

In the Vineyard, August 14, 2009

## ***News from National***

Dear Friends,

We are preparing to introduce our new strategic plan, the *Voices in Action* campaign—a five-pointed campaign focusing on transforming the church through local, regional and national action.

Starting next week we will be sending you information about the campaign via email. The emails will include complete campaign facts, the financial plan for the coming year, a web presentation, details on specific exciting initiatives, and information on how you can get involved.

Keep an eye on your email inbox for all of this information. We will be sending it in “pieces” as to not overwhelm your inbox (or your display monitor!), so please open all of our emails in the coming weeks. We’ll also post many of the documents online, and the emails will include links to them so they are easy to find.

We are grateful to all those who have worked so hard to launch this campaign. We could not have gotten to this point without the generous support of your time and your treasures. We hope all our members will join us in putting our *Voices in Action* today, tomorrow, and in the months to come.

Sincerely,



Donna Doucette  
Executive Director  
Voice of the Faithful

## **Reminder:**

### **CATHERINE OF SIENA DISTINGUISHED LAY PERSON AWARD**

The 2009 National Conference Committee is seeking nominations for this year’s Catherine of Siena Distinguished Lay Person Award. This award was established by the 2005 VOTF Convocation Steering Committee and approved by the Board of Trustees at that time. [Click here](#) for nomination requirements; **deadline for nominations is Aug. 28.**

**Register Now for Long Island Conference**  
**Making our Voices Heard**  
*Hosted by the Long Island Voice of the Faithful*

**Featuring SR. JOAN CHITTISTER, O.S.B., and  
FR. THOMAS REESE, S.J.**

Join in lively discussions as we come together to reflect on the state of our church and how we can be part of the changes that will renew our faith. For registration, check the [additional info](#) here.

We are asking affiliates, members and supporters to make their presence known at VOTF's conference on Long Island in October. How? Please consider taking an ad in our conference program book. It's easy; just fill out the [ad reservation form](#) and return it to the address on the form by September 15, 2009.

***Update on the Investigation into Women Religious***

Contrary to initial reports from the Vatican, the investigation into the lives of women religious seems to be looking more and more like an inquisition into loyalty and politics. Apparently, the investigation is focusing on the U.S. nuns who are social workers, teachers, and work in society. It will not focus on those nuns who are cloistered.

In the *National Catholic Reporter*, Ken Briggs calls this investigation the “last major struggle over what it means to be Catholic.”

<http://ncronline.org/news/women/us-women-religious-leadership-crossroads>

In an AP article entitled “Catholic Sisters Queried about Doctrine, Fidelity” there is confirmation about the Vatican’s concern over U.S. sisters’ “drift to the left.”  
[http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jSTgCugNoam\\_XAJxjVUwnFMBz6XQD99SCRG00](http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jSTgCugNoam_XAJxjVUwnFMBz6XQD99SCRG00)

NCR details the information the Vatican is collecting...

<http://ncronline.org/news/women/women-religious-study-include-soundness-doctrine>

And the *Washington Post* recently ran the following article: “Vatican Scrutiny Makes US Sisters Uneasy.”

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/07/AR2009080703265.html>

## ***News from the Affiliates***

**Chicago:** The Chicagoland VOTF affiliate released the following statement about the Church's response to Bishop Goedert's deposition regarding priests who abused children:

A July 2009 internal document (Background Information for Pastors Regarding Upcoming Legal Document Release) continues the ongoing failed secrecy and spin with which the archdiocese addresses the clergy sex abuse crisis. The document was issued for "...responding to the inquiries..." regarding the recently published deposition (taken November 2007) of Bishop Goedert. The bishop was the Vicar for priests in 1987-91 and cooperated in moving pedophile priests to unaware parishes. This deposition describes the abhorrent behavior that led to continued abuse of children.

The document penned by Coleen Dolan (presumably with the blessing of the Cardinal) continues to demonstrate their lack of understanding of the issues. It states, "**Negotiation and mediation are the most compassionate and efficient ways to resolve claims...**". While many survivors find mediation to be best for them and don't even want to begin to face the rigors of a trial, there are situations where the behavior of the archdiocese forces a victim into litigation. Litigation is polarizing and expensive and certainly not the first choice of anyone. But at times it is the just route to resolving the sins of the bishops. We can't help but wonder what Jesus would say to the amoral tone of correspondence emanating from the Archdiocese.

As illustrated in Cardinal George's deposition in January 2008, responding to the Fr. Dan McCormack 2007 conviction of child sex abuse, the archdiocese approach today is little different from the past. In fact, the internal document contradicts itself. It says that under Cardinal Bernadin, policies included "Prompt reporting to civil authorities." Elsewhere it states, "Since 2002, the archdiocese has reported all allegations of sexual abuse of minors to the authorities."

