

Voice of the Faithful National Meeting Held in June

Voice of the Faithful members nationwide gathered at the Marriott Renaissance Hotel in Detroit on June 10 for VOTF's 2011 national meeting. Attendees heard affiliate and *Voices in Action* team updates, presentations and a panel discussion on the common features and causes of clergy sexual abuse and financial scandals in the Church.

VOTF Trustee Ron Dubois led a Centering Prayer to open the meeting, followed by a welcome and introduction from VOTF President Dan Bartley.

Marita Green of VOTF Greater Philadelphia recounted "The Philadelphia Story: The Loopholes in 'Zero Tolerance.'" Philadelphia's clergy sexual abuse scandal continues, even after resignation of its archbishop, Cardinal Rigali, and Archbishop Chaput's appointment.

Voices in Action team reports included:

- Child Protection/Survivor Support—"Initiatives in Motion," Trustee Bill Casey; Chicago report on the Priest Work History Research Project, Bob Kopp;



VOTF National Meeting attendees listen intently to VIA team updates.

description of VOTF Bridgeport's "Bless Me Father, for I Have Sinned," John Marshall Lee; and VOTF webpage Forum for Victims/Survivors, Friends, and Supporters.

- Women's Initiative, assisting women's roles in the Church, new team leader Trustee Pat Gomez.
- Universal Church Reform—Overview, National Secretary

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"We make a difference!"

Every time she drove by St. John the Evangelist Church in Wellesley on Monday evenings, more cars were there. Soon, police were directing traffic, and reporters were milling about waiting to catch people as the meeting inside broke up.



The activity sparked Alice Campanella's curiosity. She knew the meetings were Voice of the Faithful. "I had heard about Voice of the Faithful," she says, "but didn't know very much about it and wasn't sure about joining." She learned 400 to 500 people were attending the meetings.

Alice was searching for a new parish. St. John's attracted her because the pastor handled well parishioners' grief over clergy sexual abuse revelations that covered *Boston Globe* pages in 2002. She moved cautiously, attending early VOTF meetings, but did not join St. John's for a couple of years.

"Being Catholic is an essential part of who I am," Alice says. "I was looking for a way to deal with the abuse in the Church, and when I found the VOTF community, where they felt as I did, I felt as though I were coming home."

Nine years later, she's still faithful to St. John's and VOTF. "Right from those early years, we wanted to address an organization (the Church) that was without transparency or accountability and that could allow something like this abuse to happen," Alice says. "Our mission and goals were formulated in VOTF's first few months."

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Concealment Fuels Clergy Sexual Abuse Scandal

Despite almost a decade of promises to remove credibly accused priest abusers from ministry and follow child protection policies, too many bishops continue a strategy of concealment that fuels clergy sex-abuse scandals. The global spotlight has nudged the Vatican towards better policies to protect children and report abusers to civil authorities, but does not seem to have moved local dioceses.

In the United States, the latest evidence that concealment trumps transparency and accountability came from Philadelphia in February, and worldwide from the Cork County Ireland diocese of Cloyne in July.

Philadelphia Indictments Snag Chancery Official

In Philadelphia, a grand jury reported 37 priests credibly accused of sexual abuse were still in ministry—despite

John Jay College Reports on Causes & Context of Clergy Sexual Abuse

In May, the John Jay College of Criminal Justice reported on “The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010.” In the report, researchers cite lack of transparency and accountability as key factors in the cover-ups that have prolonged the scandal and delayed justice for the abused, as VOTF has long pointed out.

In addition to transparency and accountability, the Causes and Context study points out several other factors in the abuse scandal that VOTF has long cited:

- The culture of clericalism, which fosters secrecy and places clergy and the hierarchy apart and above the laity, contributes to the climate for abuse and, more importantly, is prolonging a resolution to the scandal.
- Bishops who have responded to the abuse scandal by allowing credibly accused priests to remain in ministry are among the principal causes of the clergy sexual abuse scandal.
- The vast majority of clergy are priests of integrity.

Current examples of the Church’s failure in handling and preventing abuse include the Philadelphia archdiocese here and the Cloyne diocese in Ireland. (You can read about these examples elsewhere in this newsletter.)

VOTF has placed John Jay report material on its website at www.votf.org, including links to some media reporting on the research and the full texts of the Causes and Context study and earlier Nature and Scope of the Problem study. 

reassurances from Archbishop Cardinal Justin Rigali that all had been removed. Subsequently, three priests and a Catholic school teacher were charged with rape, and the monsignor who made priest assignments under former Archbishop Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua stood charged with child endangerment. Msgr. William Lynn is the first Church official in the decade-old abuse scandal to be criminally charged for endangering children.

