

Incoming President Speaks to VOTF Issues/Future

Mark Mullaney of Wayland, Massachusetts, became Voice of the Faithful's president in March 2012. He is among VOTF's founders and sat down with *Voice Matters* to offer his view of the movement in its tenth year.

Voice Matters: How did you become involved in VOTF?

Mullaney: When *The Boston Globe* reported on clergy sexual abuse in early 2002, the acts were so diabolical people couldn't imagine it was true, or how it would affect them, or what they would do. My wife, Kathy, suggested we attend that initial meeting at St. John the Evangelist in Wellesley. That first listening session included 25 people. We each told our reactions to what had happened. The overriding theme was that this crisis hasn't shaken my faith, but has shaken my belief in the people who are running the Church.

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Mark Mullaney, VOTF President

Voice Matters: How quickly did matters proceed?

Mullaney: Our three goals came along pretty quickly—supporting survivors and priests and being responsible lay Catholics who identify what changes the Church needs to meet the faithful's needs, and then trying to make that change happen. The road map is easy to follow after that. In addition to clergy sexual abuse, the Church has financial issues. I continue to be flabbergasted that the shortage of priests goes uncorrected. Women continue to be denied an equal role in the Church. And hierarchy and laity collaborating doesn't happen nearly often enough.

Voice Matters: What has kept you involved in VOTF?

Mullaney: None of these issues is resolved. They are eating away at the Church. My parents handed me a Church that appeared healthy, and I'm not sure that we're handing down a healthy Church to our children and grandchildren.


Voice Matters: Why did you run for president?

Mullaney: Because I see both danger and opportunity in the Church's crises. We have focused intently for 10 years on the damage clergy sexual abuse does to the Church, but haven't focused as much on the opportunities we have for healing. If I can have any impact on moving the organization, and maybe the Church, in that direction, then maybe that will create a better Church for my children and grandchildren.

Voice Matters: How do you see that happening?

Mullaney: First, identify who will be aggressive in working for healing. Second, identify available tools people could use to promote healing. Third, identify initiatives and tools that people could use to promote healing. VOTF also needs to take a stronger stance on issues other than clergy sexual abuse. We need to take responsibility for some third-rail issues and lobby for positive change, even if the hierarchy might not agree. Diversity of thinking, including lay diversity, is a strength not appreciated in the Church today.

Voice Matters: What are some of these issues?

Mullaney: The major issue that most, if not all, are raising is healing. Getting truth out in the open and then focusing on other issues. Those issues are plain: priestly celibacy, women's roles in the Church, pernicious clericalism, inconsistency in expression of hierarchical decrees, lack of lay input. These define our course for the next decade. 



VOTF President Mark Mullaney

Bishop Selection Update: Chicago Meets with Cardinal George; Manchester Has New Bishop

In January of this year, members of the Voice of the Faithful® Chicago Bishop Selection Initiative committee held what they considered to be a successful meeting with Chicago's archbishop, Cardinal Francis George, OMI, to discuss lay input into selecting his successor.

Cardinal George turned 75 on Jan. 16, 2012, and submitted his mandatory letter of resignation as archbishop of Chicago to Pope Benedict XVI. The pope may accept at any time.

In spring 2010, VOTF began encouraging members to initiate collaborative consultations within their dioceses to provide lay input into the selection of their next bishop. Integral to this process was the development of *Consulting the Laity on Candidates for the Episcopacy*, guidelines for lay input into bishop selection that VOTF's *Voices in Action* Universal Church Reform Team developed. The document is available on VOTF's website (search on "bishop selection").

"Throughout the first millenium, members of the whole Church, laity as well as clergy, participated in the selection of their new bishops...the selection of candidates for leadership roles in the church was a sacred obligation incumbent on all members of the Church community." VOTF's *"Consulting the Laity on Candidates for the Episcopacy"*

The Manchester Model—In fall 2010, VOTF members in the Manchester, New Hampshire, diocese organized the first consultation model using these guidelines. Although they could not secure then Bishop John McCormack's participation, the Manchester affiliate successfully distributed a questionnaire about the diocese's needs and the qualities sought in candidates for bishop.

