on the wound of sexual abuse, anger and the search for healing – led by Diane Loucks. This prayer, meditation and discussion lasted until 10:00 am.

Presentation on Implementation Plan for the Resolution on the Role of Women

Representative Rich Moriarty presented a vision for implementation. This vision statement listed a variety of ways the resolution could be implemented, focusing on a bottom-up approach. This would include listening sessions and collaboration with a variety of organizations, colleges and universities, and even ecumenical collaboration.

The discussion called for a more specific implementation plan to be developed over the next six months. Concerns that were raised had to do with the question of ordination of women; the reaction of those who would be opposed to this resolution; the criteria for success and a focus on goals and objectives. Rich emphasized that the resolution was not about the ordination of women and that the Sponsors would be willing to make that public and explicit. He promised to have a more detailed plan by the next Council meeting.

Final Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Roles and Authority of VOTF Leadership

Representative Bill Culleton presented this report on behalf of the committee that had been formed in response to the need to promote more effective collaboration among the three centers of leadership in VOTF (Board of Trustees, Officers and NRC). Bill presented two documents: one a working document that represented the substance of the

committee's work and one the recommendations of the committee. Bill summed up the recommendations of the committee in the phrase "No surprises."

Very little discussion followed and a resolution was made to recommend the provisional adoption of the Ad Hoc Committee's Roles and Authority recommendations for a trial period of six months. The motion was approved with 16 Reps voting aye, one nay and three abstaining. (Nay – Ed Friedl; Abstentions – David Biersmith, Joseph Juhasz and Steve Sheehan.)

Report from the Ad Hoc Committee on National/Local Balance (that is, the relationship on the Roles of the Officers and National Office vs. the local affiliates on issues arising in the local area)

Representative Jim Beyers made the presentation on behalf of the committee. He presented the resolution that had been developed by this committee. He stated that the intent of the resolution is to communicate that the affiliates need to have considerable autonomy. This autonomy is based on the fact that these affiliates are closest to the problems, know the background, and have the capacity to act quickly. He argued that this is consistent with the grassroots nature of VOTF and is consistent with the principle of subsidiarity, which states that no issue should be dealt with by a higher-level organization that can be effectively handled at a lower level.

Representative Culleton had previously presented an alternate resolution that focused on when and how the Officers and National Office can and should step into a situation that develops on the local level. Representative Susan Vogt suggested that an amendment to the Committee's resolution could incorporate Representative Culleton's resolution and preserve the best of both. The discussion went back and forth arguing the merits of both sides. There was a concern expressed about the use of the term "Catholic doctrine" in one article of the resolution and it was recommended that it be eliminated.

Several Representatives commented that the Affiliates are hurting and that the Council needs to work to restore the importance of the Affiliates. Representatives have a responsibility to communicate with the Affiliates and the members and to seek their input.

Jim Beyers moved the resolution and Kevin Mondloch seconded it. Susan suggested her amendment to add an article about the role of National in certain situations. Jim Beyers seconded. Joseph Juhasz then made a motion to table the resolution until 10:30 the next morning. The vote was 18 in favor; Hugh O'Regan opposed and David Biersmith abstaining.

Treasurer's Report

VOTF vice president, Kevin Connors, made his report. Year to date revenue is up by \$69,000 over 2007. Expenses are up only \$3,000. Net assets have increased by \$34,000. However he is forecasting a deficit by the end of the current fiscal year (May 31) of \$38,000. He reported that the Development Committee is developing plans to

dramatically increase our revenues in the future. The ad campaign surrounding the papal visit has gained us new recognition among American Catholics, and should contribute to more successful fund-raising in the future. We need to work to have a reserve to cover at least six months of expenditures.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director, Donna Doucette, reported on the results of the ad campaign in the NY Times and also on efforts to control expenses. As we know, the fund-raising campaign for the ad brought in designated funds in excess of \$70,000 from 1079 donors. Fifty-six of those were new members and 221 were members who had never contributed in the past. There were also 48 who contributed to our operating expenses as well as to the ad campaign.

