

In the Vineyard

June 7, 2007

NATIONAL News and Notes

IMPORTANT DATES:

Your invitation has arrived! Our VOTF “Disciples in Action” Convention 2007, October 19-21 in Providence RI is unfolding and our Convention-dedicated page is ready for its close-up! VOTF president Mary Pat Fox says, “‘Disciples in Action’ will be a time of sharing, collaborating, and celebrating as we move forward engaged in action to rebuild our Church.”

- See your invitation here.
- Please start thinking about the priests and lay people whose ministries you value. National VOTF is gathering nominations for the 2007 Catherine of Siena Distinguished Lay Person Award and the 2007 Priest of Integrity Award. Both awards will be presented at the convention. Some background, templates, criteria and contact information for these awards are on the 2007 Convention page.
- Watch for upcoming details on workshops, keynote speakers and everything else you will need to be a “disciple in action.”

REMINDER: SNAP’s annual convention, Washington DC, **July 20-22**. For details, go to <http://www.snapnetwork.org/>.

Long Island NY Regional Conference June 14, 2007: “Electing Bishops – How the Catholic Church Should Choose Its Leaders” with Joseph O’Callaghan of VOTF Bridgeport CT (Joe’s new book is now available in book stores, at www.rowmanlittlefield.com, and at www.amazon.com.) Look for *Electing our Bishops: How the Catholic Church Should Choose its Leaders*. Joe is past president of VOTF Bridgeport CT, professor emeritus of Medieval History at Fordham University, former Director of the Center for Medieval Studies at Fordham, and past president of the American Catholic Historical Association. For additional information about the conference, visit www.votf-li.org.

Worth Noting:

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). Read more at <http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2007/07-090.shtml>.

VOTF Campaign for Accountability: The Campaign that grew out of the 2005 Indianapolis leadership convocation continues to work its way toward greater protection for children in state legislatures; and financial accountability in our parishes and dioceses. Be sure to check in on updates and new actions planned around this two-part Accountability initiative.

Congratulations to Fr. Tom Doyle, A.W.R. Sipe and Patrick J. Wall! *Sex, Priests and Secret Codes* has won first prize, the Gold Award, from the Independent Publishers Book Awards. The winners of the 11th Annual **IPPY Awards** ([Independent Publishers Book Awards](#)) competed against 3,378 titles of national and regional entries combined. Silver and Bronze awards went to *Searching for Mary Magdalene* by Jane Lahr (Welcome Books) and *A Republic of Mind and Spirit*, by Catherine L. Albanese (Yale University Press).

AND congratulations to VOTF secretary Gaile Pohlhaus! Dr. Gaile Pohlhaus received the Presidential Award for Service from the College Theology Society. Dr. Anne Clifford of Duquesne University presented the award at the annual convention held at the University of Dayton. Dr. Pohlhaus has been an active member of the society over the past three decades. Among her contributions were helping to establish the Women's Caucus, establishing a convention session on marriage, and designing and administrating the pre-convention teaching workshops for over ten years.

EDITOR's note: For the first time in five years, I am tearing myself away from this "vineyard" for the months of July and August. *In the Vineyard* will be covered by VOTF National vice president Sally Vance-Trembath, alongside our long-serving web consultant Eileen Hespeler. Following the June 28 issue of the *Vineyard* and until September, please direct your inquiries, comments, and concerns to Sally at XXXXXX . I wish all of our readers a summer rich in community and reflection (my own Summer '07 ambition!) and I wish Sally the same rewarding experience I have known from editing these pages. *Peggie Thorp*

Office Note: Looking for meaningful volunteer work? The VOTF National office can help! We have a menu of opportunities. Please call Millie Seaborn at 617-558-5252 or email at mseaborn@votf.org.

DIOCESE/State Watch: See updates on the **Darien CT** parish experience with the high-living Fr. Fay; **Boston Archdiocese** administrative offices moving to suburbs (see VOTF Boston press statement here); **VOTF Bridgeport CT** contribution makes news; **VOTF St. Louis** supports new archdiocesan wellness program for priests; **Los Angeles CA** judge notes misrepresentation by Cardinal Mahoney; **VOTF Greater Hartford and Farmington Valley** met recently with their bishop; good-news update from **Delaware**.

