

In the Vineyard, December 12, 2009

News from National

Roman Missal Controversy

Voice of the Faithful received a letter last week from Father Michael Ryan, pastor of St James Cathedral in Seattle, Washington. Father Ryan is concerned about the controversial new translations of the Roman Missal. He has published an article in the December 14 issue of *America Magazine* entitled “*What if we just said wait? The case for a grassroots review of the new Roman Missal.*”

(http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=12045) Father Ryan has also set up a website www.whatifwejustsaidwait.org for people to make comments that he hopes to bring to U.S. Bishops to encourage further thought on this issue.

The *National Catholic Reporter* also ran an article on this issue in October.

<http://ncronline.org/news/faith-parish/slavishly-literal-translation-missal-criticized>

Priest of Integrity—Nominees

Two priests, **Reverend Joseph Fowler** and **Reverend Donald Cozzens**, were honored as Priests of Integrity at VOTF’s National Conference, “Making our Voices Heard,” held on Long Island NY on October 30-31, 2009.

Along with these two, four other priests were nominated for recognition. In this and following issues of *In the Vineyard* we will honor these priests (in alphabetical order) with articles about the work that they are doing for others and for the good of our church.

Reverend Roy Bourgeois was enthusiastically nominated by the New York City affiliate of VOTF. His is a name not unknown to many of us, and he has a broad base of support from the people he serves. Fr. Bourgeois is best known for his antiwar activities and for standing up for women’s roles in the Church. The following summary of his ministry over the years is a testament to his commitment to peace and justice.

Fr. Roy Bourgeois: Nominee for Priest of Integrity Award

Before entering the priesthood, Fr. Bourgeois served as an officer in the Navy for four years and was a recipient of the Purple Heart. After military service, Fr. Roy entered the seminary of the Maryknoll Missionary Order. He was ordained a Catholic priest in 1972 and went to work with the poor of Bolivia for five years. Bolivia at the time was under the rule of dictator and School of the Americas graduate General Hugo Banzer. Fr. Roy’s work there led to his arrest and forced departure from the country.

After the murders of four U.S. churchwomen in El Salvador, Rev. Bourgeois became interested in U.S. Government policy. As a result of his studies and his experiences, he

became an outspoken critic of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America. Inspired by Archbishop Oscar Romero to “speak for the voiceless,” he began participating in nonviolent protests at Fort Benning in Georgia—an effort that led to his arrest and to an 18-month prison sentence. This was the first of numerous times he endured incarceration for his beliefs.

By 1990, Rev. Bourgeois had founded the School of Americas Watch (now renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation <http://www.soaw.org/>). He is dedicated to informing the public about the implications of this training for the people of Latin America. Following the November 1989 murders of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter in El Salvador at the hands of graduates of the SOA, the Watch organized an annual protest that is held on the anniversary of the massacre each November.

Most recently, Rev. Bourgeois stood in solidarity with Janice Svre-Duszynska, as she answered a call to ordained priesthood. As a consequence, he received a notice regarding possible excommunication by the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith.

Rev. Bourgeois has explained that he supported Janice as a matter of conscience, and as a matter of personal obligation, since she had first stood with him in protest outside Fort Benning in the earliest days of the SOA protests. In his letter of November 7, 2008, to the CDF, he wrote:

”If we are to have a vibrant, healthy Church rooted in the teachings of our Savior, we need the faith, wisdom, experience, compassion and courage of women in the priesthood. Conscience is very sacred. Conscience gives us a sense of right and wrong and urges us to do the right thing...Conscience is what compels women in our Church to say they cannot be silent and deny their call from God to the priesthood. Conscience is what compelled my dear mother and father, now 95, to always strive to do the right things as faithful Catholics raising four children. And after much prayer, reflection and discernment, it is my conscience that compels me to do the right thing.”

Rev. Bourgeois’ dedication to changing structures that are unjust and speak on behalf of the voiceless, regardless of personal consequences, is a challenge to each of us. We honor this priest for his compassion and courage.

Voices in Action

Affiliates around the country are using the conference DVD’s at their meetings to spread the word about the Voices in Action campaign and the possibilities for change spoken about at the conference. If you’re interested in buying a copy for your affiliate keep an eye on the website (link directly to conf web page).

Advent Prayer

Guadete

Prayer for the Third Week of Advent
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBQSyzsPxpA&feature=related>

Is 12:2-3

Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.

