

In the Vineyard

May 4, 2006

“Quick from the dead, my Risen Lord is seen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.”

J. M. C. Crum verse from “Now the green blade riseth”

HIGHLIGHTS in this issue:

The VOTF **National Representative Council** is finalizing the agenda for its semi-annual Council meeting (slated for June 2-4 in Chicago); beginning discussions on potential new strategic and policy issues; and voting on four formal policy statements dealing with statutes of limitation and windows reform associated with protecting children from sexual abuse through legislation. See NRC Update.

National Catholic Reporter asks, rightly, “How did it come to this?”

If you or someone you know has never read a grand jury report on sexual abuse by clergy; if you know someone who still doesn’t believe the survivors’ stories; if you know someone who is swayed by Denver Archbishop Chaput’s scaremongering (see Diocese/State Watch below), consider the tragic tale told in the April 26 issue of *National Catholic Reporter* “Shining light on a cover-up.” And if anyone doubts the desperate need for Church reform, that story and the editorial in the same issue “A look into a hidden culture” will dispel any uncertainty. See Diocese/State Watch (Phila., PA).

Accountability Now Campaign - Focus committees have been established to help guide each of our two campaigns; also, **VOTF will keep Pentecost 2006** (June 4) true to its earliest meanings – first fruits. See Accountability *Now* Campaign Update.

AFFILIATE Updates – VOTF **Northern Virginia**: Frequently, several members from all over the US will identify/pass along the same particular news item. This time it’s the tragic story of an abused priest and the cost to him of telling the truth. VOTF affiliates and Fr. James Moran speak for themselves. See Commentary – “Case Study: Punishing the Victim”; the **VOTF Bridgeport, CT** conference on bishop election was a resounding success. Notre Dame theology professor Fr. Richard McBrien in his address to over 200 attendees noted, “In fact, the church elected its bishops, including the Bishop of Rome for much of its history.” For more, go to the Bridgeport, CT web site at www.votfbpt.org; **cautious optimism in NH** after March 30 results of independent audit (*Vineyard* April 6) alarmed many. See more in Diocese/State Watch and additional updates from Pa., Ohio, Mass., N.Y., and Colo.

What brings a **Special Mention** to Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz (see Special Mention) and Member Recognition to VOTF Tennessee members Linda and Jim Zralek? (See Commentary – “VOTF Member Recognition: Linda and Jim Zralek, VOTF Tennessee”).

Fr. Tom Doyle on “Dialogue with Bishops” – Part II

In the NEXT ISSUE of In the Vineyard 5/18: VOTF Northern Virginia performed their own diocesan audit (Arlington Diocese) on the implementation of the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. Their findings and observations were noted in a letter to Bishop Loverde.

NATIONAL/International News

See **Diocese/State Watch** [here](#).

VOTF Ireland web site is launched: Mary Ann Keyes planted and nurtured this seed over a year ago and VOTF Ireland's Sean O'Conaill took it from there. We encourage our readers to visit the site and share the address at <http://www.votfi.com> with all of your "friends and relations" in Ireland.

VOTF is inviting nominations to our **Board of Trustees**. See details [here](#). The Board of Trustees in consultation with the Officers and the NRC has been working on new by-laws that provide for the election of trustees. The new by-laws are in their final cycle of review by the lawyers and will be posted on our web site as soon as possible.

SITE-Seeing, Etc.

SPECIAL Mention April 2006: Lincoln, Nebraska Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz embodies a rare good news/bad news profile. The good news is that he is an exception in the USCCB; the bad news is that he is an exception in the USCCB. The Bishop has managed this achievement by being the only bishop in the US to refuse last year's diocesan auditors as called for by the USCCB's own National Review Board. See <http://www.journalstar.com/articles/2006/04/25/values/doc444d5a572efb8981944197.txt>

Publication Alert: *US Catholic*, May 2006 – "Let's pray, pay, and have our say" confirms what VOTF members already know and includes four proposals for how consultation with the laity might work. Let us know what you think at pthorp.ed@votf.org. Go to www.uscatholic.org.

Yet another learning opportunity provided by Boston College and you don't have to leave your desk. To explore the four Gospel passion narratives, go to <http://monticello.bc.edu/ides/staging/deathofjesus/entrypage.html> for an online self-paced tutorial, written and narrated by Philip A. Cunningham, Executive Director of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College. It is a collaborative project of [C21 Online](#) and the [Center](#).