As the grand jury reported, the sex abuse allegations came after U.S. bishops pledged zero tolerance in their 2002

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VOTF Recommendations for Making USCCB Efforts To Protect Children More Effective

- Amend USCCB 2002 Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People to mandate disciplinary action for future charter violations.
- Make audits more effective by allowing unrestricted access to priests’ personnel files.
- Ensure diocesan review boards are completely independent of a bishop’s influence and possess the necessary expertise.
- Insulate victims in diocesan victim assistance programs from chancery officials, diocesan law firms and insurance companies.
- Stop opposing changes in state sexual abuse statutes of limitations.
- Hold NRB listening sessions nationwide to hear lay Catholics’ reactions to clergy child sexual abuse and its cover-up and their expectations for resolving the scandal.

VOTF Resolution for Fraternal Correction

- When USCCB learns a bishop has engaged in activity prohibited by the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, or
- When USCCB learns a bishop has disregarded the principles of the charter and has failed to take the actions required by the charter, or
- When USCCB learns a bishop has made public statements indicating his disagreement with the charter’s principles or his unwillingness to take the action the charter requires,
- Then, if after notifying the bishop, he fails to take corrective action within 60 days, the bishop shall be excluded from USCCB activities, and USCCB’s action shall be reported to the Papal Nuncio and be the subject of a USCCB press release.

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Dallas Charter. Worse, the grand jury found sufficient evidence in diocesan files to investigate, despite chancery claims the evidence was not there. Chancery officials also failed to report allegations to diocesan lay reviewers, rather than reporting all claims as the review board expected.

Cloyne Report Exposes Continued Failures

In the Cloyne diocese, investigators found clergy sexual abuse and coverup as recently as 2009. Of these revelations, VOTF in Ireland asked, “How can Catholics ever trust these lying bishops again? These men acted as they did because they belong to a clerical power structure that does not value transparency and accountability. The administration of the law (Canon Law) is done in secret. This has to change.”

Anger at the bishops’ actions and Vatican documents that seemed to encourage such lapses led the Irish prime minister to say, “...the Cloyne Report excavates the dysfunction, disconnection, elitism—the narcissism—that dominate the culture of the Vatican to this day.”

Voice of the Faithful Raised Your Voice

With the onslaught of these revelations, VOTF National worked with our Philadelphia affiliate and members in Ireland to respond forcefully. President Dan Bartley and Trustee Bill Casey (co-chair of the *VIA* Child Protection/Survivor Support Team) met with U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ National Review Board and Office for Protection of Children and Young People representatives to suggest how to close audit loopholes and amend the Dallas Charter to require independent verification in place of self-reporting by bishops (Sidebar, Pg. 2).

Dan presented our recommendations at a press conference outside a Philadelphia courthouse the day Msgr. Lynn and four other defendants were arraigned. In press releases and letters to USCCB president Archbishop Timothy Dolan,

Callard Oversees Development

Sara Callard of Quincy recently joined Voice of the Faithful as development coordinator. With more than a decade of fundraising experience, Sara will be coordinating VOTF’s major donor efforts, direct mail appeals, e-mail solicitations and grant writing.

Just before joining VOTF, Sara was working as a development consultant for clients like Father Bill’s & MainSpring, which helps Greater Boston homeless people.

VOTF said penalties should be imposed on bishops who flout their responsibility to protect children.

VOTF also objected when USCCB’s spring meeting in Seattle made only superficial changes to the Dallas Charter, despite clear evidence that huge loopholes exist. VOTF asked Archbishop Dolan in a letter to make USCCB’s position on child protection absolutely clear. The letter also asked USCCB to resolve to exclude bishops violating the charter from USCCB activities (Sidebar, Pg. 2).

Small Successes, Major Problems

When Cardinal Rigali’s formal resignation was accepted in July in the midst of the scandal, VOTF found some hope. Although 76 and having submitted his mandatory retirement letter to the Vatican last May, he was not scheduled to retire at the earliest until later this year.

When the Church in Germany in July announced the opening of priest and employee personnel files to abuse investigators, VOTF responded with a letter of appreciation to the spokesman for the bishops’ conference. Copies of the letter were sent to prominent media and U.S. bishops.

