

May 1, 2001

This is the "memory" or minutes of the first gathering at our home.

Dear May Day Catholic Voices,

What a great beginning gathering. Since our time together, a number of people have started conversations with me that inevitably lead to their feelings about being Catholic, their struggles, their love, and wanting to connect with other voices. When I told them about our gathering they were so pleased. Another piece that keeps coming around is the question of how we can approach this in a different way -- not with acting out of fight or flight. The Spirit is definitely moving us and we have the responsibility to respond and discover and practice "the new way". In all of this I feel great possibility and hope. There seems to be so much to learn and not a clarity of what "it" even is. I do know that one of the main callings right now is for us to "be together".

As we had agreed, we will meet again next Wednesday, May 8th at 6:30 at our home (624 Lafayette St). Invite those who you feel resonate with what it is we are trying to do. If possible, forward to them the "Voices of the Faithful" article. Also, please call and have those you may invite to come to call our home by Monday evening, if possible. (303-832-4188). If there are more than about 50 people, we will have another place to meet. Please check your e-mail Wednesday morning to see if there will be a change of venue.

Creating ritual around our time together always seems appropriate. I would like to begin the next meeting by again lighting of our spirit candle and with prayer. I suggest giving some time for voicing, less than last Wednesday, so we can also move into what it is we need and action we may wish to take. Bring a small stone to put in the basket. We will keep these stones as a symbol of our gatherings and of our thoughts and feelings.

For this second gathering we might want to identify what we consider to be our most important questions and then discern how to begin responding to those questions. Some other food for thought:

- How can we create a strong, committed community?
- What type of training or information do we need regarding "coming from a place of peace"?
- If we are asked by the media, how do we describe who we are?
- How do we form solidarity with those in our community who have been hurt: emotionally, physically?
- Do we want to consider joining *Voice of the Faithful*?
- What other established organizations do we want to consider connecting with?
- What factors are there that we need to take into consideration?

If you have other thoughts about our second gathering, please share them.
If you ever want to have your name removed from this list, please indicate.

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Following is a summary of the memory of our first gathering.

Beginning: Thirty people came, signed in and took small sharing stones to be put into the woven basket when they had something to share. We began by lighting a three-wick candle. Each wick represented the Spirit alive: (1) the Spirit alive in our Church; (2) the Spirit alive in those that have gathered in this way before us; and (3) For us now gathered to hear the Spirit leading us now. Then a poem on "We are the Church" was read.

Next was the calling of "Voices". Here are some of the notes from this sharing:

- My call is with the connection of the Eucharist.
- I am also responsible for this. I have allowed this to happen and continue. We have known what is going on.
- We know from within what is being called for.
- There a sense of impotency in trying to be heard or to act regarding any change
- Fear seems to be a common factor among all of us.
- This is not just about the sexual pain, this is about the structure of the church and how the laity are seen.
- I am in pain because of the secrecy.
- The way the hierarchy treats the laity gives me pain.
- I don't want to feel alone in this.
- Can I walk the walk with you and me and Jesus?
- The Church is the People of God not just the hierarchy. That seems to be forgotten.
- Abuse is about power and control.
- We must listen to the victims.
- One of the issues in our Church is that women do not count.
- This is also an issue of emotional abuse.
- Not sure if I can keep calling myself a Christian. But I know I want to follow the radical voice of Jesus.
- The Church has no authority except for the authority I/we give it. The true authority is the Spirit of the Divine that is within me.
- My pain is the loss of what could be.
- I grieve for my children, they hear me rant and rave. And I want them to love the Church and community.
- "Don't confuse the Lord with the Church or the Church with the priest."
- If it doesn't make sense, if the rule is wrong, don't follow the rule. Support those who choose not to follow the rule.
- Billions of dollars of our money is being spent for the settlement of these cases.
- The hierarchy has power and control without accountability.
- My pain lies in the concerted deception that the many leader of the Church have and are participating in.
- There is preaching and not the living out of that preaching. What kind of leadership do we have?
- This is a time of great hope and possibility.
- Some of the questions/suggestions posed:
- What can we do?

- What can I do that will protect our children, that this will never happen again?
- Money is what we need to be looking at.
- How do we be visible as a body. This won't be quick, but it must be consistent.
- How do we create community?
- How do we not be quiet?
- How do we keep hope alive?
- The Spirit of God is within all of us.
- We need a sense of openness, being broken open, exposure.
- How do we move from here, this gathering, to out there?
- Concern that we will talk with each other and again nothing happens. I am afraid that we will just walk away.
- We need to stand up and come together.
- We need to walk together.
- We need to hold each other.
- There is hope.
- We need dialogue.
- We need to come together again and have our voices heard.

We then moved into prayer and discernment. Being open to the voice and sense of Spirit. What was shared from a time of prayer:

- Go and sin no more.
- Do not continue to be quiet.
- We have been talking about the power of the hierarchy. What I heard was the word "empowerment". Let us exercise our power.
- We need to be committed to the "real" Church.
- "Blessed are the peacemakers."
- We must act out of Love, be consistent, and willing to challenge.
- We need to ask questions.
- We love the Church and cannot allow this system to continue in the way it presently is.
- We need to speak the truth to power, do it non-violently, do it openly, do it lovingly.
- What we are speaking tonight---is the Truth.
- We need to learn and practice how to do this.
- Send letters. Act locally.
- Read Huns Kung's "The Catholic Church: A Short History"

We closed with agreeing to meet next Wednesday at 6:30. We held hands and sang: "We are many parts, We are all one Body."

Submitted with hope,
Diana

If you feel like bringing snacks, do so. I will have soda and tea.
Keep the Faith, Let's walk together with strength, clarity and Peace,

This was the poem that was given to share at the first gathering.

Dear friends,

How wonderful for us to come together and share our voices, our hearts, our hope. This is another beginning. Together we can journey, learn and act. I was again moved with inspiration and with the possibilities.

Attached is the poem I wanted to read to you -- as it states, there is a sense of both awkwardness and exhilaration. I am trusting that we will be led.

Namaste,
Diana

A Different Spirit

by Bernadette McCarrick, rsm

I want to tell you this:
The moment will surely come
when the Holy Spirit
will be within you;
a wild goose
stretching and straining
through storms
with her taut body,
determined.

For that moment
there will be nothing dove
about the Spirit
as she fiercely leads you
through wholesome refusals
and undreamt-of-surrenders
out into those
wonderfully clear choices
within the boundaries of which
you will land so awkwardly;
but you will be like her:
exhilarated in your every part
by such strong-winged
full-feathered
single-hearted
flight!

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Ah, yes, we're in days of counting to Pentecost!