So what's true? Where was the prompt notification to authorities during the McCormack case? Where was the "zero tolerance" when a history of misconduct in the seminary proactively indicated his predatory interests? No learned lessons were evident with McCormack! The company man perspective about Bishop Goedert is awful and smells too much of the same organizational pabulum you all want the laity to swallow from Boston to Chicago to Philadelphia to Los Angeles to Ireland.

**It is evident that** protection of children is NOT the Archdiocesan primary concern; it is the protection of the good old boys club. Based on the internal documents, and the depositions of Cardinal George and Bishop Goedert, the people of the Archdiocese should understand fully the priorities of the hierarchy.

A conscience-driven and compassionate hierarchy would have recognized in the '70s and '80s that the practices of that time did not heal the predator. This ruse has been going on since the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and there are copious documents from the Vatican referring to this repulsive behavior and attitude. So serve the pabulum elsewhere please.

A deposition may appear one-sided since it is witness testimony under oath. However, the witness' attorney can always ask the witness to expand and clarify testimony, as done in the Cardinal's deposition. Not one sided at all. What bothers them more? That it appears one-sided or that it is the truth? How do they justify Fr. Grace's advice to McCormack not to speak to the authorities? (See George's deposition). Clearly as a civil lawyer, Grace knew the law. As a cleric, he knew the moral response.

Though a Vicar for Priests is to advocate for priests, their priorities are disordered; the innocent and abused children should ALWAYS be first. As the Archdiocese knows, the laudatory statements about Bishop Goedert at the close of the internal document ARE NOT AT ALL SUBSTANTIATED BY HIS DEPOSITION where Bishop Goedert clearly admits knowing the abuse is a crime but did not even consider reporting it to authorities in the 25 cases he was aware of. TO EVEN SUGGEST THAT CATHOLICS WOULD BUY ANY OF THIS "SPIN" IS INSULTING.

We want the internal document to be released and published in the Catholic newspaper, *The New World*, and placed on the archdiocese website. If the document is useful to pastors and associates, why can't the laity benefit by reading? If the archdiocese believes what it writes, why wouldn't the laity understand this unvarnished truth? Don't just lay the document out there; solicit responses from victims and laity. If the document promotes healing by relying on the truth, it will be affirmed. If not, the real truth will prevail.

Tony Jannotta, Permanent Deacon

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**Bridgeport:** In Connecticut, the Bridgeport VOTF had the following letter printed in the *Advocate*.

### LET THE LIGHT SHINE IN

The Diocese of Bridgeport, forgetting its past pronouncements of accountability, continues its effort to stonewall the publication as ordered by the Connecticut Supreme Court of court documents relating to priestly sexual abuse and the cover-up by the bishops (the Rosado case).

The Diocese has announced that it is appealing that ruling to the United States Supreme Court. The Diocese alleges that unsealing the documents would violate its privacy rights as well as its right, under the First Amendment, to select and evaluate its ministers.

The Diocese also argues that the pertinent documents were available to the victims and their attorneys when the cases were first heard and need not be made available now to the news media or to the general public.

This expensive and prolonged legal wrangling ignores the right of the Catholic faithful, lay women and men, religious women and men, and priests, to a full accounting of the terrible crisis that has undermined the Church's good name, cast suspicion on all priests, and deprived the bishops of whatever moral authority they may have had.

The Second Vatican Council in its *Constitution on the Church* declared that the Church is the People of God, the whole body of the faithful. Despite that, canon law still vests absolute control of clergy, laity, and parishes in the bishop. When the Diocese claims that its First Amendment rights are violated, it means that the bishop's rights are violated. The rest of the faithful have no say in any of these matters. Laypeople at best can give counsel, but they have no real authority in the Church.

As faithful Catholics, we protest the continuing expenditure of untold sums of money to pursue a cause that makes a mockery of the pledge of accountability proclaimed by the bishops at their meeting in Dallas in 2002.

The time has come to put a stop to this foolish course, to accept full responsibility for the tragedy that has taken place, and to give a full and honest accounting by releasing the court documents.

If the Church is to be renewed and this blotch on the seamless garment of Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, is to be erased, then the policy of secrecy, obfuscation, and delay must be abandoned forever. The Church and its leaders must stand upright in God's clear light.

## **Site Seeing**

*Inside Higher Ed* reports on the impact of college majors on religion in its article “God and Majors.”

<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/07/28/majors>

The *Middletown Journal* examines the life of Bishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk as he prepares to retire. Katherine Ward, local VOTF member, comments on Bishop Pilarczyk’s handling of the sex abuse scandal.

<http://www.middletownjournal.com/news/middletown-news/academic-freedom-sex-scandal-parts-of-pilarczyks-legacy-245159.html>

The *Irish Times* reports on the status of requests to open to the public the report on abuse in the Irish dioceses.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2009/0804/breaking38.htm>

The *Courier-Journal* reports on a pastor from St. Ignatius who has been put on leave after an allegation of abuse.