VOTF will continue to raise its voice for transparency, accountability and renewal whenever secrecy, clericalism and hierarchical misuse of power threaten the faithful.

*Note: You can find reports on these events on VOTF’s website and in *In the Vineyard* and *Focus* e-newsletters. If you are not receiving them, see the box at the bottom of Page 4.*



Advent Meditation Anticipates Vatican II 50th Anniversary

Voice of the Faithful is sponsoring an Advent meditation series for individual or parish use. The series will be based on Bernard Prusak’s book *The Church Unfinished* and will include praying about and studying Vatican II documents. If you are interested, please drop a note to VOTF-VII Series, P.O. Box 423, Newton, MA 02464. (Documents will be available online.)

She also was development director at Forbes House Museum, Milton, and Neighborhood House Charter School, Dorchester, and principal gifts development associate at Boston University.

She is a member of Women in Development of Greater Boston and holds a bachelor’s degree from Boston College and master’s degree in business administration from Boston University’s School of Management. 

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Nick Mazza; Bishop Selection Initiative, Trustee Ed Wilson; Priests' Initiative Optional Celibacy, Dubois;

- Spiritual & Communal Growth—Prayer-Based Affiliate model for Parish Voice Affiliates, National Treasurer Kevin Connors.
- Local Action—Francis Piderit of VOTF Manhattan.

After lunch, extra chairs were needed for the audience which heard from Fr. Tom Doyle, Canon lawyer and clergy sexual abuse expert, and Jason Berry, award-winning author who recently published *Render Unto Rome: The Secret Life of*

Money in the Catholic Church. SNAP National Director David Clohessy and founder Barbara Blaine joined in the panel discussion following the presentations. Casey moderated the event, and attendees asked questions long after the meeting was supposed to have adjourned.

After adjournment, attendees hurried to Detroit's Cobo Hall for the opening of the American Catholic Council, which drew 1,800 people from across the United States and several foreign countries to celebrate the promises of Vatican II. ACC lasted through the weekend. **f**

"We make a difference!" *(Continued from Page 1)*

And then VOTF's first conference was held in 2002. Alice volunteered on the registration committee. "I'll never forget working on that first conference and thinking there's no way we can pull together a conference like what we're planning with so little notice and expertise," Alice says.

When she tried to attend a presentation, she couldn't get onto the first floor, and the balcony was half full. "Looking down on those thousands of people was one of the most memorable moments in my life," she says.

After the conference, Alice volunteered to help establish Parish Voice Affiliates nationwide, working from home while

a Wellesley middle school librarian. When she retired in 2004, she came into VOTF's office and now is the part-time employee/volunteer National Affiliate Liaison.

"It's great that most of the affiliate leaders have been with VOTF as long as I have," Alice says. "When you work with people who have led since the beginning and are helping to support a community that cares as much about the Church as you do, it sustains you."

Alice's perspective after nine years—"It's still all about getting the Church to be open and transparent and about us creating awareness," Alice says. "The Church is 2,000 years old and moves slowly, but I wouldn't be here if I didn't think we were making a difference." **f**

Help secure our mission — Consider monthly donations and bequests

Support VOTF with regular monthly donations and bequests. **Monthly donations** are more budget friendly; keep paperwork simple; result in fewer appeals; give us reliable cash flow; help keep administrative costs low; free up resources for important projects; and remind you each month you help Keep the Faith, Change the Church. To become a monthly donor, visit www.votf.org, click DONATE, and then choose Monthly on the selection page. **Bequests** provide financial

and/or tax benefits; guarantee VOTF long-term financial security; are a popular form of charitable giving; cost nothing to set up; offer great satisfaction because they help sustain VOTF; can be a specific amount, property or percentage of your estate; and are simple and flexible. For information, check the box on the return card with this newsletter or contact VOTF Development Coordinator Sara Callard, scallard@votf.org, 781-559-3360. Thank you, and God bless you for your generosity.



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Voice of the Faithful is a movement of 35,000 concerned mainstream Roman Catholics worldwide working to provide a prayerful voice, attentive to the Spirit, through which the faithful can participate actively in the governance and guidance of the Catholic Church. Our goals are to:

- Support survivors of clergy sexual abuse;
- Support priests of integrity; and
- Shape structural change within the Catholic Church.

Keep up-to-date. To receive our free *In the Vineyard* and *Focus* e-newsletters, visit www.votf.org, put your e-mail address in the SIGN UP FOR OUR EMAIL NEWSLETTER box in the lower left-hand column, click GO, and then click Submit.