God indeed is my savior;

I am confident and unafraid.

My strength and my courage is the LORD,

and he has been my savior.

With joy you will draw water

at the fountain of salvation.

Good and loving God; we rejoice in your love and graciousness; we thank you for the gift of yourself as we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Incarnate Word.

Help us to bring the Word of strength and justice to those who have been sexually abused by those whom they trusted. Help us to bring the Word of strength and justice to all your ministers of integrity. Help us to bring the Word of strength and justice to the Church, give us a Voice of Action.

And to this do we all say AMEN.

Update from Universal Church Reform

Submitted by Nick Mazza

The Universal Church Reform team is working on three initiatives: Bishop Selection, Problems in the Priesthood, and Women in Leadership.

The goal of the Bishop Selection effort is to identify five dioceses by December 2010 where an Ordinary and/or Auxiliary Bishop is scheduled to reach normal retirement age. Current appointment processes for filling such vacancies have Rome making the ultimate appointment and the candidates coming from different and even remote dioceses. But in the early church, Bishops were selected or chosen from the local faith communities, and the new bishop had pastoral experiences within the local community. The team's aim is to highlight this difference and work towards a process that better follows the original practices of the Church.

Recently, the Bishop Selection team under the leadership of Jack Doyle completed its first draft white paper. This paper will serve as the official document in communicating our initiative publicly. The final draft is being developed as well as four cover letters that will be sent to the Holy Father, Congregation for Bishops, U.S. Papal Nuncio and the President of NCCB. Additionally, some members will visit local bishops to solicit support. Jim Beyers is conducting a search of local dioceses, priest councils, parish councils and local affiliates that would be most receptive to our Bishop Selection proposal, especially if we receive negative responses from the church hierarchy.

The second initiative continues the effort sponsored by the Priest Support Working Group in its Goal II phase, which is well developed. John Ryan leads this phase, which focuses on drawing greater attention to the problems of the priesthood through grass root information dissemination, especially through local affiliates.

Women's Leadership in the Church is the third important issue for the Universal Church Reform team. Our sisters in the Lord are suffering because the greatest injustice the church can impose on a person is to restrict that individual from being who God created them to be in their spiritual journey. Kathleen Kichline leads this initiative and is recruiting women to join her initiative. Kathleen is a perfect choice for this position since she has a great working knowledge and understanding of women in the history of salvation history and is author of the book *Sisters in Scripture*.

Message from Voice of Renewal/Lay Education Working Group

The VOR/LE Working Group invites members of VOTF to join together in a “rolling” Advent candle lighting with a noon prayer modeled after the original VOTF noon prayer. Light your candle @ noon (whatever your time zone) on December 20—the fourth and last Sunday in Advent.

This invitation was inspired by a comment on VOR/LE's Advent Sunday reflection with a theme of more light coming from multiple candles. One member even plans to place a battery-operated candle in her train window as she rolls across the country on the 20th.

Please join us in lighting your candle and saying this prayer at noon, which Gaile Polhaus modeled on the original VOTF noontime prayer:

Jesus, Lord and Brother, help us with our faithfulness. Please hear our voice, and let our voice be heard as we prepare for the celebration of your birth. Amen.

LI VOTF Responds to Vatican's Exoneration of Father Placa

Statement from the Long Island VOTF

Disturbing news came on Friday as the Diocese of Rockville Centre announced that the Vatican has cleared the name of Fr. Alan Placa, a formerly high-ranking priest in the diocese who was at the center of abuse allegations.

Despite the Vatican's action, members of the Voice of the Faithful cannot deem Fr. Placa to be a “priest in good standing.” The review process by the Vatican, at which the alleged victims of sexual abuse were not invited to testify, is not a definitive investigation. As a result, any conclusions it reached must be considered inconclusive at best.

LI Objects to Vatican Exoneration of Placa

Equally, or even more important, the other actions Fr. Placa undertook during the height of the clergy sexual abuse scandal in the Diocese of Rockville Centre should be more

than enough reason for any organization to remove such an individual permanently. These actions were detailed in an exhaustive grand jury report in Suffolk County. The report cites the claims of four alleged victims that date back to Fr. Placa's first assignment and continue after he became a teacher and a dean.

The state criminal codes have let survivors of clergy abuse down. Now the Vatican has also let them down. As this situation indicates, we can not depend on the Church hierarchy to ensure accountability. We must pass meaningful civil legislation to modify the statutes of limitations so victims of clergy abuse can bring cases to court. This is the only way that we can be sure that justice is served for all parties and that children are protected.

