

Our Voice

An E-Newsletter for Those Interested and Involved in The Voice of The Faithful • Connecticut
July/August 2007 Issue Number 19

SUPPORT VOTF NATIONAL

By Jayne O'Donnell

National VOTF has just reached the end of the '06 fiscal year; unfortunately with a deficit. It is not surprising, however, in light of the fact that VOTF just turned five. Our grass roots organization burst forth from the basement of a church in Wellesley after the clergy sexual abuse crisis broke. The focus of our volunteer group of faithful Catholics, at that time, was on the immediate problem and what could be done to repair and restore our beloved church. In the ensuing years, our little band grew into a large national and international group. We must now address how to "be" in this new context.

"National", the Newton-based hub, has provided all of us with the vision and the means to carry out our affiliate needs. There is no "real" separation. If National ceases to be, ALL of VOTF ceases to be.

In the past five years, many have been empathetic to the goals and mission of VOTF, yet understandably, too oversubscribed with the many demands of life, to actively do more than "join". VOTF appreciates the support of all of its members. However, now is the time that you can actively "do" something for VOTF and the crucial work we do. . You can ensure that the work continues.

To help find a reason that resonates with you, we present: **TOP 10 REASONS TO SUPPORT VOICE OF THE FAITHFUL:**

10. It's a tax write-off.
9. To exercise your baptismal responsibility through your voice.
8. Speak truth to power.
7. Eliminate secrecy and clericalism.
6. Continue to call the hierarchy to accountability.
5. Advocate legislative reform of the Criminal Statute of Limitations. (Foley, from CT, is still roaming free.)

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VOTF™ Mission Statement

To provide a prayerful voice, attentive to the Spirit, through which the Faithful can actively participate in the governance and guidance of the Catholic Church.

AFFILIATE FACILITATORS:

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Doris Bourque: dorishbourque@cox.net

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HELPFUL LINKS:

National VOTF: www.votf.org

Hartford Regional VOTF: www.hrvotf.sytes.net

Bridgeport VOTF: www.votfbpt.org

THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC: www.taonline.org

How to become involved:

Want to join VOTF or start a Parish Voice affiliate?
Just email Jayne O'Donnell at jaynedirish@yahoo.com

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Need someone to go through approximately 200 names and cull names that are NOT on an affiliate list. If you can spare an hour, email Jayne O'Donnell at jaynedirish@yahoo.com

WANTED: WRITERS, IDEAS, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS...write up your affiliate meeting or program..send your ideas, comments, suggestions, to Joanne Blair, Editor, at ejblair@comcast.net

VOICE OF THE FAITHFUL CALLS VATICAN TO REVIEW MANDATORY CELIBACY

Press Release July 2, 2007

Voice of the Faithful, an international organization of Catholic laity, invites fellow Catholic laity, priests and religious to join us in calling upon the Holy See to conduct an ecclesial review of mandatory celibacy for diocesan priests. We call for a serious extensive, unbiased review to be conducted without prejudging the outcome, utilizing the insights of theology, history, psychology, sociology, and current pastoral needs and challenges.

"We decided to break with our past silence on this matter because of what we believe to be a growing body of evidence linking mandated celibacy with an institutional culture of secrecy and cover-up," stated VOTF President Mary Pat Fox. She further stated, "We believe it is our responsibility to speak up on this matter, and the responsibility of the Holy See to address it."

"Calling for this review is consistent with the goals Voice of the Faithful has championed since its inception in 2002. We are committed to the types of structural change in the Catholic Church needed to prevent the culture of secrecy and clericalism that was so fundamental to the decades of cover-up of widespread clergy sexual abuse," said Fox.

The newly announced initiative has been under discussion for nine months and was developed in collaboration with the Priest Support Groups, The VOTF National Representative Council and the VOTF National Officers.



"THE CHURCH WE LOVE: AN INVITATION TO DIALOGUE"

BY Dave Blume

Father Terence Kristofak, a Passionist priest, led a dialogue on the successes and challenges in the Catholic Church at a meeting co-sponsored by St. Marys and the Farmington Valley Voice of the Faithful (VOTF).

Opening the dialogue with the statement: "I love the church and I am here to stay," he explained that he would draw from his experiences as a teacher, retreat director and eight years as provincial of the Passionists. As provincial he was responsible for 220 priests and 400 employees and met with 17 survivors of sexual abuse by Passionists. All of the cases were settled without law suits. This experience has had a significant impact on him; thus, he strongly supports what VOTF is doing to help the church improve in this area.