The National Office and Officers were deluged with media requests. VOTF received mention in more than 200 media outlets. Officers were contacted for many interviews and for printed articles. National Secretary Julie McConville and local Boston VOTF affiliate officer Dorothy Kennedy were interviewed on local television. An 11"x 17" version of the ad was distributed to affiliates. Some affiliates used the ad material in their local newspapers.

There was enough money left from the NY Times ad to purchase advertising on mobile banner trucks on the streets of Washington DC and New York City during the papal visit. At the time of the meeting nearly 6500 signatures had been gathered for the petition to the Pope.

Donna also reported that the Office had greatly reduced the costs of snail mail for financial appeals by contracting with a new mailing service. The results of the ad campaign have given us new opportunity to reach new targets for fund raising.

Chairman's Report

Board Chairman, Bill Casey, reported on the problems associated with the recent election of Officers. There were three issues with which he dealt: 1) invalid votes; 2) suspected premature communication of election results; and 3) candidates' access to email addresses of members. A committee of the Board investigated these problems and a report based on these investigations will be sent to all members and placed on the VOTF website. Briefly, here are the problems that surfaced.

1. Twenty-six invalid votes were cast by individuals who did not have a special code provided by the consultant who administered the election. Although we have IP numbers for those who cast these votes, we have no way of tracking them down without significant costs. Two of them came from Berlin, Germany. These 26 votes did not affect the final results of the election.

2. The suggestion that someone had revealed balloting results before the election was finalized turned out to be based on rumors on the closeness of the race and not on anyone's awareness of actual numbers.
3. Nearly three-dozen members complained that they were receiving unsolicited campaign ads on their email addresses that could not have been known by those sending them. Evidence was found that someone using one of two IP numbers had accessed the VOTF database in at least 10 of our 14 regions.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm. Bus transportation was provided by the local Philadelphia Affiliate to transport the members to Old St. Joseph's church in downtown Philadelphia for Mass and a covered dish supper in the church hall.

Sunday Morning

After an opening prayer, the first order of business was the selection of two Representatives to join the Board of Trustees and the election of two Representatives to replace Bill Culleton and Sheila Peiffer on the Steering Committee. Here are the results:

Board of Trustees selection

<u>Nominees</u>	<u>Votes</u>
David Biersmith	5
Ron DuBois	15
Kris Ward	6
Ed Wilson	11

NRC Steering Committee Election

<u>Nominees</u>	<u>Votes</u>
Joseph Juhasz	17
Hugh O'Regan	11
Bud Bretschneider	11

Representative Bretschneider deferred to Representative O'Regan to increase geographical presence of the West on the Steering Committee.

Working Group Reports

Reports were made by members of several of our Working Groups.

Prayerful Voice

Gaile Pohlhaus, interim chair of the Prayerful Voice Working Group, reported that she is attempting to revitalize the Prayerful Voice group. She provided the Council with a description of the goals of this working group and asked each Representative to find at least two potential members from their region.

Protecting Our Children (POC)

Representative Pat Gomez, member of the Protecting our Children Working Group, reported on activities of this group since the last NRC meeting in November 2007. POC

arranged for the keynote speaker at the Providence Convention; presented the results of the National Survey at their booth at the same Convention; coordinated a Breakout Session with three panelists at the Convention; collaborated on the production of a film for awareness of abuse entitled “It’s Not Just Jena,” suitable for teens and adults; sponsored a facilitator’s training on child personal safety program (TAT); and issued two Press Releases concerning Child Safety. Three members of POC are on the Ad Hoc Committee studying the relationship of VOTF with the National Review Board of the NRC.

Convocation Implementation Team (CIT)

Representative Susan Vogt made a brief presentation. The responsibilities of the CIT ended at Pentecost. The on-going projects of this team have been incorporated into other groups, particularly the Parish Surveys under Protecting our Children and financial accountability under the Structural Change Working Group.

Structural Change Working Group (SCWG)

Board member, Elia Marnik, reporting in place of Chair Margaret Roylance, noted that they welcome the addition of CIT projects and members to their Working Group.

