

October 20 In the Vineyard

News from the Working Groups

Fr. Mark Schmeider – A Priest of Integrity

Submitted by Svea Fraser

The Priest Support Working Group honors selected clergy with a “Priest of Integrity” award for their noted courage and compassion in their ministry. But there are many untold stories of priests doing heroic service in their communities. We hope that highlighting the ones we have come to know will give us examples to follow and build hope in the often-unseen goodness that abounds.

In this issue, our spotlight shines on another of those priests: Fr. Mark Schmeider. Fr. Schmeider was nominated last year by the Cincinnati Westside Affiliate for the Priest of Integrity award given at the VOTF conference in Providence, R.I. In recognition of his service, and with support and appreciation, we honor him here in this edition of *In the Vineyard*.

To read about Father Mark

Unsung Hero: A Priest of Integrity

Father Mark is a priest of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, an active member of SNAP and a member of the Cincinnati Coordinating Committee of VOTF. He has been an inspiration to those who know him, offering to meet with survivors of priest sexual abuse and speaking up as a survivor himself. Mark was active in supporting the Ohio proposed legislation favoring extending the statute of limitation and the one-year window for prosecution of abusers.

Fr. Mark's dedication to those most in need is evidenced by his involvement with the following ministries: From 1980 to 2002, he served as a full time Catholic Chaplain at Levanon Correctional Institution, a state of Ohio close security prison, then as the Cincinnati Archdiocesan Jail Chaplain and Coordinator of Prison Ministry for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati from 2002 to the present. He initiated and formed the Karos prison ministry in Ohio in 1989, and it is now in ten Ohio prisons.

He is the Board Chair and co-founder of the St. Francis/St. Joseph Catholic Worker House, a homeless shelter for men, from 1990 to the present. In 1985, he founded Anawim Housing for the poor. He was also a secondary school teacher for 10 years.

Voice of Renewal/Lay Education Celebrates Advent

Submitted by Anne Southwood

Voice of Renewal/Lay Education working group will zero in on scripture during Advent in light of the focus on scripture under way this month at the Synod on the Word in Rome.

Gaile Pohlhaus, a member of the VOTF Prayerful Voice working group, will collaborate with Anne Southwood and Bill Murphy of Voice of Renewal /Lay Education on a series of personal responses to the Advent Sunday gospels...how the living Word of God speaks to all of us. Bill and Anne, who both serve as Arise group leaders in their diocese, think this idea is similar to the "Arise" method of faith sharing.

To read more about VOR/LE and what they are doing

VOR/LE National Working Group slates Advent Gospel Study

The VOR/LE Working Group hopes to involve its discussion list members in expanded discussion after posting the initial three responses on the VOR/LE yahoo list on Nov. 30th. Each Sunday Gospel will be a topic, with members invited to share responses to the gospel for the First Sunday of Advent during the remainder of that week, to the Second Sunday's gospel during the second week. The pattern will continue, based on each Sunday gospel, through Advent.

It is enlightening to see the different ways the gospel can speak to us at different times in our lives...and interesting to see the variation in response to parish homilies.

To participate in the discussion, you must join the "virtual community" by sending an email to the VOR/LE list moderators. Send the email to VOR_VOTF-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Request from Prayerful Voice Working Group

Submitted by Gaile Polhaus

Hallowe'en is a wonderful time for kids. Say a quick prayer for each trick or treater that you meet.

Calendar

Volusia Voice of the Faithful

Marti Zeitz heads the Victim Assistance Ministry for the Tampa-St. Petersburg Diocese, and will address the first full meeting of the 2008-2009 Year of Action for Volusia Voice of the Faithful.

The meeting will be at 3 p.m., Sunday, October 26 at Ormond Beach's Anderson-Price Memorial Building. For more information, please contact: Robert Keane [keaner@bellsouth.net]

San Francisco Area Voice of the Faithful

Voice of the Faithful is inviting you to attend a lecture by well known Catholic author and educator, Professor Thomas Sheehan on Sunday October 26, at 2 PM.

Professor Sheehan is a member of the Religious Studies department at Stanford University. He is also the author of *The First Coming: How the Kingdom of God Became Christianity*.

Professor Sheehan will lecture on “Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus” and how this might impact the positive message of our work as VOTF members.

The meeting will be held at The Meier Room at Fromm Hall, University of San Francisco. For more information or to register please visit <http://www.votf-sf.org>

Nashua Area Voice of the Faithful

A discussion concerning the future role of the people in the Catholic Church will follow a mass of healing to be celebrated by Rev. Robert Guillemette, Pastor, Immaculate Conception Church on Wednesday, October 29, 2008, at 7 PM.

The mass and discussion will be held in the chapel of the Spiritual Center building of Immaculate Conception Church at 216 Dunstable Road, Nashua.

For information call Bill McPherson at 603-883-5688.

