

Our Voice

An E-Newsletter for Those Interested and Involved in The Voice of The Faithful • Connecticut
May 2007 Issue Number 18

JAYNE O'DONNELL AND RICK LENZ MEET WITH ARCHBISHOP MANSELL

[On March 16, 2007, Jayne O'Donnell (Greater West Hartford VOTF) and Rick Lenz (Farmington Valley VOTF) met with Archbishop Mansell, on behalf of all the VOTF members in our region. Below, they recount that visit].

The Archbishop seemed tense on the morning that we met, unlike the three previous visits we had. He later told us he had met with reporters from the Hartford Courant and had complained that the only coverage that they give to the Church is negative. In retrospect, we think that meeting may have been over the Foley matter and may have contributed to the difference in the Archbishop's mood.

In response to a question as to how things were going, the Archbishop brought us up to date on some of his activities with regard to homeless etc. Rick mentioned his own surprise (after reviewing his files for this meeting) at how many times we had written him since last year's meeting (7 X) and joked that we wouldn't mind if he wrote back. The Archbishop commented, in all seriousness, that he couldn't believe that we had written him within 6 days of last year's 2 hour meeting and repeated many of the same points we had talked about. He further stated that because of that, he considered it the least productive meeting he had engaged in all year. He added that today was not going to be a 2 hour meeting. Rick responded that points in the letter were mostly additional information that we didn't have at the time of the meeting—e.g., some information on the way in which other dioceses have structured their diocesan pastoral councils. He informed us that he had given workshops on that topic; we took that to mean that he didn't need any further help. We also had not gotten definitive answers to many of our inquiries in the last meeting, and were underscoring their continued importance to VOTF.

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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.

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THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC: www.taconline.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

JAYNE O'DONNELL AND RICK LENZ MEET
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Rick mentioned we wanted to talk a little about financial transparency. The Archbishop said "very little", indicating that we had already covered that topic in previous meetings. He also indicated he was not happy to hear from his staff that Rick alluded to pending abuse claims in his radio interview on WTIC with Ray and Diane. Rick clarified that the reference had been a very general one—i.e., not specifically linked to the archdiocese. The clarification didn't seem to matter. Jayne respectfully pointed out that the bishops had brought this situation upon themselves, by not heeding warning signs as early as '85. In response to a specific question, the Archbishop confirmed that there would be no transparency in the immediate future. He emphasized again that the Diocesan Review Board and Finance Council had signed off on non disclosure of finances. Rick responded that we didn't even know who the finance council members were. The Archbishop stated that he wasn't going to force those people to disclose their affiliation with the Diocesan Finance Council and that they were "doing good work". Rick mentioned that would be like the members of St. Mary's Finance Council (of which he is chair) being totally anonymous. The Archbishop said that is a different situation at the parish level, but didn't elaborate.

We next broached the topic of parish reconfiguration. Archbishop Mansell said that different parishes are at different stages—e.g., W. Hartford & Farmington Valley not "in crisis". He further said that he doesn't want to create panic about this issue. When we raised the health problems of the Farmington Valley priests, the Archbishop played the situation down. He would not discuss whether there would be replacement priests to put in any of those parishes, if the need arose. When asked about lay involvement in this important process, the Archbishop stated that the parish reconfiguration committee does get lay input and people in the affected parishes are asked to respond. He further said that he feels strongly about not closing and abandoning parishes.

For the fourth year in a row, we inquired about the progress in creating a Diocesan Pastoral Council. We were told that it's still on the agenda, but were given no sense of when something might happen.

Rick and I were very disappointed by the apparent lack of progress on the issues that we had brought to the

Archbishops' attention since our first encounter. We seem to have reached an impasse on the things that are most important to VOTF: financial transparency; the creation of a Diocesan Pastoral Council and meaningful lay input into parish reconfiguration.

[We encourage all members to attend affiliate meetings and be a part of planning our next course of action, in the face of this apparent lack of urgency on the part of the Archbishop].