BOOK Alert: *Sex, Priests, and Secret Codes: The Catholic Church's 2,000-year Paper Trail of Sexual* by Thomas P. Doyle, A.W.R. Sipe and Patrick J. Wall, Volt Press. For review, see May 5 posting in NCR at www.ncronline.org.

Commentary

“Dialogue with Bishops” – Fr. Tom Doyle, second installment of three (see April 20 *Vineyard* for Part 1)

“Case Study: Punishing the Victim” – Bill Casey, VOTF Northern Virginia

“VOTF Member Recognition: Linda and Jim Zralek, VOTF Tennessee”

QUOTES for our time: “The world of hierarchy has come to an end. Don't fight with it. Let it disintegrate.” *Eugene Kennedy, professor emeritus at Loyola University of Chicago, at the third annual convention of VOTF Long Island on April 22.*

"This is an ancient, rigid, secretive, top-down, all-male monarchy. It always has been. It always will be. The answer is not to reform them, but to go around them and to contain them." *SNAP's national director David Clohessy at the third annual convention of VOTF Long Island, April 22.*

DIOCESE/State Watch

New Hampshire: The *Concord Monitor* reported on April 21: “The state's Roman Catholic diocese announced yesterday that all priests and most church employees and volunteers who work with children have been screened and trained to protect children from sexual abuse. Church officials released internal statistics less than a month after a state audit found major deficiencies in the diocese's attempts to honor the terms of its 2002 agreement with the attorney general's office.”

VOTF NH member and founding member of New Hampshire Catholics for Moral Leadership Carolyn Disco said that while compliance is always good news, "I'd like to think the figures represent the absolute truth, but I want to hear it from the state auditors." For more, go to <http://www.concordmonitor.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060421/REPOSITORY/604210339>.

Philadelphia, PA: The cover story of the April 26 issue of *National Catholic Reporter* is the diocese of Philadelphia and offers another vignette of one tragic decision after another in one diocese. “Some of the files seemed intentionally vague. Others, though, are painfully detailed and provide investigators with a blueprint of how [Cardinal} Bevilacqua, who led the archdiocese from 1988 to 2003, and his predecessor, Cardinal John Krol (1961-88) routinely shuffled abusive priests from one unsuspecting parish to the next. (One serial abuser was

moved through so many parishes -- 17 in all -- that archdiocesan officials worried they were running out of churches where parishioners would be unaware of his predilections.) Abusers were almost never permanently removed from active ministry. And in almost every case, the civil authorities were not informed of the abuse.” Go to

http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2006b/042806/042806a.php.

- *NCR* editorial, April 26: “Last month, we made a request of Cardinal Francis George of Chicago after severe lapses in that archdiocese’s child protection program allowed credibly accused abusers to return to ministry, one of whom was arrested in January for molesting three boys. We asked George to use his influential station to convince Rome and his fellow bishops to, first, assemble competent panels of independent expert Catholics to compile reports fully disclosing what happened in each diocese, an act that we think could begin to restore trust in a shaken community.”

And this:

“From the first news of this crisis in 1983, through the years of grudging admission by bishops that something was amiss, through the explosion of news in 2002 when the courts forced the release of secret documents in the Boston archdiocese, through the anguish of the meeting in Dallas in June of that same year, the formation of a National Review Board and ongoing court cases, the tenacity of the clergy culture’s grip on Catholic leadership has been the most evident characteristic of that group’s response.” Go to http://ncronline.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2006b/042806/042806s.htm.

Denver, CO: According to Zenit.org*, Archbishop Chaput (Denver, CO) is worried. Writing in *First Things*, the Archbishop said, that amending the civil statutes could “decimate the remaining resources of the Catholic faithful in the United States and steal the religious future from a generation of Catholic young people.” Go to the May issue of *First Things* at <http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft0605/opinion/chaput.html>. Let us know what you think at pthorp.ed@votf.org.

- Associated Press reports that retired Bishop Gumbleton, “breaking with Colorado Catholic leaders” met with Denver lawmakers in April “to promote bills aimed at helping childhood sex-crime victims file lawsuits.” In its current form, the bill would allow lawsuits to be filed from as far back as the 1980s.” Three of Colorado’s bishops, including Chaput, have been lobbying hard from their pulpits and in the media against the bill.

