

In the Vineyard

March 13, 2008

“First they came for the Communists, but I was not a Communist so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Socialists and Trade Unionists, but I was neither, so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Jews, but I was not a Jew, so I did not speak out. And when they came for me, there was no one left to speak for me.” *Martin Niemoeller**

In this issue: Lost and Found in New Hampshire: “Truth and Justice”; VOTF Ireland seeks a meeting with the Pope during his upcoming visit to Ireland – a first papal visit in 29 years; Fr. Bozek continues to hold his ground against his bishop; VOTF Priest Support Working Group will attend the NFPC meeting in April; the 2007 audit of 195 US dioceses for their compliance with the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People is available; new survey by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life details the religious affiliation of the American public and explores the shifts taking place in the U.S. religious landscape; and more.

Free! Someone may be missing out on what lay voices are saying and doing in our Church. Just as bad, VOTF may be missing voices that will continue to fuel our efforts. If you know someone who might like to receive the *Vineyard* twice monthly and/or the one-page “Focus” in between the *Vineyard* weeks, click here and enter an email address with your name and address. It’s that easy – and just as easy to unsubscribe.

NATIONAL News

Recent VOTF statements:

- VOTF New Hampshire joined SNAP to honor “current and former New Hampshire attorneys general and their staffs for their work that brought about the unprecedented release of 9,000 pages of secret Catholic Church records detailing clergy sex crimes.” See the full text, SNAP Director David Clohessy’s statement, and VOTF New Hampshire Carolyn Disco’s statement under [Survivor Community News](#).
- VOTF [commented on](#) the recent announcement that the diocese of Fairbanks, Alaska, plans to file for protection under the federal bankruptcy statutes.
- The March 6 issue of VOTF’s one-page, bi-monthly “Focus” notes the astonishing statement by Cardinal Claudio Hummes (Prefect of the Congregation of the Clergy) speaking before the National Priests Meeting in Brazil that the abuse crisis was exaggerated by the media.

VOTF Overseas

From VOTF Ireland's Sean O'Conaill: VOTF Ireland recently sent a letter to the Irish Bishops Conference on the subject of "Betrayal". The letter is posted on the VOTF Ireland web site at <http://www.votfi.com/ibclet08.htm>. Fr. Tom Doyle called this letter "... the clearest, most complete and most comprehensive statement I have seen in 23 years of intense involvement in clergy sexual abuse by Catholic clerics in countries throughout the world. I believe that the contents are certainly applicable in Ireland but in every other country on the globe. Most certainly, this statement applies to the institutional Church on the level of the Vatican." The purpose of the letter is to arrange a meeting between survivors of clergy sexual abuse and Pope Benedict XVI during his upcoming visit to Ireland.

SURVIVOR Community News

VOTF New Hampshire joined SNAP to distribute "Truth and Justice Awards" to all of those in the NH District Attorney's office who fought for and won the release of thousands of documents on the Diocese of Manchester. The documents pointed to the diocese's "half-century or more" of complicity in the sexual abuse of children. Of particular interest is the "truth list" revealed by the New Hampshire Attorney General (in 9,000 documents published March 3, 2002) and released at the presentation of the "Truth and Justice" Awards on March 6, 2008. [Click here](#) to read all of the above.

VOTF Priest Support Working Group

Our Priest Support working group continues its coverage of priests nominated for the VOTF Priest of Integrity Award. [Read about](#) Father Stephen Stanbery, a pastor responsible for three parishes in rural New Bavaria, Ohio.

AND ... we have been given an opportunity to have a VOTF booth at the upcoming **National Ministry Summit: Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership** in Orlando, FL in April this year. Six sponsors host the conference: the National Association for Lay Ministry; the Conference for Pastoral Planning and Council Development; the National Association of Church Personnel Administrators; the National Association of Diaconate Directors; the National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association; and the National Federation of Priests' Council.

From April 20 to April 24 John Ryan and Svea Fraser (and other interested members of VOTF) will meet the members of these other Catholic organizations, all of whom are involved in planning emerging models of pastoral leadership and parish structures.

Not only that, at the end of the conference the Working Group is [hosting a reception](#) before the 40th anniversary banquet of the National Federation of Priests' Councils. The cost of the reception is \$3,000. The working group is contributing mightily to this effort, but we welcome the support of others who see this as a golden opportunity to enter into the conversation and to have a voice with others who share the responsibility for the future of our church. *Submitted by Svea Fraser*

DIOCESE/State Watch

The Gavin Group 2007 audit of 195 US Dioceses for compliance with the USCCB Charter to Protect Children and Young People: Once again, all dioceses are not in compliance with the bishops' own mandate to protect children from sexual abuse by clergy—and the bishop of Lincoln, Nebraska, continues his refusal to participate. In her letter included in the report, Teresa Kettelcamp (USCCB executive director for the office of Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection) warned against “issue fatigue” and underscored the ongoing need for vigilance. For the complete report, go to <http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/annualreport.pdf> and see how your diocese is faring.