National Local Balance Resolution

Discussion of this resolution had been tabled from the day before. Representative Chuck Miller had spent time making a number of suggested edits to the original resolution. Each edit was discussed separately and voted upon separately. All but one of the individual edits were approved. Representative Beyers made the amended motion and Representative Vogt seconded. Eighteen Representatives voted in favor. Ed Friedl and Steven Sheehan voted against the resolution.

The meeting was adjourned on time with a prayer. Four representatives – David Biersmith, Joseph Juhasz, Hugh O’Regan and Susan Vogt – promised to investigate hosting upcoming meetings and inform the Council very soon about possibilities in their regions.

AFFILIATE News – VOTF New Hampshire

Attorney General finds improved cooperation in diocesan audit, though issues remain.

by Carolyn Disco, Survivor Support Chair, NH Voice of the Faithful

The third annual state audit of the Diocese of Manchester’s implementation of its sexual abuse policy found an improved “tone at the top,” marked by openness and a more cooperative attitude on the part of diocesan officials. The welcome positive findings followed a difficult year in which Bishop John McCormack initially refused to participate in a fourth audit, an action the state was willing to litigate if necessary. McCormack

changed his mind, perhaps in response to unfavorable press over prior negative audit results.

That was the essence of the report by New Hampshire Attorney General Kelly Ayotte and Associate Attorney General Kristin Spath to about 60 people at a Voice of the Faithful meeting last month. It was the attorney general's third appearance before the group, continuing an annual tradition of updating members on the state's progress in monitoring diocesan compliance.

Ayotte gave generous credit to McCormack and his staff – “even Fr. (Edward) Arsenault,” highly criticized in the previous audit – for significant enhancement in cooperation, and cited that as the most heartening development of all. The attorney general said there was an apparent breakthrough when McCormack decided it was more productive to work on what needs to be done, instead of fighting the state by dragging one's heels. The turnaround is particularly evident in the bishop's decision to participate in the fourth audit, though he may have realized he would have probably lost in court. Nonetheless, greater diocesan receptivity to recommendations and feedback, without disruptions, signals a much better working relationship.

There are still unsettled issues, Ayotte said; namely, the longstanding need for the Diocese to revise its abuse policy to state formally that a priest will be removed from ministry upon receipt of an allegation versus after completion of an investigation. The Agreement between state and diocese that specified state oversight clearly states the former. While immediate removal has been the practice, it needs to be memorialized in writing, something the Diocese has refused to do before, but will act on in the coming year. Ayotte emphasized that revising the policy to specify immediate suspension is very important to the state.

The state's auditors found shortcomings in the lack of timetables for investigations of allegations, with no indication of even when they would begin. Likewise, timetables are needed for the escalation of disciplinary issues, and enforcement of safe environment program mandates. Ayotte said the goal is measurable thresholds and consistent application. The Diocese reassures her that every deficiency her office identified will be addressed, an encouraging shift.

A special part of the third audit covering 2007 was a random survey of 500 parishioners by the University of New Hampshire. It gauged understanding of diocesan policies and practices to prevent child sexual abuse. The attorney general said the Diocese was apprehensive about the results, which had both positive and negative outcomes.

It was good news that “more than 95 percent of respondents would contact law enforcement if they learned of an allegation of child sexual abuse.” A vast majority felt the Diocese would handle the matter appropriately. But 39 percent indicated “they never received communications from the Diocese about child abuse policies,” and 40 percent were only “slightly or not at all familiar” with them, Ayotte quoted from the audit

findings. The Diocese needs to do a much better job communicating its policies and procedures, particularly the legal mandate for everyone to report abuse to civil authorities.

Sustainability of the child protection program over the long term as part of diocesan practice is the focus of the fourth and final audit, according to Ayotte. Regardless of who holds an office, the administrative structure needs to be in place to assure compliance with the law and sexual abuse policies and procedures.

The attorney general concluded her remarks by noting that after the audits are over, and after the agreement with the Diocese is technically concluded, her office will fight to protect children if they think an allegation has been improperly handled. "You will always have a friend and ear at the attorney general's office," she insisted. "That's very, very important" to understand. She admitted that was not always the case with law enforcement in general, but it is now.