Rockville Centre NY diocese found negligent: "A jury found the nation's sixth-largest Roman Catholic diocese and a church parish negligent yesterday in a case involving a youth minister who repeatedly raped and sodomized teenagers in his care." See Associated Press coverage at http://www.journalnow.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=WSJ%2FMGArticle%2FWSJ_BasicArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1173351263383&path=!nationworld&s=1037645509161. *New York Times* coverage is available at <http://voicefromthedesert.blogspot.com/2007/05/li-maiello-trial-1145-million-awarded.html>. Also see

http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=18383656&BRD=1601&PAG=461&dept_id=479859&rfti=6.

Cleveland OH: “Fourteen Catholic priests accused of sexually abusing minors remain in administrative limbo more than five years after some of them were suspended by the Cleveland Catholic Diocese.” See the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* at

<http://www.cleveland.com/printer/printer.ssf?/base/living-0/1180168716169660.xml&coll=2> or

<http://voicefromthedesert.blogspot.com/2007/05/vatican-takes-years-to-deal-with.html>.

- Also in Ohio, the *Enquirer* notes, “Victim advocates blasted the Archdiocese of Cincinnati on Monday for failing to notify parishioners about a national ‘clergy alert’ involving two priests accused of abusing children.” Go to <http://news.enquirer.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070521/NEWS01/305210056&template=printpicart>.
- Note VOTF Ohio members’ published letters under SITE-Seeing, Etc.

COMMENTARY –

“*Meeting the Police – in Church*” from VOTF Union County NJ

“*Letter to Our Bishop*” from VOTF Upper Cape MA

SITE-Seeing, Etc.

VOTF Council Representative Bob Schwiderski found these links for Prevent Child Abuse America - <http://www.preventchildabuse.org/index.shtml> and http://member.preventchildabuse.org/site/DocServer/cost_analysis.pdf?docID=144

A broad coalition of Catholic Church justice organizations has completed a **Report Card** initiative on the status of women in the Catholic Church. The report card indicates more than one A. Go to <http://womensjusticecoalition.org>.

Another faith’s **response to sexual abuse in their community** has drawn considerable attention and praise. To read the letter written to Baltimore’s Orthodox Community on April 11 from the Vaad Harabbonim, the Rabbinical Council of Greater Baltimore, go to <http://voicefromthedesert.blogspot.com/2007/05/sexual-abuse-in-community.html>. The letter appeared in the *Baltimore Jewish Times* at <http://voicefromthedesert.blogspot.com/2007/05/sexual-abuse-in-community.html>.

The Catholic Book Club newsletter, part of *America* magazine, is an e-announcement that recommends a book a month. To sign up, go to <http://www.americamagazine.org/CatholicBookClub.cfm>.

A recent poll finds many **Catholics unaware of church steps** to prevent abuse <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0702833.htm>

An excerpt from a letter written by **Tom O'Brien of VOTF SW Florida** is worth reading in full at <http://www.news-press.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070516/OPINION/705160364/1015>.

- VOTF members (W. Litzler of St. Christopher's and L. Shenk of Cleveland/Akron) had letters published on Cleveland.com with regard to due process for priests and victims of clergy sexual abuse. Go to <http://www.cleveland.com/letters/plaindealer/index.ssf?/base/opinion/1181033243194430.xml&coll=2>

Thinking Fall? **Boston College** is: See where you might fit in this summer or Fall '08 at <https://wfs.bc.edu/lambmb/SummerContinEdNews.pdf>

DIOCESE/State Watch

Darien CT – The *Darien Times* provides an update on St. John's parish, once the home of Fr. Fay whose alleged "financial misconduct" in the handling of parish funds remains under federal investigation. See <http://voicefromthedesert.blogspot.com/2007/05/1-year-update-on-infamous-father-fay.html>.

- **VOTF Bridgeport CT**: "As an alternative to the Bishop's Annual Appeal, VOTF organized the Voice of Compassion–Bridgeport Fund in 2004 in response to many Catholics' concerns the diocese's use of faithful Catholics' money to pay settlements for survivors of priestly sexual abuse." For more, see http://www.thestamfordtimes.com/stamford_templates/stamford_story/364836621977322.php. Also, visit the VOTF Bridgeport web site at www.votfbpt.org.
- **VOTF Greater Hartford and VOTF Farmington Valley** met with Archbishop Mansell, on behalf of all the VOTF members in their region. They recount that visit at <http://www.votfbpt.org/html/links.html> (click on May 2007).

Boston MA – "The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston announced a \$65 million dollar deal on Thursday to sell its administrative headquarters in Brighton to Boston College to complete a money-saving move to the suburbs." See the *Worcester Telegram* at <http://www.telegram.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070524/APN/705242229> and the VOTF Boston press statement [here](#).

