

# Our Voice

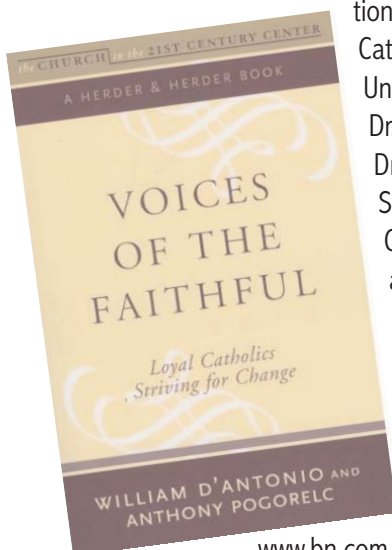
An E-Newsletter for Those Interested and Involved in The Voice of The Faithful • Connecticut  
September/October 2007 Issue Number 20

## “VOICES OF THE FAITHFUL: LOYAL CATHOLICS STRIVING FOR CHANGE” PUBLISHED BY THE CHURCH IN THE 21ST CENTURY AT BOSTON COLLEGE

By Joanne Blair

Noting that "One of the most interesting developments in Catholic life in the past decade has been the formation of Voice of the Faithful," the Church in the 21st Century Center at BC has added this book by William D'Antonio and Anthony Pogorelc to their 21st century book series. The publication was announced on September 13 with the statements: "This remarkable group of devout, active and loyal Catholics has emerged as the most forceful voice for church reform in the wake of the priestly abuse scandal. This new book presents both the hard statistics about the group's membership and frank and appreciative analysis of the group's influence."

The announcement continues with a list of enthusiastic endorsements by Dr. Thomas Groome, Dean Hoge, David O'Brien, Sidney Callahan, Mary Gautier and Kathleen Kennedy Townsend. "Voices of the Faithful" is both a research study of VOTF as a social movement in progress as well as an analysis of its meaning in history. The book includes comments on the results of the study by six noted scholars and theologians as well as by the authors and promises to be an important addition to the history of the Catholic Church in the United States. Authors Dr. William D'Antonio and Dr. Anthony Pogorelc, S.S., both professors at Catholic University, are also the authors of a 2004 VOTF study.



"Voices of the Faithful" 265 pp., list price \$24.95, is available online at [www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com) for \$19.96; [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) has several copies at lower prices as have several other Internet sites.

### 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:

##### Downtown Hartford

Doris Bourque: [dorishbourque@cox.net](mailto:dorishbourque@cox.net)

##### Greater West Hartford

Bill Carroll: [tbc7288@aol.com](mailto:tbc7288@aol.com)

##### Greater Farmington Valley

Dave Blume: [djbmo@aol.com](mailto:djbmo@aol.com)

#### HELPFUL LINKS:

National VOTF: [www.votf.org](http://www.votf.org)

Hartford Regional VOTF: [www.hrvotf.sytes.net](http://www.hrvotf.sytes.net)

Bridgeport VOTF: [www.votfbpt.org](http://www.votfbpt.org)

THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC: [www.taonline.org](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:ejblair@comcast.net)

# VOTF NATIONAL TAKES A STAND AGAINST CARDINAL GEORGE AS NEXT HEAD OF THE USCCB

By Joanne P. Blair

Honoring its #1 goal "to support victims of clergy sexual abuse" VOTF National released a copy of the following letter to each individual bishop in the US, well in advance of their upcoming meeting to choose the USCCB president. The letter was accompanied by a 3 page timeline detailing Father McCormack's actions from 1988 until his arrest for sexual abuse of children in 2006 and ends with a description of the fallout on the whistleblower, school principal Barbara Westrick, whose employment was terminated in June 2007.

Dear Bishop\_\_\_\_\_

Voice of the Faithful is writing to you and your fellow bishops respectfully and regretfully, but strongly urging that you elect, as the next President of the USCCB, someone other than Cardinal Francis George of Chicago. We recognize that it has been the tradition to elect the current vice president to succeed as president and that Cardinal George has had a distinguished career in the Church. However, after prayerful consideration we believe that events over the past couple of years converge to render it neither wise nor prudent to follow that tradition this year.