He challenged the group with the question: "What are you reading to increase your awareness and knowledge of the church?" He suggested several books and magazines that he believes are essential to knowledgeable Catholics. These included: "Brave New Church" by Fr. Bill Bausch, "Six Good Reasons for Staying in an Imperfect Church" by Fr. Martin Pable and a wide variety of Catholic magazines.

The next challenge that Fr. Kristofak put forth for dialogue was: "What are YOU doing for your Community?" The dialogue on this issue ranged from the difficulty of being a faithful Catholic today with fewer rules than in the past, to the evolving roles of priests and laity. Fr. Terry summed up the discussion stating that laity and clergy must work together at parish and diocesan levels to help our communities. He reminded the group that neither vocation, lay or clerical, is inherently better than the other. Among other things Fr. Kristofak urged the members of VOTF to continue to work to change the church at all levels.

Thoughtful questions such as the possibility of getting back to a more "democratic" model of the church as existed in the first century were discussed. The need for Intentional Giving (where the members of the community give an amount per year based on their means) was also discussed.

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CALENDAR

SAVE THE DATES

September 22

CT Gathering of VOTF

Will Meet at St. Timothy's

South Main Street, West Hartford

12 Noon - Registration

12:45 PM - Keynote by Tom Gallagher

4 PM - Mass

5-6 PM - Wine & Cheese Gathering
(See separate article in this newsletter for further info)

October 19-20

"Disciples in Action"

National VOTF Convention

**Will Take Place at the
Rhode Island Convention Center**

**The Convention will celebrate
the Contribution VOTF has made
to the Church**

**(Full details on the programs,
speakers, accommodations, etc. will
appear in the next issue of Our Voice
and will also be available on
the VOTF web site.)**



The Church We Love continued from page 2

Fr. Kristofak listed five qualities that he loves about the church and four areas that are current challenges to the church. These were:

- Universality of the Liturgy – he has felt at home anywhere in the world at the liturgy.
- Conversion and Reconciliation – "this is a very important part of our church".
- Services to the Poor - "the church is second only to the government in its service to the poor".
- Persistence on Right To Life issues – He is proud of the church's consistent stand.
- Pronouncements on Social Issues.

He listed the top four challenges (in his opinion) facing the church at this time:

- Sexual Abuse Issues – "While there is a long way to go, the church is becoming a model on addressing these issues".
- Clericalism – He decried the sense of elitism and privilege that is rampant within the clergy.
- Need to be Transparent – This is essential to regaining the trust of the laity.
- Stewardship of the Earth – He cited the example of Fr. Thomas Berry and Fr. Berry's philosophy of: "You destroy the outer world, you destroy the inner world."

The meeting concluded with a wide ranging discussion of both positives and challenges in the Church today.

TOP 10 REASONS TO SUPPORT VOICE OF THE FAITHFUL: (continued from page 1)

4. Push for financial transparency in the church (it's your money).
3. Endow the laity, 99% of the Church, with real decision-making power.
2. Ensure that your children/grandchildren inherit the Church you love.
1. Because you believe in and support the 3 goals of VOTF:

"To support survivors of clergy sexual abuse!

To support priests of integrity!

To work for structural change within the Church!

Letters From Our Readers

Bishop Cote
197 Broadway
Norwich, CT 06360-4488
Dear Bishop Cote,

I am electing to NOT contribute to the ABA and I feel it is only fair to tell you why.

To date, you have been less than truthful about where the money comes from to settle sex abuse cases. You have repeatedly stated that all money for these settlements comes from insurance yet the series of articles published in THE DAY on Mother's Day, indicates that more than ONE MILLION DOLLARS of these payments came from the "insurance reserve fund" which was built and is maintained by assessing parishes. This means that contributions made by the parishioners are, unbeknownst to them, funneled into this fund to make payments above and beyond insurance.

When your conscience leads you to be absolutely honest and financially transparent to the parishioners of this diocese, I will consider contributing to the ABA. Until then, my contributions will go to the Battered Women's Center and the Soup Kitchen.

It's time to stop treating parishioners like children who are incapable of reason. It's time you told us how much money you take in and from what sources. It's time you told us just how much it costs to take in and disburse this money (i.e., administrative costs). It's time you told us how this money is disbursed. It's time you published an audited, quarterly, transparent financial statement. It's time you directed pastors to do the same for their parishes.

It's time to stop acting like a medieval prince and become a more humble servant of the people!