BRIDGEPORT VOTF CONFERENCE
FOCUSES ON FINANCIAL
ACCOUNTABILITY (OR LACK
THEREOF)

By Joanne Blair

Over 100 people gathered at the Fairfield University's Barone Center on April 28 to examine fully all the ramifications of the current lack of accountability in their Church as well as to brainstorm methods of change.

Mary Pat Fox, VOTF National President, keynoted the meeting by first reminding the group that the Villanova Report on embezzlement in parishes indicated that 85% of parishes that responded experienced some level of embezzlement. Emphasizing OUR ROLE IN FINANCIAL STABILITY, she stated "It is critical that we realize that it's up to the laity to fix this; we need to own it and take action" and then proceeded to reveal her very practical four-pronged plan. It included participation in the collection process, the use of only checks in contributions, the encouragement of skilled people to serve on the finance council, and regular audits. Reminding the group that both clergy and laity have embezzled church funds, she described the process already in use in some parishes and dioceses. Money from both the collection basket and poor box is placed in numbered bags with a tamperproof plastic seal and the teams of people who collect the money vary from week to week. One person writes the parish checks and another reconciles the checkbook. This plan, which greatly reduces the probability of theft, requires significant lay commitment on an ongoing basis.

If there are no full disclosure audits in the parish, Fox suggested that collections should be withheld until continued on page 3

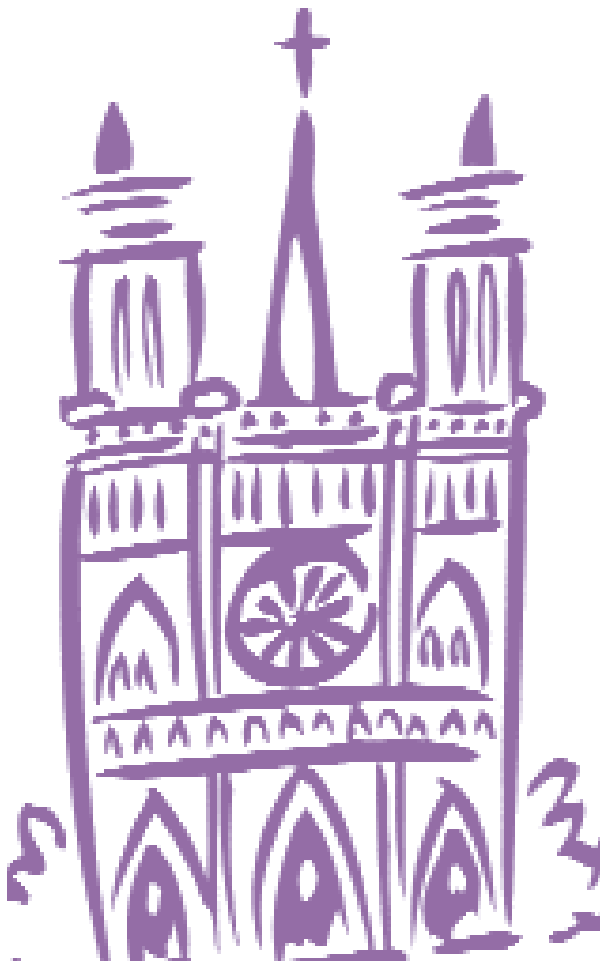
CALENDAR

SAVE THE DATES

OCTOBER 19-21, 2007

VOTF NATIONAL CONVENTION

**Rhode Island Convention Center
Providence, RI
(More information to follow)**



BRIDGEPORT VOTF CONFERENCE' continued from page 2

the culture of secrecy is broken;" if the diocese does not have such audits, she recommended that the laity refrain from contributing until it does. In the interim, contributions could be sent directly to the charities, with a note to their bishop/archbishop of this plan.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND MISMANAGEMENT IN THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT was tackled by Joseph O'Callaghan, professor emeritus of Medieval History at Fordham University, former director of the Center for Medieval Studies there and former adjunct professor of Church History at seminaries in New York and Connecticut. He began by briefly discussing the scandals at St. John's Parish in Darien, where a sum of about \$1,470,000 was taken and at St. Michael's in Greenwich where \$529,000 is missing. He noted that financial mismanagement also occurred under Archbishop Egan when Father Pilla took \$178,000 in money and furniture from an off the books account. The real victim in the Darien case was not the priest who embezzled but the one who was the whistleblower. When the diocese seemed to be moving slowly, Father Madden and the secretary of St. John's used their own funds to hire a private detective. Disillusioned at the reaction of the Diocese, Madden left both St. John's and the priesthood.