St. Louis MO: How goes the battle between the St. Stanislaus Kostka community and Archbishop Raymond Burke? See SITE-Seeing, Etc. for *NCR* coverage.

SITE-Seeing, Etc.

***Who was Martin Niemoeller?** During WWI Niemoeller was a U-boat commander and politician for a few years before he turned to theology. He was ordained a Lutheran priest in 1929. The one-time Nazi supporter's increasing criticism of Nazi policy earned him seven years in concentration camps, including Dachau from which he was liberated in 1945. He spent the rest of his life working for world peace and was president of the World Council of Churches. He died on March 6, 1984, at the age of 92.

A recent **Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life** has released a new survey of more than 35,000 Americans and finds over one-quarter of adults (28%) have left the faith in which they were raised in favor of another religion – or no religion at all. For more information, go to the Pew Research Center publications at <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/743/united-states-religion>.

National Catholic Reporter is offering a 60-day, free subscription to their e-publication. Regularly, the options are print-only (e-access is free for print subscribers) or electronic-only, the cost for which is somewhat less than hard copy. As many readers are aware, NCR should be called **International Catholic Reporter** – the scope of their coverage is and has been global. Here are some highlights in the March 7 issue:

- The captivating story of Fr. Marek Bozek, a latter-day David (Fr. Bozek) and Goliath (Archbishop Raymond Burke) tale, is the subject of an NCR article. Go to http://ncronline.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2008a/022208/022208a.htm.
- What do the new chairman of Germany's Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference have in common with India's bishops? Both are moving in substantive ways toward a more liberal Catholic Church in their countries, including greater ecumenism and gender balance. See

- http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2008a/030708/030708k.htm and http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2008a/030708/030708k.htm.
- A brief reflection on the recent death of the much-loved Jesuit orator and writer Fr. Walter J. Burghardt at http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2008a/030708/030708u.htm.

Bishop Robinson may be speaking somewhere near you! The former Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney, Australia was the advocate for victims abused by priests from 1994-96. He himself was a victim of abuse and spoke out about it and the denial, inaction and lack of concern shown by Rome for all victims. The Vatican chastised him for speaking out. The Bishop, now retired, has written a book addressing some of those issues: *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church: Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus*. Several VOTF affiliates and many other organizations have booked a visit with Bishop Robinson during his time here. For a brief look inside the book, the introduction appears at www.richardsipe.com. Go to the right-hand navigation bar under “Books of Note” and click on “Confronting Power.” And watch your local calendar for the Bishop’s itinerary.

The **Boston College Center for the Church in the 21st Century forum on Voice of the Faithful** is now available via their web cast archive at <http://www.bc.edu/church21/> .

“**Interesting Statistics Affecting the Priesthood and the Faith**” has generated considerable interest since our VOTF Minnesota Rep. Bob Schwiderski found it and passed it along. See what you think about <http://www.jknirp.com/stats.htm>.

QUOTE for our time: Recognize a basic reality: Courage is not the absence of fear. It is feeling afraid to do something but finding the strength to do it.” Fr. Walter J. Burghardt, writing in NCR in 2006.

PRIESTS of Integrity – provided by Svea Fraser

Due to pressing family commitments, Father Steve was not able to be with us in Providence, but his award was accepted by David Clohessy, president and director of SNAP.

In a few sentences, here are snippets of testimony made on his behalf: Father Steve is “a country priest” who has “been on a continuing crusade for integrity and transparency” in his diocese since the abuse and cover up scandals became apparent in 2002. He is a quiet and unassuming pastor who didn’t set out to be a hero, but who became one by speaking out on behalf of those who are hurt. He has worked courageously in exposing the truth behind the murder of a slain Catholic nun; clergy sexual abuse cases; closed parishes; and financial impropriety. Father Steve also participated in the Oscar-nominated documentary “Twist of Fate”.

In honoring priests such as Fr. Steve, it has never been our intention to judge, nor to ignore, those unnamed leaders who are equally committed to the people whom they serve. We are grateful for the ones who have allowed us to name them, not for personal recognition, but as a sign of hope and an inspiration to others. We are all called to the same conviction. The greatest honor we can bestow is to imitate their courage and compassion.