I am not including a return address because I do not expect a reply from you. If you do, for some reason, feel you want to reply, do so in a letter to be read at all masses. A good start would be an audited, truly transparent, financial statement.

A former contributing pay, pray and obey Catholic,
Casey Serra
Norwich CT



Hartford Regional Voice of the Faithful
20 Woodmont
West Hartford, CT 06117
May 24, 2007

Dear Archbishop Mansell,

The recent article in the Hartford Courant re Fr. Foley's move out of state has raised an issue of deep concern. While Fr. Foley is no longer living at St. Thomas Seminary, we are assuming that he is living in an unsupervised environment in another community. If he is in an actively supervised setting we applaud your actions.

According to the article the Archdiocese has notified the bishop of that diocese of Fr. Foley's presence. That is a first step. However, are the families who live in that community aware of Fr. Foley's presence and his history? If your family was living next to Fr. Foley would you feel comfortable? We recognize the challenges in dealing with a person who has not been convicted as a sex offender (in this case protected by the Statute of Limitations). Fr. Foley has at least eleven credible allegations against him, most of which have been settled by the Archdiocese. Therefore, given his history of problems with children, this situation requires a new approach.

As members of the Body of Christ, we want to express our sense of responsibility for dealing with this problem by proposing an approach that will safeguard children and ultimately help Fr. Foley. It is our understanding that the Archdiocese has a financial obligation and oversight responsibility for Fr. Foley as long as he is a priest. For this reason Fr. Foley continues to receive a stipend and health insurance. We propose that this stipend be used to place him in an actively supervised environment. His vow of obedience to you, his bishop, should enable this to be done.

We are all responsible for protecting our children, but in this case only you have the authority to place Fr. Foley where he can do no further harm. If he roams freely he remains a danger to children.

We write to you on behalf of all the members of Voice of the Faithful in the Hartford region.

In peace and hope,
Dave Blume
Bill Carroll
Fay Lenz
Joanne Moran

Doris Bourque
Mary Espinosa
Rick Lenz
Jayne O'Donnell

CONNECTICUT GATHERING OF VOTF FEATURES PROPOSAL TO CHANGE STATE LAWS CREATING PARISH CORPORATIONS

By Joanne Blair

On September 22, VOTF members from throughout Connecticut (and some from neighboring states) will gather at St. Timothy's Church, West Hartford. Keynote speaker Tom Gallagher will present his plan for achieving financial transparency in the Church in a talk entitled "Protecting Citizens-of-Faith by Changing State Laws Creating Parish Corporations."

Gallagher notes that his proposal stems from "a need to change state laws that created the parish corporation in a manner that gives the office of the bishop certain fundamental areas of exclusive control (theology, sacraments, catechetics and priests appointments) while expanding parish corporations to include at least seven lay trustees, who along with the bishop or his representative and the pastor, each have one vote on all administrative powers (strategic plans, budgets, spending, lay personnel policies, finance, audits, social services, etc.). In this way the bishop, pastor and laity become co-responsible for the life of the parish."

Gallagher's thesis opens the door to accountability and lay involvement, a idea put into place briefly by the first American bishop, John Carroll, and one that is long overdue. All are welcome and encouraged to come, listen, and join in the discussion.

SNAP MEMBERS PRESENT 2007 NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON, DC

By Joanne Blair

SNAP gathered a roster of high profile speakers for its annual conference, held this year in Washington, DC, from July 20-22. The group included Walter Robinson, editor of the Pulitzer Prize winning Boston Globe Team whose 2002 series led to nationwide examination of clergy sexual abuse crimes and cover-ups, Barbara Westrick, who recently was fired for calling the police regarding sexual abuse of minors by

Father Dan McCormack and thus exposing Cardinal George, Thomas Roberts, former CNN anchor and survivor who testified before the Maryland Legislature and told his story to the nation on CNN, Tom Doyle, the courageous whistle blower priest and canon lawyer, who warned the American bishops about the enormity of the sexual abuse crisis in the Church back in 1985 and Jeff Dion, a survivor who directs the National Crime Victim Bar Association. The conference also featured a panel of family members of victims of homicide by priests, and a number of workshops

**National VOTF Convention
October 19-20
"Disciples in Action"
Rhode Island Convention Center
Providence, RI**

JAYNE O'DONNELL APPOINTED TO NATIONAL VOTF BOARD OF TRUSTEES

By Joanne Blair

Jayne O'Donnell, founding member of Greater West Hartford VOTF, the original editor of OUR VOICE and currently a member of Greater Hartford Regional VOTF, has been named a member of the National VOTF Board of Trustees. She attended her first meeting on June 4 in Boston.

