



Voice of the Faithful™

"Keep the Faith, Change the Church"™

March 16, 2005

PRESS RELEASE APRIL 7 EVENT

DISTINGUISHED THEOLOGIAN ANTHONY PADOVANO TO SPEAK ABOUT HOPE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Anthony Padovano, Distinguished Professor of Literature and Philosophy at Ramapo College in New Jersey, will address Voice of the Faithful in the Diocese of Bridgeport at its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, April 7, at 7:30 p.m. at the First Congregational Church on the Green in Norwalk. Everyone is invited to attend.

Professor Padovano received his doctorate in sacred theology from the Gregorian University in Rome and a doctorate in philosophy from Fordham University. He has lectured world-wide and has been a visiting professor at many American universities and colleges. In addition to three award-winning plays, he is the author of twenty-eight books including *Reform and Renewal: Essays on Authority, Ministry, and Social Justice* (1990), *The Church Today: Believing and Belonging* (1990) and *Resistance and Renewal* (2002). Further background information is available at www.apadovano.com.

Acknowledging that the scandal of priestly sexual abuse and the attendant cover-up by the bishops has disheartened and dismayed Catholics, Professor Padovano will speak about hope in the Catholic Church. Hope, one of the cardinal virtues, is a mainstay of the Catholic people in times of crisis, disorder, and confusion.

In that spirit of hope Voice of the Faithful in the Diocese of Bridgeport developed five proposals for structural change in the Church: (1) the election of bishops by the clergy and people of the diocese; (2) the right of parishioners to participate with the bishop in the selection of their pastors; (3) the establishment of elected, representative diocesan pastoral and finance councils with real authority; (4) the establishment of elected, representative parish pastoral and finance councils with real authority; and (5) the right of the faithful as members of a parish corporation consisting of their elected representatives, the bishop, and the pastor, to own church property. The full text of the proposals can be consulted at votfbpt.org/proposal.html.

The stated mission of Voice of the Faithful, an organization of mainstream Catholics, is to be "a prayerful voice, attentive to the Spirit, through which the faithful can actively participate in the governance and guidance of the Catholic Church." These proposals are intended to stimulate conversation concerning the role of the laity in the governance of the Church. A reasoned dialogue among bishop, priests, nuns, and laymen and women will contribute to the renewal of the Church.

VOTF is seeking contributions to its 2005 Voice of Compassion Fund for direct support of diocesan charities at its new address: VOTF, PMB #171, 1127 High Ridge Road, Stamford, CT 06905-1203 For further information about VOTF in the Diocese of Bridgeport, the Voice of Compassion Fund and for directions to the First Congregational Church on the Green in Norwalk consult www.votfbpt.org, or call Jim Alvord at 203-847-4145.