With equal insistence, Ayotte reiterated how important VOTF members are as parishioners in the Diocese. She is dependent on the laity to take responsibility to speak up if something is not right. "It's up to you." The right policies and procedures need to be in place, but they are insufficient if Catholics do not come forward. Everyone is a mandated reporter to civil authorities, and needs to be aware and vigilant. "It's up to you," she repeated. She also thanked VOTF for its support over the years.

Questions abounded in a lively Q&A. Why the sudden change of heart by the Diocese? A strategic business decision in the face of negative consequences for them, either in court or the media, or a genuine attitudinal shift due to self-reflection? How can they be trusted when the diocesan website simply lies about what the attorney general said regarding a prior audit? Claiming full compliance with the letter and the spirit of the agreement when her text says exactly the opposite.

Is the Diocese bound to continue training programs? What recourse does law enforcement have if they fold up initiatives already begun? Did they follow up on two requests by the auditors to reference "inappropriate conduct" like accessing pornography in the sexual abuse policy itself? It is not included, and can be a precursor warning sign of abuse. Has the hierarchy intervened to thwart audits? What about transparency?

Ayotte and her associate Spath welcomed the changed tone at the top, whatever its genesis, but suspect that unfavorable media coverage may have been a factor. Spath noted that previously the Diocese wanted a week's notice before surprise visits by auditors, required follow-up questions from auditors be in writing, passed through their legal counsel first, and so forth. Now, that back and forth is gratefully eliminated.

Ayotte affirmed that she would not hesitate to prosecute if allegations were not reported in the future. But the vigilance of the laity about training programs or other requirements needs to be expressed publicly, since there is power in collective voices. She would join those voices, she said, though there is nothing she could do legally. Pointedly, the threat of civil liability is a deterrent if protections are not in place.

Including notices in parish bulletins requesting survivors to come forward, and reminding people they are mandated reporters under the law, are efforts Ayotte believes would extend the public discussion of abuse issues. It is such discussion that advances the cause of keeping children safe, a prime goal of law enforcement and society in general. VOTF attendees thanked Ayotte and Spath sincerely for their ongoing commitment, and willingness to meet again with them.

Links:

Cover letter from Attorney General Kelly Ayotte to Bishop John McCormack, March 28, 2008

http://doj.nh.gov/publications/nreleases/pdf/2008_diocese_letter.pdf

2007 Audit report dated January 15, 2008, released April 1, 2008

http://doj.nh.gov/publications/nreleases/pdf/2008_diocese_assessment.pdf

Executive Summary p, 6-7; scroll to each section on “Findings” and “Recommendations” for ease of reading.

Response of Bishop John McCormack to Attorney General Kelly Ayotte, April 1, 2008

<http://www.catholicnh.org/media/files/child-safety/AGLetter2008-04-01.pdf>

Diocesan media release: <http://www.catholicnh.org/news-events/recent-releases/040108-protecting-children/>

Diocesan website claim about 2006 audit: "The (AG's state audit) report confirms that the Diocese of Manchester has complied with the letter and spirit of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, all articles of the Agreement with the State of New Hampshire, and the diocesan sexual misconduct policy."

<http://www.catholicnh.org/child-safety/reports-and-updates/response-to-kpmg-assessment-dated-011707/>

Attorney General's 2006 evaluation: "Despite the substantial progress made by the Diocese, there are still some critical gaps and issues which need to be rectified before the Diocese of Manchester will be considered in full compliance with the Agreement or be considered to have a fully effective and sustainable compliance program..."

The tone at the top, however, does not appear to be consistent among key personnel at the Diocese of Manchester... An improvement in the program's senior leadership's demonstrable tone is warranted.

Finally, it has been almost four years since the Diocese and the Attorney General's Office entered into the subject Agreement and while substantial progress has been made, the Diocese is still not in full compliance therewith and more structural and procedural enhancements are needed to achieve full, effective, and sustainable compliance."

http://doj.nh.gov/publications/nreleases/pdf/050407KPMG_Diocese_report.pdf p. 6-7

Comparison of prior State versus Church audits: http://votf.org/Survivor_Support/audit.html