During this our 5th anniversary year, VOTF has focused on what it means to be led by the Spirit in all actions and Lent was a time set aside to study conscience and our moral responsibility to respond. We have grave reservations about the succession of Cardinal George to lead the USCCB because he has not demonstrated moral leadership in Chicago. Past performance is always a strong indicator of future performance. Cardinal George's failure to protect children in the past makes him an inappropriate choice to lead the USCCB. Now more than ever in the US, Catholics need moral leadership and accountability and we respectfully request that you ask Cardinal George to step aside so that a bishop with a track record of protecting children may be elected.

We are scandalized by the Chicago Archdiocese's lack of moral responsibility. Mismanagement of the McCormack situation would be enough to raise serious concern

among the faithful but this was compounded by the failure to renew the contract of Barbara Westrick, former principal of Our Lady of the Westside, when she reported abuse of one of her students. This indicates that speaking truth to power results in punishing the whistleblower by the very church system that is charged with protecting children. Reasons for our conscience-led decision are delineated on the following pages.

In the wake of the huge settlement in Los Angeles, five current diocesan bankruptcies, and church sex abuse scandals in many places here and abroad, we submit that it is critical at this juncture to elect a bishop beyond reproach. The election of the next president of the USCCB will clearly indicate to the People of God and the public how serious the Catholic Church is about righting the wrongs that have plagued us over the last 5 years.

Our prayer is that you consider our case prayerfully and make a decision of conscience about our future leadership.

Sincerely,  
**Mary Pat Fox**



# CALENDAR

**BE SURE TO JOIN US**

**OCTOBER 19-20**

**National VOTF Convention**

**"Disciples in Action"**

at the

Rhode Island Convention Center

Full details at [www.votf.org](http://www.votf.org)

& (617)588-5252

**Spread  
the  
Word**



## **TWO VIEWS OF FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY...FROM THE USCCB...AND FROM VOTF**

By Joanne Blair

**USCCB**...Earlier this year a memorandum was sent to each bishop in the US regarding "Parish Financial Governance". After describing the problems of parishes throughout the country, the memorandum presents a summary of the recommendations of the Accounting Practices Committee (APC) of the USCCB.

A reading of the summary suggests that there is a slim chance that this document will effect changes in common financial practices in the US. Every single statement begins with "recommend", suggesting that the document itself is unenforceable. The parish reports to the bishop, who "has the duty to ensure that no abuses exist in the administration of church goods within the diocese" Given the track record of the most recent years (85% of the parishes who chose to respond to the Villanova survey reported instances of embezzlement of church money) it is difficult to believe that simple "recommendations" will be observed. As it stands now, the archbishop or bishop is the sole head of each diocese and the USCCB has no control over individuals.

All in all, the memorandum presented by this well-meaning committee does not seem to have a prayer of effecting meaningful financial accountability.

**VOTF Bridgeport**...Attorney Thomas Gallagher presented his plan for handling church finances at the September meeting. Commenting on the recent drop in Church attendance by Connecticut Catholics from 70 to 30%, he suggested that it might be reversed if the laity had more involvement in the operation of their church. "The Attorney General of CT needs to get involved in making sure that Roman Catholic parishes handle their finances correctly...This has nothing to do with theology but very much to do with the proper handling of moneys under the Religious Corporation Act."

continued on page 5

# Letters From Our Readers

## "AMERICAN" Priests

Well, it's happened again! It seems the goal of American seminarians is to get themselves ordained and then get sent to Europe for "further study" or some other such nonsense. Father Kevin Randall, a recently ordained priest in the diocese of Norwich is now serving as part of the Vatican "diplomatic corps" in Slovenia, of all places. I keep hearing about a shortage of priests in the United States. If this is so, why are newly ordained priests sent to Europe while foreign-born priests (with appropriate "green cards", I assume) fill the pulpits in this country? I am certainly not trying to cast doubt on the sincerity of foreign-born priests but wouldn't it be better if they stayed in their own countries and worked with and for those whose culture and language they share? And wouldn't it be better for American priests to stay in this country and work with and for the people whose donations to the seminaries paid for their education as priests?

How many American priests are "studying" in Europe? It seems to me that we need a few less Canon Lawyers and a few more parish priests. I think it is more important to have a priest serve in a parish than to send him to Europe to become an expert in the stained glass of Belgian cathedrals.