VOTF St. Louis applauds Archbishop Burke for a newly inaugurated wellness program for priests.
http://westcountyjournal.stltoday.com/articles/2007/05/16/life_and_style/health_and_fitness/sj2tn20070516-0516wcj_priestside.ii1.txt

- AND news that the Boston archdiocese has also been reaching out to priests. See http://www.bostonmagazine.com/articles/city_journal_help_me_father/.

Los Angeles CA: "Citing an alleged misrepresentation by Cardinal Roger M. Mahony, a judge ruled Wednesday that four people can seek punitive damages against the Los Angeles Archdiocese for failing to protect them from a priest they accused of sexual

abuse.” See <http://voicefromthedesert.blogspot.com/2007/05/judge-opens-church-up-to-huge-payout.html>.

Delaware: “After a five-hour hearing today that included the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington warning of possible ministry cutbacks and an industry representative warning of the potential for higher cost or non-existent insurance coverage, the House Judiciary Committee voted 5-0 to release a bill that would eliminate the civil statute of limitations for child sexual abuse cases.” See <http://voicefromthedesert.blogspot.com/2007/05/del-child-sex-abuse-bill-clears-hurdle.html>.

COMMENTARY

[Last year around this time, the *Vineyard* published the story of this affiliate’s experience when passing out a leaflet at their parish church one Sunday. They returned to do so again a few Sundays ago. Ken Riley of VOTF Union County NJ provides some background to this year’s letter. The letter appears below.]

We in VOTF Union County, New Jersey, attend a different parish in our diocese (Newark) the first Saturday of each month to say a public prayer for priests of integrity before Mass. We pass out prayer cards and ask congregants to join us. The backs of the prayer cards identify us as Voice of the Faithful with a web site for further information.

On one occasion last year the pastor of a parish actually acknowledged our presence before the congregation and welcomed us. Apparently someone in the congregation contacted Archbishop John Myers’ office, as during the following week the Archdiocese sent an email to all parishes that we were not to be welcomed. When we entered Sacred Heart Cathedral the first Saturday of June 2006, we were met by two policemen from the Sheriff’s office who told us we were not to hand anything out.

On Saturday, May 5, 2007, we attended Mass at Our Lady of Peace in New Providence, New Jersey. A representative of our group went into the sacristy on the Saturday before Mass to introduce himself to the assigned celebrant.

When our representative did this on May 5, the pastor (who was to be the celebrant) told him we were not to say the prayer because he was opposed to Voice of the Faithful. This caught us by surprise and we did not say the prayer, but we had already distributed the prayer cards and then sat in the first pew with our Voice of the Faithful buttons on. After Mass we reflected on what happened and decided we should have gone ahead and said the prayer for priests publicly and, therefore, I sent the following letter to the pastor.

Dear Father Cunneen,

I was part of the small Voice of the Faithful group that participated in the 8:30 AM Mass at Our Lady of Peace this past Saturday. I was shocked when Cy Massar informed us that you refused to allow us to publicly pray for our priests of integrity because you

object to Voice of the Faithful. I would like to know why you object to Voice of the Faithful.

The Archbishop has stated his objection is based on his belief that some in Voice of the Faithful are affiliated with other organizations that dissent from the teaching of the Church. This appears to me to be guilt by association. As an organization, Voice of the Faithful takes no positions on any teachings of the Church.

Our intention on Saturday was not to ask for your permission to pray publicly in Church, but to extend a courtesy to you, as the appointed leader of Our Lady of Peace, of what we planned to do. In retrospect, we feel we should have gone ahead with what we planned, and ought to do so in the future.

We hold deep in our hearts that the Church belongs to the people of God and the laity are not to be consigned to pay, pray, and obey, but are to be treated as equal brothers and sisters in Baptism. History seems to show that somewhere along the way the institutional Church adopted the models of Roman Empire imperialism and Middle Ages feudalism. I ask myself the familiar question, "What would Jesus think?"

In your homily, you referenced how Mother Theresa joyfully served the outcasts of the world. In some respects we feel like outcasts of this diocese because of the refusal to enter into dialogue with us. It's a shame that a simple welcome cannot be extended.

I firmly believe that the Holy Spirit works directly through the baptized and guides us along the path of truth. Consequently, we should not be afraid. The Holy Spirit leads the Church and we should not suppress discussion and dialogue.