The affiliate used responses to the questionnaire to develop recommendations which they sent to the apostolic nuncio. The document described the needs and opportunities that would face a new bishop and qualifications and attributes important to the local diocese. Among the affiliate's requests: "a bishop who will reach out to his people, listen to them and consult with them in small and large groups...who has extensive parish experience."

Interestingly, the candidate ultimately selected by the pope, the Most Rev. Peter Libasci, at his first press conference in

New Hampshire, said: "The first challenge is to listen very carefully and come to know the people of the diocese." Many months will pass before diocesan members can assess whether their new bishop's actions match his words.

The Chicago Model—In Chicago, VOTF members studied the model from Manchester, then adapted the steps to fit the particular needs of their diocese. They also arranged a meeting with Cardinal George.


At their meeting, the Chicago committee outlined the selection process for Cardinal George, who responded that the process could be good but must be initiated by the apostolic nuncio and that a sitting bishop could not be involved in selecting his successor.

Committee members stressed that an inclusive process engaging as many "ordinary" lay men and women as possible could help slow or in some cases help stop the drift of Catholics away from the Church—a topic that concerns the cardinal.

Cardinal George encouraged the group to start now to seek lay input within the Archdiocese of Chicago that could be forwarded to Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Carolo Maria Vignano and to develop resources that could facilitate lay input. He emphasized anyone is free to contact the apostolic nuncio at any time about any issue.

As the meeting concluded, Cardinal George said he would forward VOTF's materials to Archbishop Vignano.

The committee is following up the meeting in several ways:

- Establishing a portal on the VOTF website in order to document the committee's activities and help other dioceses with similar planning;
- Developing a questionnaire to help describe the best candidate, given the issues in the Chicago Archdiocese, and posting it on the website portal;
- Promulgating responses received from Cardinal George and Archbishop Vignano to letters citing lay rights under Canon Law on input into bishop selection; and
- Continuing to meet into the spring to develop additional steps in the process. 



CELEBRATE
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Voice of the Faithful® Marks 10th Year with Major Conference

In 2012, Voice of the Faithful® reaches a significant milestone in its history. VOTF members, volunteers and supporters have been working 10 years to ***Keep the Faith, Change the Church.*** We are marking this milestone by staging a major conference. Our 10th Year Conference



will take place at the Marriott Boston Copley Place Hotel, in the heart of Boston's Back Bay neighborhood, on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 14 and 15, 2012. Join us to ***Celebrate*** our mission, ***Rejuvenate*** our commitment, and ***Accelerate*** our work.



With an exceptional speaking program, VOTF's 10th Year Conference will help put the movement's history into perspective, assess where its various initiatives and actions stand in relation to the scandal within the Church, and explore where the path to healing and renewal leads.

Speakers include **John Morgan**, Chairman of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church of Ireland, former chairman of Ireland's Committee on Child Protection, and member in 1999 of the first Irish Bishop's Committee on Child Abuse; **Honorable Anne Burke**, Illinois Supreme Court Justice, former USSCB NRB Chair, and first recipient of VOTF's St. Catherine of Siena Layperson Award; **Thomas Groome, Ph.D.**, Chairman of the Department of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College and prolific author, most recently of *What Makes Us Catholic: Eight Gifts for Life*; **Rev. James Connell**, Archdiocese of Milwaukee Vice Chancellor, pastor and courageous survivor supporter and promoter of more effective clergy sexual abuse audits; **Jamie Manson**, award-winning columnist for *National Catholic*

Reporter, lay minister to the poor, frequent speaker and retreat leader, and former Women's Ordination Conference trustee; **Rev. Donald Cozzens**, Writer in Residence at John Carroll University, award-winning and best-selling author, and noted national and international commentator on religious and cultural issues, especially those relating to the sexual and financial crises gripping the Catholic Church; and **David Clohessy**, Executive Director since 1991 of SNAP, the nation's largest and oldest self-help group for clergy sexual abuse survivors.




