

June 12, 2002

Subject: Memory of our 4th gathering (June 12)

Dear May Day Catholics,

New energy was brought to the gathering with new faces and sharing. We believe that together and with energy alive and growing, we feel we can make a difference. The difference may most be felt in the growth and changes that take place within ourselves, individually and as a group.

Prayer and Voicing:

We began with the lighting of our candle with three wicks representing: the Spirit of our Source embodied in Jesus, the Spirit that resonated within those who have met before us, the Spirit that exists now present, within us and within the Bishops as they meet -- that we will hear and act from that place of prayer.

We participated in a prayer from the six directions and another prayer from "Woman Prayer Woman Song"

We put stones into our holding basket. Some of the sharing included:

- Feelings of hope
- Calling for diversity in the Church
- This is only the tip of the iceberg
- We need to keep remembering "We Are the Church"
- Wondering if we can really do anything. "Why am I here?"
- Not to forget that we are advocates for the victims
- Why am I still a Catholic?
- We are here because we believe the teachings of Jesus, we can live and be challenged by those teachings.
- It is time that we, the people of the Church, come of age.
- Some people are afraid of coming to meetings or putting their names of this list, for fear of losing their jobs or some other repercussion
- Some others shared their individual pain

Action:

Letter received from the AB was discussed. Here are some comments made by participants:

- His response reminds me as to why I don't want to invest in the hierarchy and AB.
- Anyone on his council most likely has to pass his litmus test.
- The way of change will come, we need to develop an alternative way of expression

- What are we trying to get from him, what is our purpose?
- He didn't understand that "group signed letters" are an attempt at dialogue.
- What does he mean "accept the teachings."
- This can be used to galvanize this group.
- We want him to know how we feel.
- The fact is that because many have written letters and have called their AB this issue has come to light.
- The letter was worth it.
- It is interesting that the AB decided to read our letter as "pressure" rather than something positive.
- There are many "good Catholics" who disagree and are open to dialogue on many issues within our church. This is a good thing.

Discussion developed about how much should we be about trying to engage the AB and how much should we just "be" and not engage with the AB. It was suggested that we work in a multi-purpose way and that there may not be a need to choose one above another.

The multi-pronged approach may be: we move forward on "Being" Church with various actions and programs, continue the "voicing" and prayer ritual, and at appropriate times update and try to engage with the AB.

Important voicing:

- Being people of Love: We were reminded that we do not want to become that which we are trying to change. We do not want to be angry, separating people. We need to watch our language about "us and them." We may disagree and we are together in this. What does it mean to be inclusive and inviting? How are we do act? We must live the gospel, demonstrate it, and invite others to do so, even if they rebuff us.
- What does it mean to be community, as a member of this Church? How do we want to relate to each other and the victims and others in the Church? How do we support one another?
- We want to try to bring the Church into the dialogue about what is going on in the world with all its pain and injustice and celebration.
- Hope for open dialogue, continue to invite and suggest.
- How do we move forth as a community and educate ourselves - maybe study of Vatican II and other important pieces of our rich history.
- We need to look at ritual and celebration. What is the most effective way to move forward as a group?

Voices of the Faithful:

Mary Jo Myers presented a clear and in-depth information piece about this group. We are considering as how we want to be connected with them. Mary Jo has a three-page written piece on the VOTF. If you would like a copy, please call me or indicate via e-mail that you would like one.

Planning Meeting on the 22nd

Denny Swann gave an update on plans for the 22nd. Please read the forwarded piece.

Closing Song: "Come Holy Spirit"