

VOICE OF THE FAITHFUL
IN THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT
August 5, 2004
First Congregational Church on the Green

The meeting opened with a prayer. The meeting was attended by some 40+ people, with newcomers from Wilton, Newtown, and Bridgeport.

Tony Wiggins, the newly elected Chairman, delivered opening comments, emphasizing VOTF's positive focus on structural change and open Church government. Noted were the negativity of some bishops and their concern for the need for more priests. Tony announced the opportunity to view Rev. Thomas Doyle, O.P. on Ch. 77's "Light One Candle" program for the next several weeks. Fr. Doyle's talk, "Clericalism and Catholicism," which he presented in Maine earlier this year, will be shown in segments on Thursdays at 11:30am and on Saturdays at 3:30pm.

Newly-elected Vice Chair, Peg Mooney, introduced the 2004-05 Board members.

The format for 2004-05 meetings will begin with a brief talk by a survivor. A. Maiberger introduced Peggy Fry, a member of S.N.A.P., who had addressed VOTF at the April 2003 Fairfield U. Conference and now felt empowered to speak with us. She also announced the upcoming S.N.A.P. Mid-Atlantic Conference at Norwalk Community College, on Saturday, September 25th, and urged VOTF's support of this conference. The keynote speaker will be Rev. Thomas Doyle, O.P. Families of survivors will speak, as well as legislative advocates from out of state. Information for **On-line Registration and Mail-in Registration** may be found by logging onto www.snapnetwork.org/snap_national_assembly/CONN_registration_form.htm -- also, forms for **Mail-in Registrations** will be available for those without computers at the next meeting, September 2nd..

Financial Report – J. Butler, newly-elected Treasurer reported a balance of \$23,176.34.

Voice of Compassion Fund – currently \$11,079; upon reaching its goal of \$12,500, five charities will receive \$2500 each.

J. O'Callaghan distributed copies of VOTF's statement of "Who We Are" – (revised 4/9/03), which was developed in Boston and maintains a centrist position. He emphasized that we are focusing on administrative issues, not doctrinal issues.

A 20-minute portion of Fr. Thomas Doyle's talk (see Paragraph #2, above) was viewed. Segments will continue to be shown at future meetings. It may also be seen on Ch. 77, as noted above.

Tony announced that Marilyn Kirchner, newly-elected Board member, will be in charge of VOTF's "lending library" of audio and videotapes at General Meetings. New tapes, like Fr. Doyle's (see above), and F. Scott Appleby's "Shall the Laity Be Liberated?" are available as well as tapes of a variety of talks presented at the Tri-State Conference at Fordham in October, 2003.

Advertising Campaign – Bill O'Sullivan reported that he and Bob Mulligan are working on "Who We Are" and will be placing newspaper ads in the area beginning in October. He cited some of the issues which galvanize public opinion, like the closing of parishes to pay debts and the lack of openness and accountability, especially in financial statements which do not itemize large categories like "Administrative Expenses." Noted was the requirement of Canon Law that every parish have a finance council; however, this may not be adhered to in every parish. T. Malarkey expressed his concern for residents in Greenwich who are upset about the Diocese's plans to sell the St. Agnes property; he will work with Bill and Bob on a letter on this. Also, J. Lee, a parishioner from St. James Parish, Stratford, presented a paper he is working on, "Stewardship in a Christian Life," which focuses on his objections to the obligatory Diocesan background checks on all volunteers even those not involved with children. He was referred to the Publicity Committee regarding possible publication.

Next Meeting, September 2nd – Our speaker will be Nancy Dallavalle, Professor of Religious Studies, Fairfield U. The title of her talk is "Catholic and Adult: Parish, Diocese and Public Square."

October 5 – the 4th Annual Anne Drummey O'Callaghan Lecture – at Fairfield U. The Rev. Jeffrey P. vonArx, S.J. will be inaugurated as the eighth president of the University. As one of the inaugural week events, on Tuesday evening, October 5th, at 8:00PM, the speaker will be Sister Joan Chittister, O.S.B. who will speak on "God, Women and the World: Telling the Story Another Way."

BECAUSE OF THE OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR SR. JOAN CHITTISTER ON OCTOBER 5th THERE WILL BE NO GENERAL MEETING IN OCTOBER.

The meeting was adjourned with a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Rose and J. Fogg, Recorders