National VOTF is managed by the Board of Trustees (BOT). The corporate powers of VOTF are vested in BOT, subject to the bylaws of the corporation. The Board is the principal governing body of the corporation, in consultation with the officers and the National Representation Council, and ensures that reasonable actions are taken to accomplish the objectives of the Corporation.

Jayne's dedication and commitment to VOTF have remained strong since its beginning, making her an ideal BOT member. She has been actively involved in speaking to groups about forming affiliates and offering her assistance if so needed. Along with Joanne Moran, she has also discussed VOTF's mission to students in Father Dave O'Brien's class at the College of the Holy Cross on a number of occasions.

OTHER VOICES AROUND THE COUNTRY

By Joanne Blair

VOTF LI NY members continued their focus on supporting survivors with their monthly vigil at St. Agnes Cathedral on July 1 and the distribution of handouts before and after Mass. The pamphlets asked the question, "Are you wondering why Msgr. Alan Placa, who was suspended from the ministry five years ago because of credible allegations of child sexual abuse, is still listed as "priest in residence" in the St Aloysius Parish (Great Neck) bulletin and will live in the parish rectory...especially when he co-owns a penthouse apartment in Manhattan, where he works for a prominent law firm, with Msgr. Brendan Riordan, pastor of St. Aloysius parish?"

In the **Winchester, MA area, WA VOTF** is continuing their weekly meetings right through the summer months and into the fall. Father Mark O'Connell, Assistant to the Moderator of Curia for Canonical Affairs of the Archdiocese of Boston, was guest speaker at the July 23 meeting. On July 30 VOTF members gathered for a viewing of "Deliver Us From Evil" followed by a discussion period. "Find Your Voice - Here Your Voice - Trust Your Voice," a presentation by the Voice of Renewal Working Group, has been scheduled for the meeting on August 20.

VOTF Northern California was the first affiliate to release the news of the VOTF National call for a review of mandatory celibacy for diocesan priests. It was sent to the press and appeared online on their web site of June 25.

An Invitation from VOTF President Mary Pat Fox...

Dear Friends,

I hope you have all marked your calendars and plan to celebrate the 5th anniversary of Voice of the Faithful by attending the VOTF Convention, "Disciples in Action," on October 19-20 in Providence, Rhode Island. We are all called to be disciples through our baptism; this will be a time to learn how our members have responded to that call in the last five years and how we might continue to do so for the next five!

The convention will celebrate the contributions VOTF has made to the Church today, bringing into focus successful action in which our affiliates have engaged across the country. You will hear their success stories and you will return home with road maps as well as inspiration for future actions in your diocese or parish.

Plenary speakers will focus on lay involvement in our Church: how we do it and what more needs to be done. Panels and workshops will cover wide ranging issues including Financial Accountability, Protecting Children Through Legislation, Parish Closings, Dialoging with your Bishop, and a whole host of other topics that can help you back home (additional details of workshops and panels will appear in upcoming issues of The Vineyard and on this Convention-dedicated web site)...

"Disciples in Action" will be a time of sharing, collaborating and celebrating as we move forward in action to rebuild our Church.

I look forward to seeing you in Providence!

Keep the Faith, Change the Church,
Mary Pat

Spread the Word
Invite a friend to the next meeting.

SNAP ASKS FOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE DAY", NORWICH, CT.

By Joanne Blair

SNAP Outreach Director Barbara Dorris sent out the following request on July 6 regarding an article published the previous day in "The Day", Norwich, CT, entitled "Tough Questions Await Victim of Alleged Sex Abuse." The article can be accessed by a link in the email; to receive a copy, email Barbara @gymsoul@hotmail.com

Dear Friends,

I am enclosing an article, please read and write a letter to the editor. In the article the diocesan lawyers are claiming that their tactics are the normal way to mount a defense, we are saying that their tactics are designed to destroy the victim and intimidate other victims into remaining silent. We feel the bishop should rein in the lawyers and try the case on the facts.

Thank you for your help,

Barbara Dorris

A basic look at the facts in the article indicate that Mary Jane Leverone has filed a sexual abuse lawsuit against the Norwich diocese, the late Rev. Thomas Shea and Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Gales Ferry. The claim is that during the years from 1969 to 1971, when she was 10 to 12 years old, Shea (who was accused of molesting at least 16 girls in 11 parishes in the diocese) kissed, massaged and fondled her. It is Leverone's claim that the diocese ignored warnings that Shea was a danger to children and that the abuse has caused serious physical and psychological problems along with difficulties holding a job and maintaining relationships.