ABC News reports on the situation with the clearing of Placa
<http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/sex-abuse-victims-groups-outraged-vatican-decision-clear/story?id=9268719>

News from Ireland

Dublin Report: Clerical Sex Abuse in Ireland

Following is an update from Sean O'Conaill, VOTF-Ireland

We know now that the Vatican seems to be abandoning its "nothing to do with us" posture— probably because of the obvious tension between the Irish bishops. Friday's meeting [Dec. 11, 2009] will evidently be attended by whoever heads the "church" wing of the secretariat of state - as well as Cardinal Bertone and Cardinal Battista Re.

Some reports say the Vatican wants some kind of "final resolution" to prevent the slow drip feed of bad news from Ireland. But that would surely take the resignations of maybe 10 bishops.

Whether our plea for a papal inquiry will be heard is probably unlikely, but that in itself is likely to raise growing annoyance here at the role of the papacy in appointing lame bishops, and failing to take an interest in why they are so lame.

After months of delay, the government in Ireland finally released its report on sex abuse committed by Catholic clergy during a 35-year period (Jan. 1, 1975, through April 20, 2004). The long delay came with multiple warnings that the details would be appalling. They are.

On Dec. 7 it was decided that [**Pope Benedict will hold a summit**](#) with top Irish bishops on Friday Dec. 11 to discuss the findings of the *Murphy Report on the Dublin Archdiocese*.

Over the weekend, a small group from Voice of the Faithful Ireland delivered a letter to the Papal Nuncio there asking the pope to remove the bishops who enabled the abuse and bring an end to the culture of secrecy in the church.

Click here to read the story. And link here to read the letter from VOTF Ireland to the Pope.

VOTF members in Ireland and in the U.S. are calling for accountability as Pope Benedict prepares to meet with Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin, Cardinal Sean Brady of Armagh, President of the Irish Bishop's conference, and Archbishop Giuseppe Leanza, the papal nuncio in Ireland.

Please take a moment to view the video below that briefly recounts what we face in light of the Church's refusal to hold accountable those bishops who covered up initial sex abuse and still refuse to open all the records pertaining to such abuse. We must spread the word so that together our "voice of the faithful" will be heard.

Below is more coverage of the scandal in Ireland:

Speculation about Bishop Murray resigning

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/murray-expected-to-resign-as-pope-orders-leaders-to-rome-for-crisis-meeting-14589739.html>

Members of VOTF Ireland demonstrate

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2009/1205/breaking18.htm>

Pope to receive letter from VOTF

<http://www.independent.ie/national-news/pope-to-get-open-letter-on-failings-of-bishops-1965148.html>

Will the Irish Bishop quit?

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/dec/07/bishop-abuse-resignation>

Site Seeing

Carolyn Disco from VOTF New Hampshire responded to Fr. Timothy Radcliffe's assertion that English-speaking countries have more clerical sex abuse due to some "particular weakness" in those churches. Her response in the *London Times* can be read at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/letters/article6947750.ece> along with the link to Radcliffe's original letter.

Demonstrations in Bridgeport ask for Criminal Investigation

<http://www.newstimes.com/news/article/Priest-abuse-victims-want-criminal-investigation-275072.php>

Bridgeport VOTF members quoted in the following articles:

http://www.connpost.com/ci_13900709?source=most_email

<http://www.thehour.com/story/478833>

http://www.connpost.com/ci_13902786

http://www.connpost.com/ci_13895091

An opinion on the investigations of the sisters....

<http://www.uscatholic.org/church/2009/11/sisters-mercy-arent-mcdonalds>

Spirituality of women

http://www.gloucestertimes.com/puopinion/local_story_336224845.html

Looking for a way to stay connected during the winter?

Learning at Home: Webcasts You Can Easily Play

Boston College's Church in the 21st Century Center makes all its webcasts available, on topics covering everything from Ignatian spirituality to the Jewishness of Jesus to Edwina Gately speaking on social justice. They even provide a list of their 10 most popular webcasts each year. You can watch the videos in high-band or low-band video (depending on your computer's capabilities) or just as an audio. It's an easy way to stay connected as the winter winds begin to howl. Check out all their listings here.

Christmas Shopping Online?

Please consider linking to Amazon through VOTF's homepage. A portion of every sale will benefit VOTF.