There's a lot of questions in that paragraph but, unfortunately, very few answers. I think the answers could start with the bishops. If a bishop is experiencing a shortage of priests such that he must rely on, for lack of a better phrase, "foreign imports", why doesn't he protest the export of recently ordained priests to Slovenia? If you have a shortage of anything, you certainly don't give away what you have — unless you're an American bishop. They appear to be ready to give away anybody — for what, I wonder, a gold star from the Pope? I find it inconceivable that the bishop of Norwich gives up a young priest, without a murmur, for another import from India or Mexico or Poland.

And speaking of Poland, Father Les (one of the better imports from Poland) was recently transferred from St. Agnes in Niantic to a mostly Spanish-speaking parish in Willimantic. Now just how much sense does that make? Surely, there has to be a Spanish-speaking priest in this area for this parish. The bishop, however, sends Father

Les. This parish in Willimantic will now have a pastor who speaks Spanish with a Polish accent! Is this a great country, or what?

My plea to the American Bishops is simply this: KEEP AMERICAN PRIESTS IN THIS COUNTRY! If the Pope needs priests, he should get them from India or Mexico or Poland. They apparently have a surplus in those countries.

**Casey Serra, Norwich Diocese**

## FINANCIAL REFLECTIONS FOR ADULT AMERICAN CATHOLICS

Many faithful adult Catholics sense that our bishops see us in the same adolescent state that we were in when Confirmation included a slap on the cheek as the bishop commissioned us as "soldiers of Christ". In the 24/7 world where we live and accept the responsibilities of family, friendship and community, we are viewed as adults. In our Church we are still regarded as adolescents at best.

So, keeping in mind Christian responsibilities and tithing in particular, might it be reasonable to tender to the Church 10% of what an American teenage allowance might be today? For instance, ten dollars per week at 10% means one dollar in the offertory basket for the teenager or \$1 per week for the "hidden adult", until the Church hierarchy recognizes that faith is 24/7 and that the vocation of the faithful to ministry in the community is a commitment to be fully realized.

Until that day, perhaps tithing for adult Catholics would include alternative contribution to Christian ministry that:

*\* serves the poorest and neediest in justice wherever we may see and hear them,*

*\* is provided by organizations that are efficient, open, accountable and transparent to donors,*

*\* is supplemented by giving our time and talent through actual presence and participation, even if these steps lead us to diminish our formal Church contributions at this moment?*

Will you consider the Voice of Compassion Fund of the Voice of the Faithful in the Diocese of Bridgeport for expressing your adult commitment?

**John Marshall Lee**

**Chair, VOTF in the Diocese of Bridgeport**

# **VOTF NATIONAL CONVENTION OCTOBER 19-20 FEATURES "DISCIPLES IN ACTION" AS THEME**

Press Release from VOTF NATIONAL

Theologian Fr. Richard McBrien, lay activist Edwina Gateley and Judge Michael Merz, Chair of the National Review Board of the USCCB, will be among the featured speakers at the VOTF National Convention scheduled for October 19-20 at the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence RI.

McBrien, one of the country's best known Catholic theologians, is past president of the Catholic Theological Society of America and winner of its John Courtney Murray Award "for outstanding and distinguished achievement in theology." He has written a syndicated weekly theology column for the Catholic press since 1966, and is a frequent on-air network commentator for Church-related events. McBrien's keynote address "VOTF and the Church: Where do we go from here?" will open the two-day convention.

Edwina Gateley will address the convention's theme "Voice of the Faithful - Disciples in Action." Gateley has dedicated her life to following the call of God. In the 1960's she founded the Volunteer Missionary Movement for lay people. Her ministry has taken her all over the world. She worked in Africa and her current work is in the Chicago area where she founded Sophie's Circle, which befriends and ministers to prostitutes and street people. Edwina's work has been publicly commended many times. She has been praised by the Governor of the State of Illinois, the Mayor of Chicago, the late Cardinal Joseph Bernadin and former U.S. President Bill Clinton. Edwina is also an author who writes about prayer and spirituality.

Merz, a trial judge in Ohio, was named Chair of the National Review Board in June. The National Review Board was established by the USCCB in 2002 when the bishops adopted their "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People." The Board's purpose is to collaborate with the USCCB to prevent sexual abuse of minors by persons in the service of the Church in the United States.