I appreciate your attention to this letter and the opportunity it allows me to communicate with you.

LETTER to our Bishop

Letter to Bishop Coleman from **VOTF Upper Cape, MA**/diocese of Fall River MA:

Dear Bishop Coleman,

The Archdiocese of Boston, under the leadership of Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley, set the example for increased financial transparency by posting annual audited reports. The dioceses of Springfield and Worcester likewise post annual audited reports. Unlike all of the other Dioceses in Massachusetts, the Diocese of Fall River, under your leadership, does not.

While the Code of Canon Law does not require assurances to the laity that there are appropriate internal controls in place to ensure transparency and accountability, Robert West, Ph. D. and Charles Zech, Ph. D. of Villanova University suggest in their research, summarized in Internal Financials Controls in the US Catholic Church, that such

assurances in the form of audited financial reports would go a long way in dealing with issues of embezzlement and would in fact encourage greater generosity on the part of church goers.

Embezzlement cases involving laypeople as well as priests exist in parishes throughout the United States. Similar problems have surfaced close to home at Saint Joseph's Parish in Woods Hole and at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Wellfleet.

In January 2007, the accounting practices committee, who advise the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, called for tighter internal controls over finances in the nation's more than 19,000 parishes. The committee recommended that the parish priest, in conjunction with the parish financial council, prepare budgets and financial statements for the benefit of parishioners and the diocese to which they belong.

We urge you to follow the example of neighboring dioceses in publishing audited statements and moving forward with your stated goal of having an effective financial council in every parish in the diocese. We offer our services to that end.

Respectfully,

*Diocesan Issues Committee
Voice of The Faithful, Cape Cod
Kathy Cronin, Gerry Hart, Maureen Fessenden and Robert Moll*

CONVENTION 2007: October 19-21, 2007 Providence RI

Disciples in Action

An Invitation from VOTF president Mary Pat Fox

YOUR Invitation Has Arrived!

Dear Friends,

I hope you have all marked your calendars and plan to celebrate the 5th anniversary of Voice of the Faithful by attending the VOTF Convention, "Disciples in Action", on October 19-20 in Providence, Rhode Island. We are all called to be disciples through our baptism; this will be a time to learn **how our members have responded to that call in the last five years and how we might continue to do so for the next five!**

The Convention will celebrate the contributions VOTF has made to our Church today,

bringing into focus successful actions in which our affiliates have engaged across the country. You will hear their success stories and you will return home with roadmaps as well as inspiration for future actions in your diocese or parish.

Plenary speakers will focus on lay involvement in our Church: how we do it and what more needs to be done. Panels and workshops will cover wide-ranging issues including Financial Accountability, Protecting Children through Legislation, Parish Closings, Dialoguing with your Bishop, and a whole host of other topics that can help you back home (Additional details of the workshops and panels will appear in upcoming issues of *In the Vineyard* and on our Convention-dedicated page on our web site at www.votf.org.)

The National Representative Council (NRC) will hold their biannual meeting in Providence beginning Friday morning, recessing for the Convention, and reconvening on Sunday morning. As with all NRC meetings, all are welcome to attend. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet your regional representative and contribute your thoughts on the VOTF mission.

“Disciples in Action” will be a time of sharing, collaborating, and celebrating as we move forward engaged in action to rebuild our Church.

I look forward to seeing you in Providence!

Keep the Faith, Change the Church
Mary Pat

PRIEST of Integrity Award

Once again we are soliciting nominations for a Voice of the Faithful Priest of Integrity award, to be presented at the October Convention. After five years, we continue to seek to honor someone who exemplifies something each one of us is called to be, and not the least of which our leaders are expected to be: persons of integrity, characterized by wholeness and holiness.

In the early days of VOTF, a founder spoke of the crisis in the church as a “cancer that must be excised.” The challenge is to destroy the cancer cells without causing major damage to the rest of the body. And isn’t this the challenge that we who are the Body of Christ face? We don’t want the Church to die; we want her to survive and thrive. But without intervention, how can we heal? The process will involve necessary changes, and inevitable sacrifice. We must treat each part of the Body of Christ the way we treat our own bodies: with utmost care and compassion, with searing truth and the courage to speak it, and with forgiveness and openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit.

The Priest of Integrity award is such a gesture, and a sign of our gratitude and respect for those servant leaders in our midst who are so essential to a healthy Body.