Along with the other speakers, O'Callaghan noted that the bishop has complete control over all finances and property. Thus, the only way for the people in the pews to react is by withholding money or convincing the diocese that a better route would be to transfer the responsibility of finances to lay people who would elect parish and diocesan finance council members. The councils would adhere to the "no taxation without representation" plan which would require the consent of the whole body of the faithful. Another route, perhaps more fruitful, might be to join Thomas Gallagher in his effort to change the State Religious Contribution Corporation Act.

O'Callaghan then reminded the audience that things had been different in the early Church by quoting Cyprian, a third century bishop: "From the beginning of my episcopate I determined to do nothing on my

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BRIDGEPORT VOTF CONFERENCE'

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own private judgment without your counsel and the counsel of the people".

THE EDIFICE COMPLEX: FROM STABLE TO CATHEDRAL was the clever but right on target topic of the presentation by Daniel Sullivan, a Corporate and Securities Attorney. He traced the history of the Church in the Bridgeport area from the first Mass in 1830 and the building of simple structures for worship, reminiscent of those of the Congregational Church, to its beginning as the Diocese of Bridgeport in 1953 and then to the current day. Sullivan noted the large numbers of properties and land, from churches, schools and cemeteries to property that is simply leased for commercial use, that is currently owned by the Church. Property on the tax rolls today comes to just under a billion dollars. Sullivan noted that it was difficult to find these properties, giving the example of the three health care facilities that the diocese recently sold while maintaining control of the land for 99 years..

Once again the laity has absolutely no say in buying, selling, and spending in general. For example, the diocese has spent a large amount of money through the years in its attempt to fight the release of information on sexual abuse cases and lately joined the fight against extending the Statute of Limitations in Connecticut. Diocesan spokesperson Nancy Matthews made the statement that if the Statute of Limitations were lengthened, the Church could not find money for the poor (a startling comment in view of the fact that there is money for the \$4.5 million renovation of St. Augustine and the diocese receives a large sum of money from the government).

Sullivan ended by posing this question to the audience "Do we want to spend our money on infrastructure or on the poor and needy?" leaving the group with something to ponder.

Under the aegis of John Marshal Lee, Bridgeport VOTF presented a conference that was extremely timely, well thought out and grounded in over 160 hours of serious research. He closed the meeting with an overview of the topics and a few lighthearted comments on the facts, i.e. "when the pastor took the money the bishop called it extravagance but the people called it embezzlement."

Not quite so lightly, he mentioned the \$12,500 collected on a Mission Sunday with only \$2500 going to the missionary. He also noted the sale of three health centers run by the Carmelites while their request to continue running one of them was denied. Lee ended with a reminder of the Rev. Richard McBrien's statement at the 2006 conference about whether he was optimistic or pessimistic. McBrien responded "Optimism and pessimism are feelings; I am eternally hopeful." So may we all be hopeful!

HARTFORD COURANT BRINGS FOLEY SCAM TO LIGHT

By Joanne Blair

Once again it was the secular press that broke open a long tale of abuse with few consequences for the abuser. The Rev. Stephen Foley was removed from his Glastonbury parish in 1993 when the diocese received an abuse claim against him; he was ordered not to wear the Roman collar when the diocese was sued in 2003. Since then he has received free room and board, health insurance and a monthly stipend while living at the Hartford Seminary. Detectives who investigated the allegations that Foley used his fancy car to lure teenage boys and then abuse them dropped the case when they realized that the Statute of Limitations had passed. It also turns out that much of the police work on him had been destroyed after a 10-year period.