The issue in this case is the type of question submitted by the diocesan attorneys and whether they are reasonable or, as one of the defense attorneys suggested, offered "to embarrass, psychologically overwhelm and emotionally deflate the plaintiff."

Some examples of the questions follow:

Identify every person you've had a relationship or friendship with since May 1964, when you were five years old. Provide their names, addresses, the nature and dates of the relationship and why they ended.

Identify every clinic, hospital, doctor, nurse, psychiatrist, alternative practitioner or medical provider who has treated you since the age 5. Provide their names and addresses, the conditions you were treated for, the dates of treatment and diagnoses.

Name each school you attended and when, the subjects you studied and the grades you received. Name each health insurance company that has covered you since you were 5, their addresses, policy numbers and dates of coverage. Name every prescription you've taken since you were 5, who prescribed it, the dates and frequency you took it and for what conditions.

All of these questions are acceptable, although the plaintiff is able to file objections with the judge determining relevancy. In this case a judge has been asked to rule on which questions are proper.

Leverone has charged that Bishop Reilly received numerous psychological and medical reports about Shea when he was bishop. The diocese's response was 1) to ask Leverone to identify the documents that shows it knew about Shea's actions and 2) to refuse to release the 52 documents about Shea to Leverone's attorneys - an interesting turn of events.

Dave Clohessy, National Director of SNAP, pointed out that this type of questioning is not uncommon and has been used throughout the country. He stated that "The bishops express compassion in public and then they sic the most aggressive lawyers on us they can." It is his belief that this type of questioning is focussed on harassing and discouraging victims in the hope of keeping others silent. Clohessy accepts the diocese's right to defend itself, but he notes that "there's a big difference between what is legally permissible and what is morally right".

SPREAD THE WORD

AROUND THE CHURCH - NEWS IN BRIEF

By Joanne Blair

The **First Annual California Lay Convocation** which met June 2 at St. Mary's Cathedral, San Francisco, was a rousing success. More than 300 people, including laity, priests, deacons, sisters, and Archbishop Niedeaue, who arrived at the beginning of the convocation and remained for most of the day, were in attendance. Discussion was open to all topics, including, but not limited to ordaining married men and women, calling back priests who left to marry, lay people as pastors and administrators and the role of the laity in choosing pastors and bishops.

Catholic Auxiliary Bishop Opens Saturday Worship at UCC Synod. In a display of ecumenism at its best, the Most Reverend Peter Rosazza, Auxiliary Bishop of Hartford, gave the homily at the worship service and drew frequent applause. Just as frequently he praised UCC members for being "living examples of Christ's own thirst for justice that moves you to serve others, especially the poor, the immigrant, the homeless. He then described the UCC churches that he saw as living examples and said to the assembled group, "I congratulate you for your focus on the urban context. We say with St. Paul, "I can do all things with Christ who strengthens me."

Barbara Westrick, whistle blower principal of Our Lady of the Westside School, has been fired from her job for blowing the whistle on accused child molester Father Daniel McCormack.

Although some of the accusations date back to 2001, McCormack was neither charged nor removed as pastor until Westrick told police, the archdiocese and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services about allegations made to her in January 2006. She also criticized Cardinal George for letting McCormack stay at the school after he was arrested in August 2005 for molesting a male student. Two more children were molested between September and December 2005, when Father McCormack was finally removed from the parish. Westrick's reaction was "I would do it again. I would do it a hundred times again because these kids are not throwaways."

Cardinal Mahoney asked for and received a trial delay. Although he was ordered to testify in a lawsuit alleging that he failed to protect parishioners from a pedophile teacher, Cardinal Mahoney requested and was granted a two month trial delay. The case involved Paul Kreutzer, a teacher now serving a prison term for molesting students. One victim who was repeatedly sexually abused at a church alleged that church officials knew of Kreutzer's behavior but failed to act. According to the LA Times, "The case was seen as a bellwether: more than 500 claims have been filed against the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, alleging sexual misconduct."

On July 14 the Archdiocese of Los Angeles announced a payment of \$660 million to 508 sexual abuse survivors, thus saving Mahoney from having to testify under oath.

