

MINUTES  
Voice of the Faithful, Inc.  
Board of Trustees Meeting, June 17, 2014

**Board Members Present:** In the office, Mark Mullaney, Anne Southwood. On conference call, Ed Greenan, Mary Freeman, Phil Megna, Margaret Roylance, May Pat Fox, Pat Gomez

**Also Present:** Executive Director Donna Doucette (conference call); Public Relations Director Nick Ingala

**Absent:** Larry Mulligan, Ron DuBois, Mike Ryan

President Mark Mullaney called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

**Opening Prayer:** Led by Margaret Roylance.

**Consent Item:** Minutes from May 21, 2014, meeting were approved unanimously (8-0).

**Finances**

Treasurer Anne Southwood reported that we are not in bad shape financially compared to last year at this time, but total income is 9% less this year from last year. Board members noted that fewer people are giving but at a higher rate, that it usually takes a while for someone new to an organization to donate consistently, that we should review donor patterns in all categories of members and maybe generate some grant money.

The Board then discussed the different methods used for generating donations: email blasts, postal mail, monthly partners, and so on. Each of these is essential, but timing and messages should be examined as well as any new options that may be available.

**Development**

Mark said we are planning a first-ever membership drive, which should benefit from a number of ongoing initiatives. Jayne is continuing to work with potential major donors, and we're setting up meetings with them in the next month or so. We're also looking at the Restorative Justice Program as a candidate for grant funding and doing appeal/information emails over the summer.

Mark and Jayne also will be speaking at affiliate meetings along the East Coast, and some new members and new donors also are being introduced to VOTF and our mission and goals.

**Efforts to Meet with Cardinal O'Malley and Other Bishops**

Mark discussed our ongoing contact with the Archdiocese of Boston. He suggested we should put together another letter that is more specific about what we're offering. We also are working on meetings with other bishops about VOTF projects under way. The projects will continue, and

the reforms they represent will continue, but perhaps under the new papal regime more bishops will be interested in participating in reform. Currently, the focus of presentations to the bishops will be the married priest initiative, restorative justice, and financial accountability.

In addition to a planned meeting with Bishop Uglietto, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Boston, and eventually with Cardinal O'Malley, VOTF contacts with bishops have included a good meeting with Bishop Caggiano in Bridgeport and a proposed meeting with Archbishop Blair in Hartford in July.

### **Other Initiatives**

Mark stated that, in addition to **married priests, restorative justice, and financial accountability** we need to move our other initiatives to similar stages. This led to a lengthy discussion about the status of the VOTF position and actions in support of **women's role in the church**. Anne noted that Phyllis Zagano presently has about 300 academics taking her online women deacons course and feels there will be something coming out of it that we could use.

Consensus was the women deacons is probably a "bishop by bishop" approach in terms of restoring the female deacon role to what once existed in the Church. But first a faith community must discern the need for a woman deacon and call a willing candidate. Education of the community to this possibility is an essential first step, and VOTF could be part of that effort. Mark suggested that VOTF pull together a program around women's roles that could perhaps support a membership drive focusing on bringing forward women's roles in the Church, working with leaders like Phyllis Zagano and FutureChurch. In doing so, it would be important to note, as Dr. Zagano does in her deacons program, that the diaconate is not a "consolation prize" because women are not ordained as priests; it is a separate vocation. We sometimes add to the confusion by saying (at least among ourselves), we can't get woman priests so let's get woman deacons. In terms of vocation and church life, we need to separate them clearly.

The Board then reviewed our other initiatives: continuing education on **clericalism** and how to resist it, **optional celibacy** and **ordaining married men** (needs a next step), **bishop selection** (needs another site), prayerful voice, and lay education. Can we ask people who are involved in each of these initiatives to come back to us with next steps that we could use for meetings with bishops and garnering new member and more funds? Also, 2015 is the anniversary of Vatican II. How should we observe it?

### **Executive Director Report**

In addition to the reports forwarded to the Board for the meeting, Donna said she is working with some new potential volunteers who would do their work for VOTF "remotely," so she will focus on our online activities as ones where they can best contribute. Also, the bishop's portal needs to be monitored and constantly updated, especially to let people know when bishops are retiring and to solicit input.

### **Financial Accountability Working Group**

Margaret reported on the group's contact with Canon Law Society, which is doing a study of finance councils nationwide—this would be a good connection with our work on financial transparency and accountability. The Canon Law Society recently sent out a questionnaire to every chief financial officer at every diocese in the U.S. and asked a range of interesting questions. When they did this for parish councils, they got about an 80% response rate and expect the same for this initiative. The Working Group discussed the survey this past Saturday during our Financial Accountability Work Group meeting, and members of the group thought that it was well-designed.

### **Governance Committee Report**

Mark noted that the Nominating Committee actions have been moved to the Governance Committee. Mary Pat said that basically we want to keep our options open to having elected trustees. She said that she and Ed Wilson will draft a suggestion for a change in the bylaws to accomplish this. This would include, for example, maintaining the office of past president. She said the committee would have more to report later.

### **Other Issues**

Mark reported concerns of some priests in the Diocese of Venice, Florida, with Bishop Dewane. VOTF members in Florida are working to address this.

Mark also reported on interviews he did recently with the *St. Louis-Post Dispatch* and a radio talk show in Portland, Ore. Mark said he told the reporters, among other things, that 12 years ago, bishops had a choice of healing or covering up, and they chose to cover up. Now our restorative justice program might reopen this door. Both reporters were very interested following up on this. So, Mark felt we are definitely showing that we are taking talk to action.

**Closing Prayer:** Mark led the Glory Be.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

**Next Board Meeting:** July 22, 2014

**Respectfully Submitted:** Margaret Roylance, Secretary and Board Member

**Future Meetings in 2014:** Aug. 19, Sept. 23, Oct. 21, and Nov. 18. No meeting in December