Altogether there have been 11 sexual abuse complaints against Foley since the early 1990s. Recently the Archdiocese agreed to pay \$550,000 to the man who had accused Foley of using his position as Fire Chaplain to sodomize him when he was 14 years old.

Ironically, it was a slick car deal that brought Foley into the public limelight. He purchased a car through a New Hampshire car dealer (the same type he used to lure his victims) under the guise of the New England Association of Fire Chiefs and then transferred it to himself. Two years later he traded it in for a Crown Victoria in a deal offered only to law enforcement officials.

At this time no one seems to know exactly where Foley is.



FOLEY SCANDAL POSES SERIOUS QUESTIONS FOR CATHOLICS

By Rick Lenz

The Rev. Foley scandal has focused public attention on the limited reach of some of our statutes of limitations and the relative ease with which security procedures governing the issuance of permits for fully equipped emergency vehicles can be bypassed. It has also raised other questions,—especially for Catholics, fundamental questions of the kind that should be directed at ourselves as well as our church leaders.

We are quick to question, for example, how it is that Foley's actions in securing and using a vehicle similar to those he had allegedly employed to seduce and sexually abuse young boys caused no ripples among church officials and clerics whose daily paths must have crossed his at St. Thomas Seminary. We wonder—was there no sensitivity, no concern on their part for other potential victims of this man? But what about us—the Catholic laity? How sensitive have we been to the plight of survivors of abuse? Indeed, how sensitive have we been to the pain and silent recriminations suffered by countless good priests who are not abusers and who have remained faithful to their vows?

Have we fully educated ourselves on the issue of clergy sexual abuse? How many of us have read the 2004 Report issued by the lay member National Review Board in the wake of the crisis? The report included numerous recommendations designed both to promote increased sensitivity and effectiveness in responding to allegations of abuse and greater accountability of bishops and other church leaders. Those recommendations were delivered to the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and there they apparently remain. How many of us have inquired of our own bishops as to the status and disposition of those recommendations? How many of us even care?

And then there is the matter of the money: money paid for sexual abuse defense and settlements; money paid to credibly accused priests like Foley in the form of monthly stipends and benefits. We are told that the settlements create a tension between the desire to reach out to survivors and the need to preserve the social mission of the church. However, our views on this ethical dilemma have not been sought. We decry the payments to the credibly accused clergy and we shake our heads, but for the most part, we remain silent. Most of this money ultimately comes from the Catholic-faithful,

courtesy of a diocesan tax or "cathedraticum" imposed on weekly contributions to each parish. Yet we continue our donations with little complaint and virtually no expectations with respect to financial transparency or accountability. How can this be?

At its November 2002 General Meeting, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a document entitled Diocesan Financial Issues. In that document, the full body of U.S. bishops addressed the question of financial reporting, asserting that "each diocese should endeavor to accomplish reasonable norms of accountability and transparency with respect to financial activities of the diocesan offices." Yet many dioceses—presumably with the advice and consent of their lay member diocesan finance councils—provide no financial reporting whatsoever to the Catholic-faithful. In fact, the very identity of diocesan finance council members may itself be a mystery, providing no basis upon which their credentials or credibility can either be assessed or affirmed.

It has now been some 40 years since the Second Vatican Council declared that the Church is the entire "People of God," and not just the religious or the clergy or the hierarchy. We, the laity, hear the words, but do we really believe them or act on them? How committed are we to the involvement and commitment these words imply? How many of us serve in our parishes when given the opportunity? How many of us would be willing to serve on a diocesan pastoral council if one were established, or on a parish reconfiguration committee? These are the questions we need to answer now, because the shrinking ranks of our aging priesthood make greater lay involvement in the church a certainty. How ready and willing are we to spend ourselves today in order to preserve and re-energize the Church of tomorrow for ourselves and our children and grandchildren?

When the clergy sexual abuse crisis first erupted in the Archdiocese of Boston in 2002, it gave birth to Voice of the Faithful, a centrist organization of committed Catholics who pledged to support survivors of abuse, to support priests of integrity and to work for structural (not moral or doctrinal) change in the Church. The Foley scandal is simply the latest evidence that attainment of these three goals remains very timely, necessary and important to our Church—both now and for the future. But it has to begin with us, the People of God, because as we learned 40 years ago, we are the Church!