Justice Anne Burke

VOTF's 10th Year Conference takes place at the Marriott Boston Copley Place Hotel, located in the city's Back Bay neighborhood within walking distance of major shopping and cultural attractions. Northern New England's brilliant autumn foliage season also begins during conference. The hotel's lobby soars four stories. VOTF's 10th Year Conference reception, which will precede dinner on Friday, Sept. 14, will take place in the third- and fourth-floor atrium areas.

The conference will start Friday, Sept. 14, with an evening reception, followed by a banquet with keynote speaker, *VOTF at 10* video presentation, and 10th-year ceremony. The conference will continue all-day Saturday, Sept. 15, and close with a Mass. Opportunities also exist for exhibit space, for authors to promote their books and for sponsors to support the conference.

Other conference features include:

- Helping VOTF write its history by participating in the *In Our Own Voices* book project;
- Including your message about VOTF's activities, survivor and Church reform issues, or personal reflections or prayers for hope and healing in the conference program book; and
- Becoming an Angel to support the conference and help others attend.

Complete conference information and registration is at www.votf.org by clicking the links at the top of the left-hand column on the home page. 

SNAP Fights Church Lawyers in Kansas City & St. Louis Clergy Sexual Abuse Cases

VOTF offers solidarity in effort to maintain victim confidentiality

Voice of the Faithful® is standing with SNAP (Survivors' Network for Those Abused by Priests) as the organization continues its efforts against being forced by Missouri courts to disclose confidential information about sexual abuse victims.

SNAP held a press conference March 13, 2012, in front of the U.S. bishops' conference headquarters in Washington, D.C., to express the view that the Church's recent legal attacks, according to SNAP, "are crippling our work to protect the vulnerable and heal the wounded."

Catholic Church lawyers defending clergy members in child sexual abuse cases in Kansas City and St. Louis are demanding SNAP turn over 23 years' worth of confidential information, even though SNAP is not party to either law suit. Defense lawyers are asking about SNAP's members and tactics, which is information beyond the cases being tried.


"The real motive is to harass and discredit and bankrupt SNAP, while discouraging victims, witnesses, whistleblowers, police, prosecutors and journalists from seeking

our help," said David Clohessy, the organization's executive director, in an editorial in *The New York Times*.

In a national statement March 13, VOTF expressed its agreement with law professor and victims' advocate Marci Hamilton, as quoted in the *New York Times* that day: "If there is one group that the higher-ups, the bishops, would like to see silenced, it definitely would be SNAP. And that's what they're after. They're trying to silence SNAP."

Earlier this year, VOTF joined nine victims' advocacy groups and Missouri Press Association in a friend-of-the-court brief asking that defendants' requests to compel SNAP to turn over confidential information be denied. The brief argued that anonymity and confidentiality are vital to sexual abuse victims' groups in order to work successfully with victims.

SNAP Executive Director David Clohessy's subsequent deposition appeared to be a "fishing expedition" for information beneficial to the defense. A Kansas City court hearing April 20 will determine whether SNAP will be compelled to turn over subpoenaed documents.

"The Church, in the guise of a couple of bishops or several, seems bent on continuing its protection of the institution rather than emphasizing compassion for child victims who speak out as adults about how devastating abuse is, not only for themselves, but also for all those around them," said Mark Mullaney, VOTF president. "The Church's assets are important to its mission and many charitable activities, but not at the expense of atonement for the perpetration and cover-up of crimes against children. We need to find a constructive way of healing." 

Help secure our mission — Consider monthly donations and bequests

Support VOTF with regular monthly donations and bequests.

Monthly donations are 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; cost nothing to set up; offer great satisfaction by helping to 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 in the Church.

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