Boston, MA: Cardinal O’Malley’s idea of dialogue is a little clearer to some. The April 23 column of *Boston Globe* columnist Eileen McNamara “One-Way Dialogue” is illuminating. At a meeting with *Globe* staff (the full transcript is available at http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2006/04/21/edited_transcript_of_cardinal_sean_p_omalleys_qa/), O’Malley, and eight male advisors to the Cardinal, McNamara noted, “It was refreshing, really, a cardinal-archbishop with no pretension of ideological inclusion. He said he believes in dialogue but, as he defines it, dialogue is less about listening to other points of view than about doing 'an awful lot more to help our

people to understand what the church's teachings are.” For the McNamara column, subscribers can go to [http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_product=BG&p_theme=bg&p_action=search&p_maxdocs=200&s_dispstring=Eileen%20McNamara%20AND%20date\(all\)&p_field_advanced-0=&p_text_advanced-0=\(\"Eileen%20McNamara\"\)&p_perpage=10&p_sort=YMD_date:D&xcal_useweights=n](http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_product=BG&p_theme=bg&p_action=search&p_maxdocs=200&s_dispstring=Eileen%20McNamara%20AND%20date(all)&p_field_advanced-0=&p_text_advanced-0=(\).

- What is also clear is the unusual (although other dioceses have done much the same) and welcomed step taken in the Boston archdiocese by Cardinal O’Malley to disclose archdiocesan finances. Go to <http://www.rcab.org/Finance/HomePage.html>. What financial information does your diocese publish? Let us know at pthorp.ed@votf.org. Also, this information will be useful to our financial accountability advisors (see *Accountability Now* Campaign Update).
- The *Boston Globe* on April 17 reported “Minus priests, parishioners led services at three occupied churches” in Scituate, East Boston and Wellesley.

VOTF Long Island, NY: One more weekend remains for VOTF Long Island, NY’s petition for an elected representative diocesan finance council. Go to www.li-votf.org for details.

LATE News from Ohio: Associated Press reports, “Gov. Bob Taft on Tuesday signed into law a bill that adds the state's clergy to professions required to report suspected sexual abuse. The law also extends the time for victims of abuse by clergy to file lawsuits, although supporters were disappointed that lawmakers removed a provision that would have opened a one-year window for past victims to sue.” The bill takes effect in August.

[*ZENIT is an International News Agency. “Our mission is to provide objective coverage of events, documents and issues emanating from or concerning the Catholic Church.”]

ACCOUNTABILITY *Now* Campaign Update

Two groups of volunteer advisors have been assembled to facilitate the progress of the VOTF Campaign for Accountability. They are the Financial Accountability Advisors (FAA) and the Legislative Accountability Advisors (LAA). These groups consist of financial and legislative experts from across the country. Each group will:

- 1) provide resources and “on-call” support that will bolster affiliates’ campaign efforts
- 2) share campaign successes and lessons learned with other involved affiliates
- 3) make suggestions for how to revise the campaign plans as new information is presented

VOTF is grateful to the following:

FAA Members:

Brenda Hackett (Wayne, PA); Joe Harris (Seattle, WA); John Hauter (Chicago, IL); George Perkins (Fall River, MA); Brad Pritts (Ann Arbor, MI); Vicki Rector (Colorado Springs, CO); Karl Useldinger (Colorado Springs, CO)

For financial accountability campaign questions, contact the FAA via email at VOTF_FAA_SUPPORT@yahoo.com .

- Note an April 2 *New York Times* article that further documents the need for financial accountability. "Pensions in Peril Over Church Exemptions" is at http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/02/business/02church.html?_r=1&oref=slogin.

LAA Members:

Tom Byrne (Cleveland, OH); Joseph Kern (Long Island, NY); Chuck Miller (Montgomery County, MD); Judy Miller (Montgomery County, MD); John Moynihan (Boston, MA)
Bob Schwiderski (Twin Cities, MN); Ed Wilson (Brooklyn, NY)

For legislative campaign questions, contact the LAA through Tom Byrne at byrne351@yahoo.com .

NOTE from VOTF president Mary Pat Fox:

PENTECOST June 4, 2006: *Kick-off for the VOTF National Campaign for Accountability*

Join with friends this Pentecost for the official beginning of our commitment to accountability in the Catholic Church. Our Campaign for Accountability *Now* team has been assembling the framework for the campaigns on financial accountability and protecting our children with input gathered first at the 2005 Indianapolis convocation and then from affiliates, the NRC and working groups throughout VOTF.

On Pentecost, we will unite in prayer to ask for God's grace as we work to build a healthier Church. Get out your red jacket and your VOTF pin; there will be a role for everyone who wishes to participate. Watch the VOTF web site for more details at "Campaign for Accountability."

COMMENTARY

Part II

Communicating with Bishops Does Not Equal Capitulation

Part I appeared in the 4/20 Vineyard; the last installment will be in the 5/18 issue.

