

VOTF in the Diocese of Bridgeport  
General Meeting  
May 7, 2009

The meeting was called to order by co-chair Dan Sullivan followed by an opening prayer prepared and led by Marge Hickey. Dan then announced that next year's meetings would be held on the second Thursdays of the month. He also announced the election of members of the board would be held in June and that Tony Wiggins is chair of the election committee. Anyone wishing to serve on the board could speak to Dan after the meeting.

The treasurer's report was given by Marilyn Kirchner.

John Lee reported on the Voice of Compassion Awards and presented Cathy Malloy, executive director of the Sexual Abuse and Crisis Center of Stamford a grant of \$750. Ms Malloy reported on the work of her agency and expressed her thanks for the grant.

Bob Mulligan, chair of the Program committee, introduced our speaker, Dr. Elizabeth Dreyer, professor of religious studies at Fairfield University and author of several books on spirituality.

Dr. Dreyer's talk, "Women's Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", began with the song, "We Are Called" from the CD from the Called to Holiness series. Her initial comments concerned the metaphor of "woman", the qualities of woman that men have defined over the centuries. Dreyer said women must free themselves from these old definitions and work through their own meanings. As an example, she stated that if we look through anything through a female lens, it alters the picture, for example, the sin of pride is looked at as male pride not a woman's vice generally.

Grass roots theology was the next area in Dreyer's talk. She strongly asserted that we, the laity need to know the tradition, recognize the time in which we live and "do" theology which simply means studying and talking about the experience of God in our lives. More specifically, Dreyer listed four requirements for theology: a sense of awe and wonder (access into the life of God); an ordered, informed, reflective search for meaning (who is this God?); a communal experience of talking about the world and the word of God; and finally, a prayerful dimension that results in action for justice.

Dreyer's new series, "Called to Holiness", on women's spirituality, looks into the many facets of a woman's life and how God works in her and through her. The first three books in the series have already been published and copies were sent around the room for the assembled members to see. "Making Sense of God" is authored by Elizabeth Dreyer and is the first book in the series.

To close her remarks, Dreyer outlined some problems encountered in the whole area of theology at the grass roots. One problem is the gap between professional theology and grass roots theology. Though Catholics are the wealthiest, most educated group there is little knowledge of theology. Another is the separation of mind and heart. Good theology considers both. Pluralism is another possible problem since there are so many choices today, even atheism has become a choice.

After the talk, Dr Dreyer took several questions from the group.

The meeting was closed with a prayer to the Mother, prepared by Marge Hickey, in honor of Mother's Day.

Submitted by: Peg Mooney, Recording Secretary