Spread the Word

EMBARRASSING EXTRAVAGANCE OR ENABLED EMBEZZLEMENT

By John Marshall Lee, Chairperson, Bridgeport VOTF

Recently, the Darien Times and Connecticut Post detailed the latest chapter in the saga of Father Michael Jude Fay, former 15-year pastor of St. John parish in Darien. Father Fay left town in 2006 amidst a flurry of news articles detailing mishandled funds, responsible whistleblowers who attempted to attract prompt attention and federal investigation. Subsequently, diocesan auditors revealed a tale of financial mismanagement and secret accounts, resignations and parishioner emotions. Many questions remain unanswered without a response from the diocese. If you are a cradle Catholic, you doubtless are familiar with capital campaigns for a new church, bingos and raffles for parochial schools, collections and benefits for the missions or ministries, and appeals of all kinds including an Annual Archbishop's Appeal. But Father Fay's recent letter appealing for financial help to assist him in settling his legal expenses was entirely new. This was probably the first time in the history of the Diocese of Bridgeport that a priest of the diocese made a legal appeal request. It was designed to be a narrow collection, for the remainder of his personally acknowledged legal expenses. No advice was indicated as to donor tax deductibility.

One year later many Catholics (and probably others) are confused. With so much apparent evidence of financial mismanagement and personal enrichment by Father Fay, why are there as yet no charges filed? The federal criminal investigation is stated as ongoing, but the authorities are unwilling to comment. Some have wondered whether the lack of progress or reporting is because there is no complaining party with standing. Perhaps there will never be charges, a trial or punishment through the legal process.

The thinking is that Father Fay did not take the money from the people of the parish. It was not theirs. For when they dropped their offering in the basket, they lost any say about where it went and on what it was spent. It really became the bishop's money at that moment of giving, because of the operation of the Connecticut statutes and Canon Law.

So, the press reported embezzlement and the diocese referred to extravagance. There is a world of difference between the two viewpoints. Father Fay as an incardinated priest of the Diocese of Bridgeport owed at least obedience and service to his bishop through responsible leadership of his parish community. The bishop owed his brother priest support. Though Father Fay's lifestyle concept exceeded the Bishop's viewpoint by at least 800% over the five years since Bishop Lori came to the diocese, the audit did not probe further into history. Some funds were recovered. But the Diocese of Bridgeport in its recent financial education series in Fairfield County Catholic, the diocesan newspaper, has not made clear what support level in terms of compensation, benefits, housing, retirement, etc. coincides

with a simple priestly life here in Fairfield County as contrasted with one that is extravagant. Would that be helpful for faithful Catholics to understand?

Father Fay wrote from Florida to family and friends that this past year has been complicated and extremely painful. One can believe the truth of this statement, since Father Fay's opportunity for securing income was severely reduced. Does Bishop Lori continue to supply a salary? Or medical benefits? Or offer an early pension because of a disability Father Fay may be suffering? The press mentions none of these. Fairfield County Catholic, which has been prompt in the past to note many financial and administrative changes in the diocese, has provided no information toward this end either. Would a better informed Catholic in the pew be more supportive?

Father Fay goes on to say as proceedings come to a conclusion, I am left with a very difficult legal bill, reportedly of \$115,000. Do you wonder at this amount or why Father Fay retained legal counsel? There have been no charges. Perhaps there have been negotiations with the diocese. Perhaps there have been several hundred hours of representation. If Father Fay has personal legal expenses of \$115,000, do you wonder what the legal, accounting, auditing expenses have been for the diocese on the occasion of the St. John embarrassment?

And that thought leads me to understand that I was wrong in my earlier statement that this was the first clergy legal expense appeal letter. You see the bishop thought his ownership and control of the diocese and each of its 87 parishes, continues with money given by the people in the pews, to fund legal appeals against release of documents including statements by Bishop Egan (and others) relating to scandal of sexual abuse. Several news organizations have petitioned the courts for years now to have the files unsealed.

As church members we have unknowingly paid for this entire story through the years in many ways. We have paid for insurance premiums that funded settlements. Lawyers and spokespersons for the diocese have been compensated with funds from the cathedraticum, a diocesan tax levied on parishes. Surplus assets, donated by generations of the faithful, have been sold. Isn't it time for Bishop Lori to cease this expensive defense and let the records indicating Bishop Egan's activities in managing the sexual abusers among his priests be unsealed? Isn't it time for priests of integrity and Bishop Lori, who was not here when the court records were drawn up and sealed, to be able to raise their heads in the court of community opinion? If the abuse scandal is truly over, Bishop Lori, can't the entire story become public now?