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

The welfare of the victims should be the primary concern of the institutional Church because these men and women, boys and girls, have not only had their bodies and their emotions deeply scarred, but their souls devastated. For a Church whose ultimate and foundational mission is the “salvation of souls,” there seems to have been precious little concern for the souls of those faithful and trusting Catholics who were raped and brutalized by priests and bishops.

The agenda of the victims and survivors has remained constant. First, they want the bishops to acknowledge that their abuse is real. They want to be believed. They do not want to be patronized nor will they be satisfied with wringing hands, profuse apologies and promises of prayer. They want to be able to believe that the bishops truly understand the horror and trauma they have experienced. In looking for some sign of an honest cognitive and emotional response, too many have been disappointed and walked away convinced that they were viewed as a threat or a nuisance and not an emotional and spiritual casualty.

Second, they have wanted the bishops to do something about the perpetrators. Many began with well-justified thoughts of revenge but miraculously, most worked through this and sought only assurance that the men and women who raped their bodies and souls be provided help but mostly be restricted from ever being able to hurt another person, young or old. In all too many cases the victims found out to their shock that the promises made were never kept. Perpetrators were re-cycled and more children were hurt.

Third, the victims and indeed the Catholic and general public have wanted honest answers from the bishops to some very painful and fundamental questions. *Why* did they cover-up and allow known child abusers to move from place to place? *Why* did they ignore victims and not offer any significant pastoral care? *Why* have they consistently and stubbornly refused to look at their own style of governing to find the answers to such devastating questions?

Finally, *why* has the image of the institutional Church’s leadership been more important than the spiritual and emotional welfare of the tens of thousands of clergy abuse victims? To these questions there have been no answers. There have only been more equivocation, more diversionary tactics and more arrogance.

Experience has clearly shown that not every bishop has failed to realize the enormity of this era. It is simply improbable that some or even many have not reacted with horror and found honest compassion in their hearts for the victims and for Catholics in general, angry and disappointed that their trust has been betrayed. Yet the body of bishops remains defensive and aloof. The good will and efforts of those who truly “get it” are hidden by the intransigence of those who continue to focus on themselves, trapped in a narcissistic self-image that serves as a barrier to true insight from getting in and authentic pastoral compassion from getting out.

It is tragic that it took a nightmare such as the clergy abuse scandal to cause the laity to awaken from the spiritual coma induced by clericalism and begin to realize that they must be adults in Church as well as in their homes, their places of work and in secular society in general. The results have been predictable. Lay men and women who have confronted and questioned have been accused of everything from misunderstanding to heresy. Some, when asking for discussion and dialogue have been told that there will be none unless the hierarchic authority is acknowledged. In other words, dress like a grown-up for the meeting, but act like a docile, obedient and fearful child. Communicating with bishops on a level playing field is, by tradition, theologically and canonically impossible. Yet it is essential if the Church is to really be the Body of Christ and if the leaders hope to be seen as pastors and not bureaucrats in medieval dress (Cf. Mark 10: 42-43). Catholic lay men and women are forced to acknowledge the irrational fears that always caused them to bow in deference before “father,” much less “His Excellency.” They *must* meet these fears head on, acknowledge them and move past them. Too much is at stake.

The lay people *must* forge the new set of rules for communicating with the hierarchs. Heretofore there have been two basic behavior patterns from the pre-abuse days, and an additional pattern born of the scandal. In the days when all lived the reality of the church as a stratified society, the lay people deferred to the bishops and generally believed that their assessments, conclusions and action plans were always right. This was almost always true in direct dealings with bishops. When out of earshot however, some lay persons often expressed disagreement, disappointment or even anger at bishops and their actions. Yet none would ever confront or forcibly question them. That simply wasn't done. They were, after all, the divinely appointed successors of the apostles.

With the scandal came a third way of communicating and that was through direct and often angry confrontation. Forced by the media and the courts to face the issues, the bishops could hardly retreat to the security of their offices, confident that the clamor would dissipate in time and all would return to normal. The deference, respect and trust that had been seared into Catholic souls quickly evaporated and was replaced by anger and disdain. In general, irrational anger has not served to persuade the bishops of the validity and urgency of the survivors' complaints. *However, the angry encounters with bishops, including the vociferous demonstrations that have taken place at chanceries and cathedrals, have not been without impact. Though the bishops have tried to give the impression of being above the fray and immune from the anger and emotion, it remains painfully true that this form of communication has shocked many bishops into the realization that they can no longer presume deference and respect.* [Emphasis added.]