<http://www.courier-journal.com/article/20090730/NEWS01/907300346/St.+Ignatius+pastor+on+leave+after+abuse+claim>

## **Letters to the Editor**

Dear VOTF,

I am happy and relieved that the financial crisis that VOTF had faced has seen a generous, well deserved, out-pouring of generosity, and will remain “afloat.”

I was a Catholic all of my life (44 years), until the ultimate betrayal and abandonment by my Church in 2005. That was when I discovered that my Catholic Church Hierarchy acted with complete disregard and recklessness in allowing a priest with approximately twenty years of behavioral concerns and sexual misconduct with minors to remain a priest, and work in a youth leadership position and therefore to have access to my son, in 2001-2002 and sexually abuse him. That abuse derailed my son’s young life at the tender age of 13-15. It injured our whole family enormously. It has been a long dark, difficult, lonely road.

Then, three weeks ago, due to the courage and perseverance of my son, (not the Church) the “priest,” Aaron J. Cote, was at long last convicted of felony sexual

abuse, in Rockville MD. To add to our pain, the Church leadership that we encountered in this experience was cold, disrespectful and deceitful.

Though I have decided that for me, I can no longer remain a Catholic, I appreciate that there are some good people out there and within the Catholic Church (VOTF) that care about the victims of sexual abuse, have integrity, and are working for accountability and change within the Church leadership. I do keep up with the work of VOTF.

Finally, I want to thank Bill Casey, on behalf of myself and my family, for being there with us in court at the prosecution of the "priest." Also, for his care and support for our family during these past several challenging years as we sought accountability, justice and the protection of other children as we pursued "Cote" to the criminal courtroom.

With appreciation,  
Toni McMorrow

Dear In the Vineyard,

I have a simple inquiry. I watched with interest the furor among American Hierarchy surrounding President Obama's visit to Notre Dame University for its commencement. You will recall there was widespread condemnation by many Catholic Clergy of that University's action in inviting the President. It even went to the point where special masses were being said, and some students asked to be excused for attending the ceremony. Of course these clergy had a perfect legal right to engage in such conduct, laying aside the moral questions such conduct raised in many minds. Given that historical fact, where were these same clergy when the Pope recently played host to President Obama at the Vatican? I am waiting for those same clergy to visit upon the Pope the same scorn they visited upon the University. If it was wrong for Notre Dame to do what they did, isn't it equally wrong for the Pope to do what he did?

Can someone please answer this simple question for me?  
George E. Barrett

### ***Book Review***

*Disputed Truth - Memoirs II* by Hans Kung, Ph.D

Reviewer: Tony Wiggins

Available at Amazon.com (follow the link on votf.org)

In his recently -written book, Hans Kung immediately gets to contrasting his career with that of his fellow professor at Tubingen University, Joseph Ratzinger, when he says, “There is no doubt that the last papal election has considerably increased the importance of these memoirs, and also my responsibility as an author. Almost all of my great comrades-in-arms in the fights for renewal and change at Vatican II are dead or inactive, with one exception, and he has become pope. Joseph Ratzinger is Benedict XVI.”

Kung's vitality seems at the same high level as when I was introduced to him in Minneapolis by my classmate, Bishop Jim Shannon, during Kung's tour in 1967.

In his memoirs, Kung says, “I am telling a sorry story: The story of the reforms that might have been possible after Vatican II, but in truth were stifled, both in the public arena, and behind the scenes.”

Kung goes on to document, without bitterness, his long struggle to change the structure of the church, so that theologians could be questioned by the Curia openly, with counsel present, and without secrecy. In the controversy over Kung's book *Infallibility-An Enquiry?*, which began in 1975, Pope John Paul II finally made an arbitrary decision, without discussion, on Dec. 24, 1979, to forbid Kung from teaching Catholic theology in any Catholic University.

Kung writes with enthusiasm about his life since, as teacher, writer, and faithful Catholic Priest. Readers will also be interested in a few of the sidelights in his career. He details direct evidence from friends in the Vatican regarding the mysterious death of the “33-day Pope,” John Paul I. Again, with direct evidence, Kung relates sordid details of Archbishop Paul Marcinkus, who was the direct business partner of the murdered Robert Calvi of Banco Ambrosiano. Kung states that Marcinkus, head of the Vatican Bank, had to “face the music” for Paul VI, who had instructed Marcinkus to invest heavily in Banco Ambrosiano. Marcinkus escaped prosecution by referring to the Lateran Treaty, and fled to retirement in Sun City, Arizona.

In summary, *Disputed Truth* is very readable, and a valuable resource in detailing the struggles to preserve and expand the spirit of Vatican II.

It should be especially inspiring to VOTF Members to read of Kung's undaunted courage in speaking truth to authority, at the same time fending off personal attacks, and all the while continuing to turn out a new book each year.

*Have a book to recommend to your fellow VOTF members? Please send your recommendations to [vineyard@votf.org](mailto:vineyard@votf.org). Thanks!*