OTHER VOICES AROUND THE COUNTRY

By Joanne Blair

Members of **VOTF/UNION COUNTY (NJ)** will gather at the Union Methodist Church, their regular meeting place, on May 17 to hear a presentation entitled "The History of Reform in the Church and Where Do We Go From Here?". The topic for their June 7 meeting is "A Bridge: Jewish Catholic Dialog" presented by Tama Ruben.

WAVOTF (Winchester MA Area) will feature Sister Nancy Murray, P.O. (sister of Bill Murray) in character as Catherine of Siena at their June 11 meeting. For further information go to the website www.votfwinchester.org/calendar

A faithful group of members of **VOTF OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA (PA)** continue their First Friday Noon Vigils in front of the Philadelphia Archdiocese Office in an attempt to get Cardinal Rigali to address the sexual abuse crisis in greater depth and to respond to concerns raised by VOTF. The group joins for prayer, passes out literature and shows support "for those whose bodies and souls were abused by priests."

Spread the Word

*Invite a friend to
the next meeting.*

TWO YEARS INTO HIS PAPACY... TWO VIEWS OF BENEDICT XVI

By Joanne Blair

The Rev, Richard McBrien began his March 28 talk on the Papacy of Benedict XVI by reminding his audience that although many people feel that the Pope determines Catholicism, the mission of the Church (preaching the word, worshiping, witnessing and serving) remains unchanged, no matter who the Pope is. He then noted that the choice of name is the first policy maker statement of the newly elected pope. In choosing his name Benedict XVI chose the name of one of the "best, most under-rated" popes in modern history, Benedict XV, as well as that of Benedict of Nursia, an important leader.

So far, according to McBrien, the brief papacy of the current pope has been noticeably different than that of his predecessor John Paul II who picked "the worst people" for leadership positions, refused to deal with the sexual abuse crisis and refused to meet with Hans Kung, even after 25 years of Kung's petitions to do so.

In assessing the poor choices of leadership, McBrien noted that during the sexual abuse crisis which rocked the Church, not one credible bishop spoke out. Indeed, John Paul II publicly thanked Father Maciel for his service to the Church even after serious accusations had been levied against him. The Pope simply refused to hear of them. Benedict XVI reacted by calling Maciel to Rome in the first year of his papacy, taking away his standing in his order and advising him to spend the rest of his years in penance and prayer.

The current pope's appointments have also differed from those of his predecessor. He picked an American Archbishop, William Levada, to head the CDF; the Rev. John Neuhaus, Editor of the conservative publication "First Things", expressed his dislike of this appointment because Levada is "gay friendly". The Most Rev. George Neiderhauer, who was appointed to succeed Levada as head of the Archdiocese of San Francisco has already met with VOTF leaders in that area.

Benedict XVI handled the request of his old friend, Hans Kung, by responding directly and scheduling a meeting.

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SNAP NATIONAL CONFERENCE JULY 20-22

Marriott Metro Center
Washington D.C

Conference Registration Fee:
\$130 weekend, \$75 one day

May 1 to June 15: \$100 & \$65
Conference Only

Limited Number of Rooms at Discount

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The conference will feature Tom Doyle, Jeff Dion, Mike Lew, among others, along with workshops and a panel made up of family members of victims of homicide by priests.

VOTF 2007 CONVENTION UPDATE

(Info from VOTF website)

VOTF National has shaped the 2007 convention around the theme of a birthday party... a time to celebrate the present, remember the past and look forward to the future! On Friday night a series of workshops displaying what has been going on in VOTF groups will be followed by refreshments and fellowship and culminate with a keynote speech by the Rev. Richard McBrien, a long time supporter who advised both Jim Post and Jim Muller at the founding of VOTF.

