

Accountability Now Campaign Summary Report

Convocation Implementation Team (CIT) 2005 – 2008

Results of the Accountability Campaigns

1300 Members and 69 Affiliates participated in setting the Campaign directions

More than 10,000 people signed petitions calling for:

- Creation of a National database for credibly accused priests
- Full funding of the Causes and Context Study being conducted by John Jay College of Criminal Justice and Fordham University
- Full financial accountability and transparency in all dioceses

Outcomes of Petition Action:

- Petition presented to Bishop Aymond, chairperson of the USCCB Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People
- Funding for the next stage of the Causes and Context Study secured
- Bishop Schnurr, chairperson of the USCCB Finance Committee, issued a statement declaring, “Finance is an area of parish ministry that is wide open for participation of the laity. Members of the laity who have expertise and experience with administration and finance should be invited and encouraged to consider a stewardship of their talents. The message to our seminarians should be that, as parish leaders, they are to recognize, call forth and coordinate the talents that God has entrusted to a particular parish community.”

Financial Accountability Campaigns launched in MA, CT, NY, VA, OH, DC

Outcomes of Financial Actions:

- More lay finance and pastoral councils established
- Affiliate leaders in Austin TX and Joliet IL asked to serve on diocesan councils
- Increased transparency in Diocesan and Parish Finances; release of financial records in the Archdiocese of Boston set a new “gold standard” for dioceses, according to the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management

Protection of Children and Support of Survivors Campaigns

Outcomes of Campaigns:

- Campaigns to reform child protection and sex abuse laws supported in MA, NH, ME, NY, NJ, PA, MD, DE, VA, KY, OH, MI, IL, TX, CO
- Increased number of dioceses posting the names of credibly accused priests on their web sites

- Letter writing campaign in 2007 calling for bishops to NOT elect Cardinal George as President of the USCCB**

Outcome of Letter Campaign:

- Election came from a split vote rather than the traditional unanimous vote that elevates the current USCCB VP to President

- Diocesan Surveys: Protection of Children Programs, Lay Involvement in Governance, and Financial Accountability**

Outcomes of Surveys:

- Diocesan surveys completed for 34 dioceses
- Team assembled to complete surveys for the remaining diocese.

Note: The surveys will be continued on an annual basis and the results publicized to call attention to those dioceses that can serve as models for others and to hold accountable those dioceses where performance has been less than needed.

- Direct Action training available to affiliates and used for a variety of local projects**

Outcomes of Training Programs:

- Parish Closings in the Archdiocese of New York: The coordinated action in NY gave voice to the laity and significantly reduced the number of parishes closed.
- Dialogue as an Important Step in Direct Action: VOTF members in more than 15 dioceses across the country engaged in dialogue with their bishops.
- VOTF in Providence RI gained commitment from their bishop to require parish councils in all parishes. The bishop set June 2008 as the deadline for all parishes to comply.
- VOTF members in Brooklyn NY were invited to help the diocese establish parish councils throughout the diocese and to share insights gained from other dioceses on parish closings.
- Members in San Francisco CA were invited to play a role in the diocesan convocation held June 2007. The diocese also assigned three priests to maintain a liaison between VOTF and the Archdiocese.
- VOTF in Chicago IL met with pastors and priests across the diocese in a “campaign” to make VOTF better known and understood, and to better understand the needs of priests in the diocese.
- Atlanta GA members met with the bishop and obtained a lifting of the ban so that VOTF can meet on church property.