Both sides of the conversation have hardened. Some bishops won't allow reform groups such as Call to Action or Voice of the Faithful to meet on Church property, mindlessly accusing them of having “agendas,” being “anti-Catholic,” “fostering dissent,” or worst of all, failing to respect the bishops. Clerics openly associated with VOTF, SNAP or other organizations deemed unacceptable by some bishops, have been criticized, shunned or, in the case of some priests or deacons, unjustly penalized. Since there is no valid basis for accusing either group of being heretical, anti-Catholic or dissenting, they are vilified,

not because their message is heretical or dissenting, but because their anger and confrontational tactics are more than the bishops can handle. What is being lost in all of this is the path to mutual understanding.

[Final installment 5/18: Fr. Doyle looks at what true dialogue will take.]

CASE Study: Punishing the Victim

We are grateful to the many correspondents who forwarded a *Washington Post* story about the case of abuse survivor Fr. James Moran (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/26/AR2006042602338.html>). Fr. Moran is a member of VOTF Northern Virginia. Bill Casey of VOTF Northern Virginia, as appalled by Fr. Moran's story as anyone else familiar with it, has provided the following documents (with permission from Fr. Moran) in order to present *Vineyard* readers with a broader context than the *Washington Post* was able to provide: a background letter to the *Vineyard* from Bill Casey; a letter from Fr. Moran to his hospital colleagues of eight years; and a letter from VOTF Northern Virginia and Georgetown affiliates to the Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, Bishop Kevin J. Farrell.

Background information from Bill Casey:

Today the *Washington Post* ran a story about the shameful treatment of one of our affiliate members by an auxiliary bishop of Washington. Although it does justice to Jim's abuse experience, it underplays (I think) the callous and punitive treatment of Jim by the auxiliary Bishop of Washington (Kevin Farrell).

Fr. Jim Moran has been a member of our affiliate for the past year or so. His story as a survivor of clergy sexual abuse and his re-victimization by Cardinal Law and other archdiocesan officials is recounted in his letter. Although he is a priest of the Boston Archdiocese, Jim spent most of his 34 years of priestly service as a military chaplain, and for the last 8 years, as a chaplain at the Washington Hospital Center (under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Washington).

As the letter explains, Jim received a medical disability from Boston based on his abuse experience, and he was scheduled to depart his chaplain position on May 31, 2006. At that time, the faculties issued to him by the DC archdiocese were to expire because he would no longer be in active ministry, although he plans to continue living in Northern Virginia.

On April 11 (Tuesday of Holy Week), he explained in his homily the reasons for his impending departure and left copies of the following letter for the few dozen people in attendance (colleagues and those under his care). The very next morning (after the hospital forwarded the letter to the DC archdiocese), a representative of Auxiliary Bishop Kevin Farrell (diocesan point person on the

clergy abuse scandal) called Jim and told him that Bishop Farrell ordered the immediate revocation of his faculties and in effect "fired" him at once from his position. No one in the hospital or the archdiocese discussed any of this with Jim before the call.

Jim is stunned by yet another round of victimization by ecclesiastical officials, this time in DC. Since then, the Boston Diocese (to its credit) is moving up the date of his medical disability to ensure continued income and benefits.

As we have learned only too well, clergy continue generally to act without any accountability regardless of how shamefully they behave, and lay persons have so little leverage to alter their abusive decisions. The leaders of our affiliate and those of the affiliate at Holy Trinity parish in Georgetown sent a letter to Bishop Farrell on April 21, objecting as directly and forcefully as we could, to this egregious re-wounding of a survivor and a faithful priest of some 34 years of ministry.

What can only be described as tragic irony, the priest who raped Jim was just arrested in Hull, Massachusetts, for molesting a mentally-retarded boy who lived near him. Anthony Laurano is retired from the Boston archdiocese, is 81, and is awaiting trial on an earlier charge of raping an 8-year old boy twice before his first communion.

Letter from Fr. Moran to his hospital colleagues dated Holy Week, April 2006:

Dear Chapel friends,

On Holy Thursday we celebrate the institution of the Eucharist as well as the Priesthood. In many parishes the priests in the parish substitute the traditional "Washing of Feet" with a Renewal of their Vows. This year, for me, the celebration of Holy Thursday is bittersweet.