Saturday will feature talks by Mary Pat Fox, Edwina Gately and Judge Michael Metz in the morning session, followed by a series of afternoon panels. The day will culminate with a celebration of the Eucharist and a vigil and walk around the river in Providence, which is lighted with fires at that time of the year.

TWO YEARS INTO HIS PAPACY...

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The two met at a private dinner for four hours, ending with a papal statement that was given to Kung for approval before it was submitted to the press.

McBrien also addressed the censure of theologian Jon Sobrino by noting that at this point it is centered on his Christology and not his Liberation Theology; there also has been no order for Sobrino to discontinue writing.

In spite of his accentuating the positive moves of the current Pope, Mc Brien reminded his audience that Benedict is still at the beginning of his papacy and thus only time will tell if he continues his moderate approach.

David Gibson, author of "The Rule of Benedict: Pope Benedict XVI and His Battle with the Modern World," sees things differently, as his April 23 New York times op-ed article indicates. He feels that the current Pope is astute enough to realize that the papacy "would demand a pastoral touch instead of a combative edge" and that his pronouncements and writings accentuate the positive. This approach has worked: liberal Catholics see it as positive while conservatives are upset over the fact that he has not silenced dissenters. However, Gibson cautions, the Catholic right ought to have more patience and the Catholic left should pay closer attention. Benedict has made it clear that there will no compromise on matters of truth as he sees it or on anything "that smacks of change in church teaching or traditions."

Gibson sums up Benedict's policies that support his conservative stance:

- * Homosexual men may not be ordained as priests.
- * The role of lay people at Mass has been restricted in order "to reinforce the Christ-like action of the priests."
- * The stand against married clergy and the ban on divorced and remarried Catholics receiving communion has been renewed.
- * Changes in sexual behavior and in the role of women in the Church are banned.
- * The primacy of the pope has been reinforced, an issue John Paul II had opened for debate.

Gibson acknowledged that Benedict has indeed preached on the beauty of faith that is the heart of Christianity. However, his response to this was "But in the United States as elsewhere, the challenge is not so much a 'crisis of faith' as a 'crisis of church' ... a closer look at the actions behind Benedict's words shows that the two are still far apart." 7

AROUND THE CHURCH - NEWS IN BRIEF

By Joanne Blair

The April 20 issue of Commonweal magazine features an article entitled **"VENGEANCE TIME: When Victims Squander Their Moral Authority"** by Mark Sargent, Dean of Villanova University School of Law. It clearly leans towards the side of the Institutional Church as it rebukes victims in their search for justice (or vengeance as the author sees it). At times it almost seems that the Church is a victim of the survivors' and the "self serving cant from heavily biased plaintiffs' attorneys."

The author writes of the victims' "assumption that the bishops are cynically crying poverty" even as the presiding judge was chiding the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Diego for transferring money while filing for bankruptcy. The judge ordered the diocese to re-file its financial disclosure statements and include unreported balances in 770 bank accounts held by 98 parishes. She also ordered Bishop Brom to personally sign the report under "penalty of perjury".

Sargent ends with a warning to victims, "They are risking the moral capital created by their victimhood and the sympathy generated by their pain... Most important, the possibility of reconciliation with wither away. But will they even care?" It seems strange that Sargent places the responsibility for reconciliation upon the victims without even discussing the need for acknowledgement of offenses by those who committed them and those who shielded the offenders.

The **First Annual Northern California Lay Convocation** takes place June 2 at the Cathedral of St. Mary, San Francisco. The stated purpose of the convocation is "To learn our history, express to each other and our

Church leaders our joys and frustrations, so to most fully and inclusively realize in the Church and in the World, the grace, beauty and wisdom of Catholic teaching as promulgated in the documents of the Second Vatican Council." The call to attend went out to clergy and lay people from the Archdiocese of San Francisco and the Dioceses of Santa Rosa, Stockton, Sacramento, San Jose, Oakland, Monterey and Fresno. (The idea of lay convocations is beginning to spread in this country.)

South African Bishop supports use of condoms. Not long after he was made Bishop of Rustenburg, Kevin Dowling began visiting the half dozen squatter camps on South Africa's border with Botswana. Freedom Park, home of 5000 shacks with no electricity or running water, is just one of the camps that house 100,000 people.