*continued on next column*

**TWO VIEWS OF FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY** continued from page 3

He went on to note that the "problem is that the finances of the Catholic Church in this state and elsewhere are run by Roman and not American law. One person, the pastor or the bishop, is given sole authority to make all decisions. This is a Roman concept, not an American one." He added that the CT law has not been reviewed since 1969 and stated "The Connecticut General Assembly needs to revisit the Religious Corporation Act in this state with an eye toward improving the law and governance structures." It was Gallagher's sense that these changes would give parishioners a real say in the governance of their own communities and make bishop, pastor and parishioners mutually responsible for the parishes. It also might just bring about REAL financial accountability!

**To All Connecticut VOTF  
Members!**

**If there is a change in your contact  
information, Please notify us.**

**GWH: [rmoconnell@comcast.net](mailto:rmoconnell@comcast.net)**

**Norwich: [carbnotlaw@aol.com](mailto:carbnotlaw@aol.com)**

**Bridgeport: [peopleins@aol.com](mailto:peopleins@aol.com)**

**VOTF NATIONAL CONVENTION** continued from left column

Other speakers of note include theologians Paul Lakeland, Leonard Swidler, Gaile Pohlhaus, Mary Doyle Roach, Francine Cardman, Gerald Fogarty, S. J., and William Clark, S.J., as well as church sociologists William D'Antonio and Fr. Anthony Pogorelc and historian Dr. Joseph Callaghan.

Among the topics to be discussed in the nearly thirty workshops and panel discussions are "Discipleship and its revival at Vatican II", "Called to be Church: A model for participatory pastoral planning", "Who says its time to blow out the candles", a panel on parish closings and "Googling God", a workshop on making the Church relevant to the 20-something generation.

The convention will also feature dozens of booths and information tables and an extensive Catholic bookstore. More info at [www.votg.org](http://www.votg.org) & 617-588-5252.



## OTHER VOICES AROUND THE COUNTRY

By Joanne Blair

Phyllis Zagano Ph.D., author of ten books, will discuss "Women in Ministry" at the November 1 meeting of **VOTF of the Diocese of Bridgeport**. Zagano, who is Senior Research Associate-In-Residence at Hofstra University, has also taught at Fordham, Boston and Yale Universities.

**Coastal Delmarva VOTF** members gathered at Ocean View town hall, DE. on September 26 to hear Philadelphia Asst. District Attorney Charles Gallagher report on the Grand Jury findings from the investigation into clergy sexual abuse in Philadelphia. He also focused on the follow-up recommendation to ensure institutional accountability and prevent what he calls "the continuing cover-up".

Kathleen Rice, Nassau District Attorney, spoke on "The Criminality of Sexual Abuse" at the September 13 regional meeting of **LI-VOTF (NY)**. Placing high priority on crimes against the vulnerable, she stressed her interest in keeping open the lines of communication with VOTF. Rice also emphasized that her office will speak with any victim/survivor of sexual abuse, regardless of an expired statute of limitations. Also present to respond to questions was Madeline Singas, Chief of Special Victims Bureau.

Members of **VOTF Northern NJ** met at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Morristown on October 3 to hear Dr. Christopher Bellitto discuss "Where Do We Go From Here? Reforming a Challenged Church?" The talk ended with an exploration of how the institutional and grassroots Church can move forward in a constructive and Christian way.

"Spirituality of Protest" was the topic of discussion chosen by Father Kenneth Lasch at the October 4 meeting of **VOTF Union County NJ**. at First Methodist Church, Westfield, NJ. Father Lasch, who retired 3 years ago, continues "to pastor in a church without walls and a parish without boundaries but well within the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church."

**WAVOTF (Winchester area, MA)** members gathered on October 1 to watch the third installment of a video entitled "Vatican II" followed by a discussion moderated by Rob Dubois, VOTF Trustee. On October 29, the group will host Sister Mary Johnson, Sociology Professor at Emmanuel College, as their guest speaker.

# Spread the Word

Invite a friend to the next meeting.