From May 1970 through May 1971 I was assigned as a Deacon to serve an internship in a parish in Roslindale, Massachusetts. In August 1970 one of the priests in the parish arranged to take a teenaged parishioner and myself to a conference in Connecticut. We stayed in homes of the priest's relatives or friends. On the first night of that trip the priest raped me. Two days later he told me he had no remorse for what had happened, that I had "asked for it," and that he used to come into my room at the rectory to watch me sleep. On our return to the parish I reported the incident to my priest supervisor. Nothing happened. I called every rape crisis center listed in the yellow pages – no one would talk to me because I was a male. In 1970 only women were considered to be victims of rape. Around February 1971 I told the Seminary there was a "problem in the rectory" and suggested no replacement be sent for me. A replacement was assigned.

My only option was to "to live with it." I did not, could not, tell my family. I've learned in the past 4 years that my supervisor had been diagnosed in 1957 with an adolescent psychopathic personality. He had this "thing" for mentally ill teenaged girls – and obviously was still "active" in 1970.

After retiring from the Navy Chaplain Corps (1997,) I could not return to Boston. I had not at that time been able to name my experience. I was assigned here at the Washington Hospital Center on 1 February 1998. From September to early November 2001 I experienced a flashback to the incident and began therapy. By early December I told my family for the first time. In January 2002 I tried to take it back to the Archdiocese of Boston. It took the Cardinal [Law] five months to see me. When we met there was no validation that I had been a good priest, or was a good person. I told the Cardinal that my biggest fear was that in not being able to stop the priest, he went on to hurt others. I was told there had been no other allegations against the priest. At the time he was retired. My accusation was investigated, and his faculties were withdrawn. He tried to say that it was mutual, and that I had "asked for it." The investigation also pointed out that there had been at least two other allegations made – but nothing was done. He is currently 80 years old and preparing for trial for (allegedly) raping an 8-year-old boy just before his First Communion fourteen years ago.

Last summer I shared more detailed thoughts and reactions with my family. My aunt and uncle, both in their late seventies, commented, "It's a wonder you are still a priest." In therapy I was dealing with my rationalizations of staying in ministry. For nearly 35 years I've rationalized that the little good that I can do would offset the evil done to me. However, during the past four years of the clergy abuse crisis I've seen more and more cases of Bishops, Archbishops and Cardinals covering up their actions of moving abusive priests from parish to parish, and even diocese to diocese.

The theology of "apostleship" is that the one who is sent more than represents the sender – he actually "becomes" the sender. With this understanding, a priest is "sent" by the local bishop to preach the Word. In essence we "become" the bishop – and represent and stand for all that they say and do. I can no longer "represent" these bishops who are protecting things of this world (checkbooks, stock portfolios, etc.) and ignoring the basic Christian need to bring Justice and Reconciliation to victims. The bishops have pointed the finger at abusive priests, and rightly so. However, they have done NOTHING to look at themselves and take responsibility for the evil they have brought to the church.

The Bishop of Joliet, Illinois gave a deposition last summer that was demoralizing. He had no idea of the number of priests who had allegations against them. He had no remorse, nor took any responsibility for moving predatory pedophile priests from parish to parish. In the Archdiocese of Chicago last summer (August 2005) a priest had an allegation of abuse raised against him. The Cardinal assigned a priest to monitor the abusive priest – but over Labor Day weekend the monitor was away, and the abusive priest took three teenagers on a

weekend trip. The priest was not removed from ministry until he was arrested in January 2006. Unfortunately, there was another child abused in December. The Cardinal of Chicago (George) was the primary composer of the so-called "charter to protect children" that the American bishops adopted in Dallas in June 2002. Cardinal George did not follow the course of action set out in the charter, nor did he follow the rules of his own diocese. The president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has had an accusation levied against him. According to the "Charter" any priest who is accused is temporarily removed from ministry until the accusation is proven to be credible or not. Cardinal Skylstad has refused to step down. Dioceses in the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere have claimed bankruptcy, claiming that the diocese does not "own" their parishes – so as to reduce the financial resources of the diocese in assessing damages. They are more concerned with the things of this world than they are in simple Christian Justice.

If you cannot understand what a victim experiences I highly recommend the movie "Twist of Faith." It is an HBO documentary that was nominated for an academy award. It was released on DVD in February 2006 and is available through www.amazon.com for approximately \$19 plus shipping. It was shown recently to a group of interested people. There were two of us as victims who were with them. At the end, we were asked our opinion. The other guy said, "Move it from Toledo to Philadelphia, and that's my story." I said, "Change the age from 14 to 25, and that's my story." It is accurate and reflects well what a victim of sexual abuse experiences.