The area is an ideal environment for the spread of HIV and nearly half of its women test positive. The diocese began its response to the people's needs by starting a small clinic in 1967. It has since grown to include a school, a day care center, a skills training center, an ARV clinic which supplies drugs to people with AIDS and a hospice to house those who cannot be saved.

With Bishop Dowling's support, teams of outreach workers visit the sick and urge people to protect themselves with condoms. "Abstinence before marriage and faithfulness in marriage is beyond the realm of possibility here," Bishop Dowling stated. "The issue is to protect life. That must be our fundamental goal." (Information from Globe and Mail, Canada.)

Spread the word

CAN TODAY'S CHURCH MOVE FROM HIERARCHICAL TO DIALOGICAL?

Practices of Dialogue in the Roman Catholic Church: Aims and Obstacles, Lessons and Laments" By Bradford E. Hinze
New York, 2006, Continuum, 326 pp.

Reviewed by Tom Malone

This book is a scholarly report on the "triumphs and tragedies" of continuing efforts "to move from a strictly hierarchical approach" of the traditional church to the "more dialogical approach" urged by Vatican II. The post-Vatican church's mission includes "activities of teaching, administering the sacraments, governing, pastoral care, and work for justice ... in which all of the members of the church are actively participating." Hinze's book belongs in the personal library of each member of VOTF concerned with our church's path into the future.

Examples of progress towards this vision range from (a) parish councils hampered by a "consultative-only clause" to (b) diocesan pastoral councils and diocesan synods, both promising for the future but still under development, and on to (c) ecumenical and interreligious dialogues. Interspersed among these episodes are commentaries on the Call to Action (CTA) movement initiated by what is now the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and intended to be responsive to Vatican II, but still awaiting a pastoral plan of action, priorities, and plan for implementation. CTA now hosts annual conferences that are the largest progressive Catholic gatherings in the country -- even though distanced from the bishops.

The Catholic Common Ground Initiative, stimulated by the late Cardinal Bernardin but heavily criticized by prominent U. S. cardinals concerned with undermining traditional authority, never arrived at the intended consensus. Dialogues on authority and leadership by women religious remain "to be fully worked out" because of differences between what women and men want.

The author concludes from these diverse episodes that our church is embarked on "a difficult pedagogical pilgrimage involved in identity formation which is associated with the genre called Bildungsroma." This is a long, arduous, and gradual maturing process consisting of repeated clashes between the protagonists' needs and desires and the views and judgments enforced by an unbending social order.

His most cogent observation is: "The issues raised by the critics of dialogue and the defenders of an older

hierarchical model of authority and tradition -- and here [Cardinal] Dulles offers the most fully developed U. S. Catholic example -- must be matched by an alternative theology of the church's identity and mission equal in scope and depth and spiritual richness to his own. Such an alternative theology, I would argue, does not need to deny the crucial role of papal, episcopal, and clerical authority. However, the theology of ordination and of offices and their exercise must be reformulated within the large field of vision associated with the dialogical understanding of the church and world that has become more clearly into view during and since Vatican II."

In the final analysis, this transition must be reflected at the local level. The parish of the next millennium will operate on the principles of subsidiarity (matters ought to be handled by the smallest [or, the lowest] competent authority) and collegiality (seeking consensus in addition to a role in decision making). These characteristics are identified in William Bausch's *The Parish of the Next Millennium* (another book that deserves space in the personal library of each member of VOTF).

Heartening developments abound. Under the leadership of Albany diocese's Bishop Howard J. Hubbard, a three-year initiative entitled "Called to BE Church" is being mounted (www.rcda.org). Bishop Hubbard's charge centered on the message of Vatican II: "... the council pointed out that the responsibility for the life and mission of the church is a responsibility whose dimensions are universal, applying to clergy, religious, and laity alike. All are bound together by a variety of gifts and ministries and all are called to serve the one mission, the mission of Jesus, to be served by a multiplicity of ministries and ministers."

