



## **TRUTH, SLANDER AND FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC**

In an editorial captioned "Salt" in its edition of February 10<sup>th</sup>, *Fairfield County Catholic* (FCC), the official newspaper of the Diocese of Bridgeport, boldly proclaimed, **"Everything you read in this newspaper is true."** The editorial then went on to conflate the content of its news pages and editorial pages, and to attack the secular press and Voice of the Faithful. **"The Op-Ed pages [of the secular press] are also the favorite haunt of dissident groups like Voice of the Faithful, who jump on any contrarian bandwagon to gain publicity. They offer nothing constructive or even accurate, only vitriol. . . . Freedom of the press should not mean freedom to spread untruths or to slander."**

### **Given those Statements, VOTF asks: Will Joseph McAleer, editor of FCC, and Bishop William E. Lori answer these Questions?**

1. Does FCC choose not to print the truth when it is inconvenient or damaging to the reputation of the bishop, the Diocese, or the Catholic Church?
2. Does FCC publish a story such as "How is the Diocese funded?" (FCC, Feb.10, 2007) only when pressured by reports of financial mismanagement in parishes in Darien and Greenwich?
3. Does FCC believe that the bishop's years' long effort, at untold expense, to block the publication of documents the Diocese filed in Connecticut Superior Court relating to priestly sexual abuse and episcopal cover-up can be reconciled with his dedication to the "truth"?
4. Does FCC believe that the healthy, spirited discussion it claims to favor justifies the repeated refusal of Bishop Lori to engage in dialogue with VOTF? Does he fear the "truth" spoken by these faithful Catholics?
5. Does FCC believe that Bishop Lori, who is among a distinct minority of a dozen or so U.S. bishops (out of almost 200) to ban VOTF from meeting on church property, can reconcile his action with the truth that Archbishops Henry Mansell of Hartford and Wilton Gregory of Atlanta (the immediate past president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops), among many others, permit VOTF affiliates in their dioceses to meet on church property?
6. Does FCC believe that its rejection of an ad for a lecture by Rev. Richard P. McBrien, the distinguished theology professor from the University of Notre Dame, because the Chair of Catholic Studies at Fairfield University and VOTF jointly sponsored it, comports with the diocese's mission to evangelize the Catholic faithful? Is this not a suppression of the "truth"?
7. Does FCC believe VOTF members have the right declared by the Second Vatican Council (Lumen Gentium 37) to make their opinions known to their bishop?
8. Does FCC know that Canon 220 and *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2475-2479) prohibit anyone from harming the reputation of another?
9. Does FCC acknowledge that its attack on VOTF, whose members are faithful and courageous Catholics of long-standing service to the Church, is slanderous?
10. Does Bishop Lori condone this campaign of slander against VOTF?

The local VOTF affiliate meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:30 PM at the First Congregational Church on the Green in Norwalk. VOTF's goals are to support survivors of sexual abuse by priests; to support priests of integrity; and to shape structural change in the Church in accordance with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. We invite you to visit our website: [www.votfbpt.org](http://www.votfbpt.org). Mail can be sent to P.O. Box 5044, Westport, CT 06881 or [contact@votfbpt.org](mailto:contact@votfbpt.org).