## "CATHOLICISM AT THE CROSSWORDS: HOW THE LAITY CAN SAVE THE CHURCH"

By Paul Lakeland, 2007, Continuum, 164 pp. \$19.95

Reviewed By Tom Malone

Dedicated to "the wonderful people of Voice of the Faithful, Future Church, and Call to Action in recognition of their boundless love and concern for our church" this book is written "for adult Catholics who want an adult church that can sustain their adult faith" by Paul Lakeland who holds the Aloysius P. Kelly Chair in Catholic Studies at Fairfield University. His previous book, "The Liberation of the Laity: In Search of an Accountable Church", won first place for theology in the Catholic Press Association's 2005 Awards. Taken together, these two books represent the views of an informed and dedicated member of the laity, complementing the bold – and, in part, controversial – plea for changes in our church recently set forth by a member of the hierarchy, Australian Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, in "Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church".

Lakeland begins his book with these words: "We American Catholics live in a church that isn't working very well, and it is up to us to do something about it." His response is a two-pronged call for "an open church in an open society." This prescription recognizes that profound changes are needed in our church where openness is threatened by:

- the exclusion of the overwhelming majority of the People of God from any role of leadership or in the formation of teaching,
- continued discrimination against women,
- the failure of episcopal leadership to deal effectively with the scandal of sexual abuse by a few pathological priests, and
- the reluctance of the church hierarchy to "receive" the message of Vatican II that "as baptized members of the community, we have a right and responsibility to defend the good of the church, truly to 'own' the church and to speak out forcefully if necessary when we feel that the church is in error or in danger" and equally profound changes are needed in American society where the threat to openness exists in:

- \* the role of money in the political process,
- \* use of corporate political lobbying,
- \* unholy wars justified by lies and misinformation,
- \* cavalier disregard for human rights and the rule of law, and
- \* clandestine affronts to our personal liberties without judicial or congressional oversight.

These threats face a church confronting a crisis in vocations to the priesthood and religious life, the closing of parishes and parochial schools, and a younger generation with no deep-seated loyalty to church practices and traditions. Existing strengths, however, are found in the "generosity and expertise of the 40,000 or so 'lay ecclesial ministers' ... involved in full- or in part-time, often paid positions in the church" and in the burgeoning ranks of the laity in Voice of the Faithful, Future Church, and Call to Action.

In essence, Lakeland argues that "the church is constituted as a community with a mission" and the mission of the church to the world "is principally the responsibility of the laity, not only because they vastly outnumber the ranks of the clergy but also because this is what it is to be a lay person, ...". He lists ten steps toward a more adult church, including:

- \* renewed attention to the sacrament of baptism as the basis for the understanding of all ministry in the church,
- \* real and significant lay participation in the processes by which pastors and bishops are selected,
- \* move the lay/clerical relationship from one of child/parent to one of equality,
- \* the laity and the clergy need to become better educated in the history of the church tradition – including the many centuries when a lot of the clergy were married,
- \* the life of the church will not be fully renewed until women achieve their rightful positions as fully equal partners with men, and
- \* the whole church needs to make an option for the poor and the marginalized.

On the final page of this book, Lakeland summarizes: "Christians can make the greatest contribution to American culture and an impact on world culture by drawing on our spiritual resources to model lives of self-discipline that demonstrate the purity of our intentions. ... That could be our greatest gift to our self-indulgent culture, bent on short-term satisfaction to hide its own sense of emptiness and perhaps its fear of the future and of the unknown." An unspoken by product of this gift would likely be to address the obstacles to openness in American society enumerated above.

## AROUND THE CHURCH -NEWS IN BRIEF

By Joanne Blair

**Delaware** has eliminated the civil statute of limitations in cases of child sexual abuse and opened a two-year "window" during which victims whose cases have been previously barred by the state's two-year limit can file suit. Just before signing the bill into law Governor Ruth Ann Minner stated "Sexual predators who victimize children are going to learn that Delaware will not stand for it." Rev. Tom Doyle, who has investigated and exposed clergy sexual abuse for the past 24 years, noted "This is the best legislation in the country. We've had so much opposition from institutions such as the Catholic Church and this shows that children are more important." Officials of the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington had no comment on the signing.

The **Diocese of Norwich** has announced that new accounting controls are in place to prevent future embezzlements but refuses to say what constitutes the changes.

