

STRATEGIC PLAN NARRATIVE



Presenting the Plan to Our Leaders and Members

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Strategic Plan Guiding Principles

Primary

- Must be consistent with VOTF's mission, goals and identity statement.
- Must be consistent with the findings of the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis.
- Must be executable—there must be a reasonable expectation that what we propose can actually be achieved given our current organizational resources and SWOT findings.
- Must be consistent with our core values.

Secondary

- Must be in line with constituent expectations—which should significantly increase our fundraising ability.
- Must engage and energize membership, tapping into their gifts so that more are mobilized and contribute talents and treasure.
- Must be easy to understand and articulate (KISS).

Highest-Level Review of SWOT Analysis and Root Causes

Despite a large, very talented membership, our inability to clearly define ourselves and our “brand” has limited our ability to create sufficient motivation to facilitate meaningful change. This has resulted in general apathy and discontent among leadership, which also hinders our fundraising ability.

Root cause: Disorganized/inefficient and ineffective organizational structure hinders our ability to develop *and execute* a clear, focused plan.

Proposed High-Level Approach to Solution

Become a more focused, action-based organization whose actions clearly and unmistakably define us by:

- ❖ Revising our organizational model to facilitate the execution of an action-based strategic plan driven by proper planning, execution, shared responsibility, collaboration, accountability, transparency, evaluation and improvement on the local and national level. Transition to the new, execution-based model must be orderly, with minimal disruption to existing programs.

- ❖ Giving members the ability to “plug into” the strategic plan in ways that are consistent with their individual skill sets, knowledge and abilities.
- ❖ Planning, monitoring and executing the strategic plan with results reported to our members in a highly organized informative way (increasing momentum, commitment, enthusiasm and donations).

Specific Approach to Solution

Organizing and executing VOTF actions by “Platform”

Platforms are designed to maximize the effectiveness of our actions by grouping our activities into five basic action-driven categories, each of which requires a specific skill set to execute.

Additionally, the majority of activities within each platform are designed to have a natural interdependence, which allows them, to some degree, to be executed simultaneously and to support one another.

A summary of the five platforms is as follows (more extensive descriptions are contained in the strategic plan itself):

- ❖ **Local/Diocese Action to Achieve Best Practices** platform is a very *practical grassroots approach* to Church reform that emphasizes actions on the local level (parish and diocese). Such activities include the implementation of highly functional pastoral councils, finance councils, and child safety committees driven by best-practices standards. *Local successes will build momentum.*
- ❖ **Reform Actions to Protect Children and Support Survivors** is a platform specific to our goal of supporting survivors of clergy sex abuse. Activities here would encourage members passionate about *supporting survivors and the protection of children* to work together to achieve success.
- ❖ **Universal Church Reform** platform *focuses on the broader Church* through issues that affect the entire people of God—for example, mandatory celibacy and its impact on priests and laity, the role of women in the Church, and the process by which bishops and pastors are selected. Facilitating national dialogue on such issues is essential and must involve well-executed, often creative external communications.
- ❖ **Partnerships and Networking** addresses the need to begin working with other organizations *to expand our circle of influence* on issues where we share common ground. When appropriate, resource and insight sharing can help us combine efforts to develop critical mass on topics and thus engage a broader voice. Examples of this platform include, the American Council initiative, developing active relationships with Religious Orders, USCCB, NRB, OCYB, National Association of Lay Ministers, National Federation of Priest Councils, Catholic Theological Society, Academia, Catholic Publications, as well as other reform minded organizations, executing a national process

of education and dialogue, national Town Hall meetings, and development of coordinated, articulate action teams that can effect change on all levels.

- ❖ **Spiritual and Communal Growth** is the platform that addresses the need for us all to remain “attentive to the Spirit,” as our mission statement says. Ours is a long and difficult struggle, and we need God’s wisdom and guidance to support us. Examples of this platform include teams that arrange high-quality retreats and social gatherings to remind us of our connection to the Spirit and one another.

Organizational Implications

Fortunately, many of the activities contained in the Strategic Plan are already under way. In addition to supplementing and expanding these activities, the strategic plan’s primary objective is to organize them in a way that they can be managed efficiently and effectively, and targeted to yield progress in each of our national goals as well as increase involvement at all levels of our organization.

Accordingly, we need five to seven (5-7) capable volunteers to step up and take on leadership roles in each of these platforms. Those core teams will be responsible for recruiting, organizing, fine-tuning and prioritizing the activities within each platform. Additionally they will be responsible for developing reporting mechanisms that keep the rest of the organization informed and also help define anticipated internal resource requirements.

The office staff in conjunction with the officers will be responsible for, among other things, coordinating and supporting the platform leadership teams, their needs and activities.

Each of the current National Working Groups will continue as is, coordinating their efforts quite naturally into the appropriate platform. For example, the Structural Change Working Group has a natural connection with the Best Practice activities in the Local/Diocese Platform, Survivor Support is a natural match with the Protect Children/Support Survivors Platform; Prayerful Voice with the Spiritual Community Platform; and so on.

Proposals developed in VOTF will now have an established, functional platform to support their implementation and ensure that all proposals are integrated to complement the national Mission.

Development

VOTF’s development activities have suffered because of our inability to define ourselves and execute responses and actions in a timely, targeted manner. In “testing” the Papal Ad, we proved that we can garner support for a specific task if we focus our talents to a clear objective and call out for help. The strategic plan is built on the premise that defining ourselves will substantially improve our ability to engage more people and achieve more results.

To volunteer for a platform, email office@votf.org

The Strategic Plan also can appeal to donors for whom a particular aspect of church reform has appeal. Although all donations typically go into the general fund (unless the donor specifies otherwise), memberships surveys related to fundraising will show us where our donors' priorities lie and where to build additional projects in the future.

To accomplish our aims in the Strategic Plan, we will announce the initiatives with professionally designed and clear explanations. Roll-out will occur over a three-month period, during which we will make it abundantly clear that our success depends on volunteers and donations, and these will have a direct impact on establishing VOTF's priorities.

This plan will create a new way of looking at the organization by embracing the many overlooked talents and abilities of our membership and offering them an opportunity to be a vital ingredient of our future growth and success.

What Can YOU Do?

To volunteer for working on one of the platforms, please send your name and a brief description of your VOTF experience, your skills, and your interests to office@votf.org.