

August 28, 2002

Memory from the gathering on August 28th, 2002

Community is forming. Another gathering where participants express their pain, hopes, dreams, faith, passion, gratefulness. Opening prayer: lighting of our candle, inviting in the spirit of St. Augustine (all are welcome). Voicing.

Voicing:

- Inviting in Martin Luther King to our gathering. The night of our meeting was the 39 year celebration of his "I have a dream" speech. Remembering all those people of faith and courage who have spoken to the culture and the institutions.
- A new member voiced how surprised she was about the level of movement she felt through the week because of our last gathering. Many questions began to formulate within. She was grateful to be with us again.
- Sadness that the hope of Vatican II has been diminished through the years.
- Acknowledgment of those who are still being abused and silenced by those in "leadership" of the Church. A couple on the east coast have been told that can no longer be Eucharistic ministers because of their involvement in an organization that is looking for change in the Church.
- It is important that we remember and hold those who have been physically abused and have not felt able to speak up.
- We need to use the term of abuse in a broad context: yes, physical abuse is the most hurtful and there is also the psychological and spiritual abuse.
- We need each other for support so that we live our core values: support in learning how to hold "the other" in what must be their pain; to reach out with love and clarity to those with whom we are frustrated, angry; how not to let vindication lead.
- Remembering how to love.
- Concern regarding some new practices being told to Eucharistic ministers at St. Thomas Moore Church: EM not allowed to touch children or say, "may God bless you".
- How we can move to forgiveness and freedom (not necessarily forgetting)?
- We are the people of God and have rights to come together under Canon Law.
- Excited to be here and to know that we are taking responsibility for our faith experience.
- Thank to those who said they are willing to take on the leadership responsibility---that means we are moving forward.
- Sharing of the pain with the "talk of war". How our country is preparing for war with such arrogance. There seems to be little thought regarding the spiritual, psychological, physical consequences that will occur.
- Amazed how bold leaders are as they believe they speak and can act freely for all in the institution, without participation of those within the organization.
- We are called to constant transformation

- We hold a dream for our Church---where everyone can use their God-given gifts freely to build each one up.
- There are signs of hope
- Another participant was able to share the physical abuse a friend suffered from a priest, that she has tried to suppress for years.
- A book was shared: "Revenge Story of Hope"

Closing of holding those who are suffering, that they will find support, hope and freedom.

Leadership Team Proposal

We used the process of discernment and consensus (see previous memos). Points of clarification and comments:

- We are embarking in a new way of coming together, so we are walking on new ground. We will learn as we move forward. Mistakes will be made. ALL are asked to bring accountability and clarity to this movement.
- A book was suggested: "Toward a Catholic Constitution" by Leonard Swindler
- Caution on becoming an "organization" like all other organizations in our culture. What are the alternatives? How can we be open to the new ways of coming together that lives out of our core values?
- We need to use our imagination.
- All are called to be Servant/Leaders.
- There needs to be courage to express our flaws and not try to justify or cover up. If we are going in the wrong direction, we must be able to change our direction.
- We need to look at the fruits of our work. Not just the fruits of the goals being met, but the fruits of the spirit and how people are feeling and being treated.
- Gandhi: "Full effort is full victory"
- Patience: we may not change the church----- we we can change ourselves in the midst of this process. That may be the reason we have been called together.
- Openness
- Participants vs. "members".
- "We are enabling expressions of faith by the faithful."
- "Hold the truth lightly and practice letting go, listening compassionately."

After discussion, clarification and prayer, we reached consensus on all points proposed. (see previous memo on leadership team proposal)

One change is regarding the make-up of the team: Pat McCormick will be in the position of support with Byron and Mary Jo).

Bishop's Response:

The bishop's response letter was distributed and read. Also the attachments he added were distributed.

The leadership team will send a clarification letter to the AB, indicating that his letters to us is not "private communication". All will receive his letter. However, we will respect and ask all participants in CCC-VOTF to respect that his letters will NOT be released to the press/media.

As we have said in our "Action Plan", we will not get into a letter writing, back and forth, campaign with the AB. We will send him letters on a monthly as so basis to keep him apprised as to our efforts.

The process used for letter writing will start with a drafting group who will present to the leadership team, and then proceed to the larger group for additional input. The letter will be revised, again sent to all participants. If there are no grave concerns, it will be sent to the AB. All participants are asked to send in their comments to us when they have read and received a copy of the AB's letter. All are asked to share their thoughts. As it so with the letters developed from us.

Treasury:

\$100 has been given to us. Diana will open a specific account for CCC-VOTF. The leadership team will discuss other ideas for the treasury. All donations are welcomed.

Media:

A press release will be developed and distributed by Marty. We will try to get it into the DCR.

Archdiocesan Pastoral Council:

Information was passed out regarding the development of APC and who the members are on the council. More follow up will be done with this.

Status of participants:

169 on our participation list. There are six names on the list we have not heard from. Please send in your comments and questions. If you know others that could benefit from knowing about CCC-VOTF, please give them this e-mail address or phone number and encourage them to call or write for more information.

Closing:

"All are welcome"

Peace, hope, and possibility----keep the faith