The "changes" came about after authorities charged a former St. Bernard School employee of embezzling nearly \$850,000. Since then officials have largely rebuffed efforts to learn more about the school's financial controls and why it took nearly four years to catch on to the scheme (Info from The Day, CT, newspaper)

**"Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church: Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus"** is the title of a just released book by retired Australian Auxiliary Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, the canonist who was selected to handle the sexual abuse crisis in Australia. Ultimately Robinson, deeply disillusioned over the response by pope and church to the crisis, resigned as bishop and wrote his book on the state of the church today, how it changed through the centuries and what it could/should become.

Noting that papal power has gone too far, Robinson writes, "and there are quite inadequate limits on its exercise. The authority of the college of bishops has been marginalized and the faith of the whole church has been rendered powerless." One reviewer calls this well-documented and scholarly book "a devastating review of the Catholic Church" and others use the term "seismic" and "explosive" to describe its expected impact. (At the time of this writing it is not yet available in the US but can be ordered from Australia.)

## CIVIL LAW AS THE WAY TO ESTABLISH PARISH GOVERNANCE BY THE LAITY

By Joanne P. Blair

"VOTF: Agent for Change" was the theme of the 2007 Connecticut Gathering of VOTF members from throughout the state at St. Timothy's Church, West Hartford, on September 23. In this case, "change" related directly to the performance of the hierarchy in the sex abuse crisis and the recent exposure of widespread financial embezzlement and theft.

Keynote speaker Tom Gallagher presented a plan to move the Connecticut legislature to reform the state's Religious Corporation Act, a law that goes back to Thomas Hooker in the 17th century and was last revised in 1969. He called the Catholic Practice Governance Law section of the act "broken and in need of an overhaul," specifically pointing to the fact that it is based on Canon Law, not Civil Law, thus investing total power in the pastor and the bishop. Although non-profit secular charities have to adhere to a standard policy, priests and bishops do not. Further noting that this total investment of power in one person is at the base of the financial scandals in the Church, he pointed out that if any other non-profit had financial problems such as those brought about by the mishandling of the sex abuse crisis and embezzlement and theft, its leader would be immediately discharged.

Gallagher's interest in financial accountability in the Church led him to some serious research on the Religious Corporation Act at the State Capitol. His work resulted in a 13-page position paper with facts, figures and a well-presented plan for its revision. Basically, Gallagher would change the state laws that give all the control to the bishop to one that would give the bishop certain fundamental areas of exclusive control (theology, sacraments, catethetics and priest appointments) while expanding parish corporation boards. According to his model, the bishop (or his agent), the pastor and seven lay trustees (elected by the laity) would each have one vote on all administrative powers (strategic plans, budgets, spending, lay personnel policies, finance, audits, social services, etc.) In Gallagher's words "In this way, the bishop, pastor and laity become co-responsible for the life of the parish." He noted that, although giving actual power to the laity is not

currently done in the US, it has been tried before. In 1820, Bishop John England gave the laity the right to vote and set up lay trustee boards which actually had power.

A change in governance would benefit the entire Church: "Citizens of goodwill and state legislators should seek well-run Catholic parish corporations because the church is the largest provider of health, education and social services outside the government. Parishes serve as anchors to their communities. We the faithful --bishops, priests, deacons and laity -- need to step forward and craft changes that produce a governing structure that allows for the best of our vocations to the priesthood and the diaconate and to the married and single life to blossom in an environment of mutual respect and understanding."

Gallagher's plan for change has been featured in both the lay Catholic and secular press. It is his sense that VOTF can become the vanguard in effecting change, with the help of other religious and community organizations. Questions and comments from the audience came fast and furiously, suggesting that many were interested in, and quite a few ready to support, such a change in the Religious Corporation Act even though they were well aware that it would be a demanding undertaking.

Gallagher is a graduate of Catholic University Law School and a former Wall Street Securities lawyer who is currently an investment management professional and also runs a start-up company. He is a Papal Knight in the American Association of Malta and a Knight Commander in the Order of the Holy Sepulcher and the Knights of Columbus, eucharistic minister at Greenwich Hospital, and the creator of the Mother Teresa of Calcutta Center on behalf of the Missionaries of Charity and the Office of Postulation of the Cause of the Sainthood of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta.

Following reports on VOTF activities in the three Connecticut Dioceses, there was a lively Open Forum for all present, leaving the attendees with much to consider. The conference ended with a Vigil Mass and a Wine and Cheese Social.



# *National VOTF Convention*

## October 19-20 "Disciples in Action"

### Rhode Island Convention Center Providence, RI