Massachusetts VOTF affiliate Northshore-Seacoast

The Massachusetts VOTF affiliate Northshore-Seacoast has invited Rev. James F. Keenan, S.J., Founders Professor in Theology at Boston College to speak. Rev. Keenan will present a program on Advent: a Season of Conversion, Healing and Expectation. Rev. Keenan will look at the season of Advent as a time of receiving God’s invitation to conversion. He will speak on the meaning of conversion; why healing is so integral to conversion; and why the liturgical practices of expectation are so important for Advent. Sunday, Nov. 2, 2008, 7:00 – 9:00 P.M. St. Rose of Lima, Topsfield MA.

Thinking About Christmas Shopping?

If you plan to do any online shopping at Amazon.com, please go to the VOTF website first and access Amazon through VOTF. Amazon.com will then donate a small percentage of whatever you buy to VOTF. You won’t be charged any extra and VOTF will be able to raise some money! Please follow the link: <http://www.votf.org/amazon/> As always, thank you for your support – both spiritual and financial!

Site-Seeing

Update on the Synod

Sister Chris Schenk, Executive Director of FutureChurch, recently sent VOTF an update on the Synod she is attending in Rome, once again thanking VOTF members for their support.

According to Chris, “We’ve had good luck meeting with women experts at the Synod so far. Two women scholars from different ends of the ecclesial spectrum told me that our work made the difference in getting the most women ever invited to the synod.”

Although she has been disappointed at her lack of success arranging meetings with bishops, Chris has had success with the media, speaking with John Allen from National

Catholic Reporter as well as reporters from Catholic News Service and Religion News Service.

Chris's organization has a **synod reports page** telling more about her work there.
<http://www.futurechurch.org/watw/synodreports/081017.htm>

And you can read John Allen's interview on **National Catholic Reporter**. [www:
<http://ncrcafe.org/node/2195>

More from the Synod

For the first time in history, a Rabbi addressed the International Synod on the Word. Shear-Yashuv Cohen, chief rabbi of the Israeli city of Haifa, addressed the Synod, saying his presence sent a "hope and a message of love, co-existence and peace for our generation, and for generations to come". For more, check the **BBC report**. [again, put this link onto the BBC report words: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7655914.stm>

Countdown to the Election

As the election approaches, more and more is being written about how Catholics should vote. Memphis Bishop J. Terry Steib speaks out in this week's National Catholic Reporter. Go to <http://ncronline3.org/drupal/?q=node/2238>

Contribute to VOTF and Win a Turkey Dinner!

Make a contribution of \$50 or more to VOTF between now and November 19 and you will be eligible for a Thanksgiving dinner complete with side dishes and dessert- enough for 6 to 10 people!

Imagine a Thanksgiving Day with all the work done for you, ahead of time. Sure, you can still bake your famous pumpkin pie or make the sweet potato casserole everyone loves! But everything else is our treat...just tell us where and what time, and we will deliver everything for you and your guests to sit down and enjoy...

To be included in the drawing, just make a gift now – either online or by mailing in your donation to VOTF, P.O. Box 423, Newton MA 02464.

Your contribution will help support VOTF's continue working on projects such as reviewing mandated celibacy, the position of women in the Church, the monitoring of diocesan pastoral and financial accountability, organizing a national American Catholic Council meeting, and much more.

For more information please follow the link; [LINK TO THE VOTF HOME PAGE](#)

As always, thanks for your generosity, both financial and spiritual.

Letters to the Editor

Submitted by Anna-Marie Ferraro, Arlington MA

I have come across a letter sent to U.S. government leaders by Bishop William Murphy of Rockville Center NY in his capacity as Chairman of the USCCB's Committee on

Domestic Justice and Human Development regarding the nation's failing economy. He outlined five principles he urged them to consider in trying to address the situation. One of his points was regarding responsibility and accountability. He wrote, "Clearly, effective measures are required which address and alter the behaviors, practices and misjudgments that led to this crisis ... Those who directly contributed to this crisis ... should not be rewarded or escape accountability for the harm they have done."

As I read this, I was struck by the appropriateness of this exact position in relation to the sexual abuse by clergy. Would that all of our bishops would apply the same criteria to their own behaviors regarding this issue.

To read the article Ms. Ferraro is referring to: <http://www.zenit.org/article-23752?l=english>

Submitted by William Horan

A "preferential option for the poor" should be maintained in our Catholic Schools. If we find that we cannot afford to keep our schools open to the poor, the schools should be closed and the resources used for something else which can be kept open to the poor. We cannot allow our Church to become a church primarily for the middle-class and rich while throwing a bone to the poor. The priority should be given to the poor even if we have to let the middle-class and rich fend for themselves.

Practically speaking, the Catholic Schools must close and the resources used for "Confraternity of Christian Doctrine" and other programs which can be kept open to the poor. Remember, the Church managed without Catholic Schools for centuries. We can get along without them today. The essential factor is to cultivate enough Faith to act in the Gospel Tradition, namely, **THE POOR GET PRIORITY**. The rich and middle-class are welcome too. But the poor come first.

Questions? Comments?

Please contact Siobhan Carroll

Vineyard Editor

vineyar@votf.org