We thank those priests who are willing to be singled out for this honor, and appreciate the conflicting desire not to be so publicly acknowledged. We are a sacramental people in need of concrete examples as outward signs to affirm our faith. There are many anonymous priests who could be so honored, and every priest (in the universal and ministerial priesthood) is called to live such a life. It is our hope that by selecting a few, the rest of us are inspired to persevere in the work that we believe God has called us to do.

NOMINATIONS FOR PRIEST OF INTEGRITY AWARD

The national Goal Two Working Group is pleased to announce the formation of a nomination/selection committee for a Voice of the Faithful Priest of Integrity award to be presented at the October conference in Providence, RI. We ask that you consider those men who, in season and out, are faithful to their vows and witnesses of Christ's conviction and compassion. This information will be disseminated far and wide, and we ask that you respond to Vince Grenough using the template below. Please do so by July 15th. Thank you in advance for your contributions.

Priest of Integrity Award Committee:

Vince Grenough (KY) "Send to" person for nominations

Joan Bedosky (NY)

Svea Fraser (MA)

Doug Roach (FL), new member of the NRC

Elizabeth Warren (TN)

TEMPLATE for NOMINATING PRIEST OF INTEGRITY

[If you create a MS Word document of this template, it is very easy to copy part of it and paste it into another document. It can also be done with an e-mail message – just copy, cut and paste into your e-mail message.]

NAME of nominee

NAME of proposer (or affiliate)

Phone number, email and/or postal address of proposer

ROLE of nominee (pastor, theologian, author, etc.)

REASON/S for nomination, i.e., **WHY** should this priest receive an award? (300 words or less)

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE (anecdotal, newspaper articles, etc.)

AVAILABILITY (and willingness!) of nominee to attend conference

Please send to Vince Grenough (vingreno@insightbb.com) by JULY 15, 2007

CRITERIA:

A Priest of Integrity:

- *Is recognized by his immediate circle of faithful Catholics, and by the nominating committee, to have met objective and measurable criteria for nomination for this award.*
- *Fulfills his calling from God by living his life in the service of others.*
- *Is marked by a sincere faith, loyal to the vows and promises of the priesthood.*
- *Speaks and acts his conscience, proclaiming the truth with humility and courage without regard for his own future security.*
- *Models servant-leadership both in the context of his life and of his ministry.*
- *Gives credible witness to the truth in both speech and action.*
- *Strives to promote Christian dignity and the rightful position of the laity in the Church.*
- *Exemplifies informed, educated, rational and mature obedience to God, His word and the Church.*

Please note that the process includes contact with Goal 1 leaders and supporters (i.e. SNAP, Bishop Accountability and other persons who would know if there were any reason not to make such an award to a particular priest).

Catherine of Siena Distinguished Lay Person Award

The 2007 convention committee is seeking nominations for this year's Catherine of Siena Distinguished Lay Person Award. This award was established by the 2005 VOTF convocation steering committee and approved by the Board of Trustees at that time.

VOTF established this award because Catherine of Siena encountered corruption and crisis in the Church and took noble and effective action to end it. Grieved by scandal and undeterred by rank, she was spurred on to reform the Lord's Church. Catherine of Siena went directly to Pope Gregory XI and through determined and courageous efforts became the catalyst for ending the crisis of the Avignon captivity of the papacy.

Catherine of Siena's deep faith propelled her to care for those labeled as least in her society. Neither hardship nor schism, neither war nor persecution detained her from being about the Lord's work. Through convicted faith, she was an innovator led by the spirit and an agent of change in a tumultuous event in her lifetime. The Church ultimately recognized her contribution by proclaiming her both a saint and a Doctor of the Church.

Judge Ann Burke was the first recipient of this award.

Models of exemplary lay leadership are needed as torchbearers of light in our Church. The laity has many gifts that are willingly used for the Church's service. VOTF seeks to light the lamps of recognition of the laity and call forth the talents of all members of the Body of Christ.

All members of VOTF are encouraged to submit the name of a lay person who has exhibited the faith, courage, and conviction of Catherine in his/her own arena.

Name of nominee

Name of nominator (or affiliate)

Role of nominee (theologian, lay minister, parishioner)

Reason for nomination (300 words or less detailing the action/work done by this person that exemplifies the virtues of Catharine of Siena)

Supporting evidence (Testimonies, newspaper articles)

Availability of nominee to attend conference

The convention committee, made up of representatives from the membership, NRC, and the officers will make the selection.

Nominations are to be sent to Mary Freeman at mfreeman13@verizon no later than June 25th.