I am being granted a "medical disability" based on chronic Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome and chronic depression. As recently as December 2005 I dreamed of the rape and actually "felt" the priest's skin on mine. As for the depression, I disguise it well – my "outgoing personality" is a cover-up. According to my therapist, I've probably been depressed since the rape (35 years ago) but since there was no one to talk to about it, I believed I was "normal." By nature I am very much a loner – and an introvert. For me to be "outgoing" takes a LOT of emotional energy.

Effective 31 May 2006 I will be leaving active ministry. It is difficult to leave – I have loved serving the church, but I cannot go against my conscience by not standing up to the bishops in calling for them to take responsibility.

Thank you for being supportive of me while I have been here for the past 8-plus years. Please know that you will be in my prayers as you care for the sick – and I simply ask that you remember me occasionally in your prayers as well.

God bless you all.

The April 21, 2006 letter sent to Bishop Farrell from the VOTF Northern Virginia and the Holy Trinity/Georgetown, Wash., DC affiliates:

April 21, 2006

Bishop Kevin J. Farrell
Auxiliary Bishop of Washington
P.O. Box 29260
Washington, DC 20017-0260

Dear Bishop Farrell,

The undersigned write to you out of a deep experience of anguish, pain, and anger. We are aghast that you ordered the withdrawal of Rev. James Moran's faculties because he dared to speak truth in explaining to his colleagues and others under his care why he is departing his chaplain position at the Washington Hospital Center. For the last eight years, he has faithfully and compassionately ministered to the sick and dying at the hospital.

Our rich Lenten tradition invites us to participate in some of the deepest mysteries of our faith. One of the most challenging is Jesus' call to repentance, starting with naming the sin that thrives within each of us. Fr. Moran dared to confront the truth in his own priestly experience, including a vicious rape by another disturbed priest in the Boston Archdiocese, an insensitive and deceitful response to it by Cardinal Law and other archdiocesan officials, and years of suppression of those wounds within his own psyche.

When God's grace led him to bring those wounds to the fore several years ago, he faithfully followed the painful path and has begun to reclaim his inner experience with the support of helpful therapists, family and friends. In recent time, that path has forced him to confront and name the sins of his abuser and the enablers of the abuser. Seeking a medical disability based on his horrific experience became the only way in which he could live with integrity. And as with all survivors of sexual abuse, telling and re-telling his story has led him closer to a place of truth and wholeness.

Yet when he dared to name the truth of his experience and the well-documented behavior of our institutional hierarchy in order to explain his decision, you victimized him yet again with a callous and punitive withdrawal of his faculties just weeks before they would expire upon the effective date of his medical disability.

How can your action square with any of the Gospel stories in which Jesus only showed compassion to those around him who were the most deeply wounded? When the two disciples left Jerusalem for Emmaus, Luke's Gospel describes them as confused, distressed, and with dashed expectations. They lamented their wounds and woes to a stranger along a 7-mile walk and did not recognize that stranger as Jesus until he broke bread with them later that evening. Luke tells us that Jesus listened to them and explained how his recent passion, death and

resurrection made sense even as they grieved their lost hopes. The story never mentions that Jesus belittled or punished them for leaving their faith community behind and tending to themselves. Instead, he treated them with care and compassion until they were ready to understand the good news.

Even if you found his comments offensive (which none of us do), you responded without compassion or sensitivity to Fr. Moran's wounded experience. Instead you ordered the withdrawal of his faculties and reopened the wound to the rape he experienced 34 years ago as a deacon and the rejection of his disclosure to Archdiocesan officials in Boston not long thereafter. As with so many survivors of clergy and other sexual abuse, Fr. Moran bears lifelong wounds and pain, despite ministering to countless Catholic faithful for nearly 35 years. How long will our Church leaders abuse the abused?

So we too participate faithfully in the Lenten call to name the sin within us, individually and collectively. We name what you have done to Fr. Moran as sinful and in need of repentance. We claim this right as adult, fully-initiated members of the faith we share, and we pray that you will find a way to turn around this sin and heal the additional wounding it has caused. As we try to do the same with our own sins, we pray for God's mercy and grace to heal us all.

MEMBER Recognition – Linda and Jim Zralek, VOTF Tennessee
from the *Tennessean*, April 19, 2006, at
<http://www.ashlandcitytimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060418/NEWS01/60418007>

VOTF congratulates Linda and Jim on their remarkable commitment to so many. We wish them continued joy in service.

Lives of service and dedication marked the 20th annual Mary Catherine Strobel Awards, given out at a luncheon today attended by more than 800 people. Considered Middle Tennessee's highest volunteer honor, and called the "Academy Awards for volunteers" by U.S. Representative Jim Cooper, the five top awards represented more than 130 nominees.

This is the fifth year that the ceremony falls under the auspices of Hands On Nashville, the largest volunteer resource agency in Middle Tennessee. The awards, given out in five categories, are named in memory of the late Mary Catherine Strobel, who was killed in the service of the city's disenfranchised population.

Community Volunteer: Jim and Linda Zralek for their lifetimes of work with a multitude of organizations, including House of Mercy, Campus for Human Development, Penuel Ridge, Voice of the Faithful, Nashville Peace and Justice Center, Vanderbilt Divinity School, Just Faith, Jesuit Volunteer Corps, Project Reflect, Tying Nashville Together, Habitat for Humanity, Diversity in Dialogue, Room in the Inn and Saint Ann Church.

National Representative Council Update

The National Representative Council is finalizing the agenda for its semi-annual Council meeting (slated for June 2-4 in Chicago); beginning discussions on potential new strategic and policy issues; and voting on four formal policy statements dealing with statutes of limitation and windows reform associated with protecting children from sexual abuse through legislation.

Council Meeting

The Council's Steering Committee is coordinating the logistics and agenda for the Chicago meeting next month. Although the agenda has not been finalized, some of the topics to be discussed include the Council's interface with the Convocation Implementation team (CIT); progress of the new bylaws being drafted by the Board of Trustees with input from the NRC; the election of replacements for Council members who have resigned; updates on previous Council proposals (priests' pension reform and lamentation service); partnering with other church reform groups; and suggestions for more effective Council operations.

New Areas of Discussion

Council members have helped distribute information about the recent financial report published by the Archdiocese of Boston and have forwarded assessments and comments from financial specialists to members of the Boston Council. Other proposed new areas of discussion include creating a policy on the deference to be accorded affiliates in making decisions concerning matters in local dioceses; reassessment of the Council structure for deliberating on proposed resolutions; and creating a strategy and policy for growth of the national VOTF movement.

Voting on Proposed Resolutions

The Council recently opened voting on four policy statements dealing with statute of limitations and windows reform associated with protecting children from sexual abuse through legislation.

WHEREAS, Goal 1 of VOTF is to "support victims of clergy sexual abuse" and Goal 3 is "to shape structural change within the Church"; and

WHEREAS, supporting past and current victims of clergy sexual abuse naturally extends to prevention of future sexual abuse of children; and

WHEREAS, many states have laws pertaining to the protection of children from sexual abuse and governing the ability of child abuse victims to sue in civil court that are insufficiently effective in protecting children or providing justice for survivors; and

WHEREAS, in many of these states the statute of limitations for criminally prosecuting perpetrators of child sexual abuse is only a few years following the abuse, and the time limitation on a victim's ability to file a claim in civil court against the abuser and any abettors is so short that most victims are not emotionally, psychologically, or financially capable of filing a claim within the limitation period, thus many victims currently are already beyond the limitations age; and

WHEREAS, temporarily suspending, or permanently eliminating retroactively, the statute of limitations on civil claims is permitted under the US Constitution; and

WHEREAS, both the retroactive suspension or permanent elimination of civil statutes of limitations and the prospective elimination or extension to a reasonable age would allow:

- Abuse survivors to have their day in civil court,
- Expose pedophiles and any who aided or abetted them,
- Alert parents and the general public to the abuse threat and spur them to take action to further protect their children, and
- Put Church officials and others on notice to strengthen their child protection efforts or face further civil action and unwanted publicity

THEREFORE IT IS RESOLVED THAT:

1. It is the policy of VOTF to support the reform of state and federal laws to strengthen the protection of children from sexual abuse, afford justice for survivors of child sexual abuse, and hold accountable any individual or institution that aids or abets child sexual abuse.
2. Prospectively, VOTF supports legislation either to eliminate civil statutes of limitations on current or new child sexual abuse cases or to extend the limitation to an age when most survivors would be emotionally, psychologically, and financially capable of filing a suit, such as age 50 or older.
3. To allow survivors of child sexual abuse who are already beyond the age allowed by statutes of limitations for filing a civil suit, VOTF supports legislation to either eliminate such statutes retroactively or suspend them for a period long enough to allow these survivors to have their day in court.
4. VOTF supports legislation to eliminate all statutes of limitations on criminal prosecution of sexual abuse or assault of a minor, including all such crimes classified as felonies and all such crimes of a serious nature even though classified under state law as misdemeanors.

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Sponsors:

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Member, Legislative Accountability Advisors, VOTF

Chuck Miller, Chair, Legislative Committee
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