

September 11, 2002

Memory from our 8th gathering

Prayerful gathering: We began with the lighting of our candle and a prayer time consisting of readings by various people in history telling their story of how we change. Here are a few of the excerpts from our prayer and reflection time.

Examples: "I am Etty Hillesum, a holocaust victim: "I really see no other solution than to turn inwards and to root all the rottenness there. I no longer believe that we can change anything in the world until we have first changed ourselves." And, sharing from personal experience, St. Francis of Assisi encouraged us to practice what we speak. "While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart."

We gathered as brothers and sisters, sitting together this evening to face the challenges of our world, our faith, ourselves, on this day of remembering violence, hatred, loss and pain. We have been brought together by our faith and by our doubt: of our Church, remembering the experiences of 9/11, and remembering the experiences of all acts of hatred that have touched our lives. What are the responses rising in our hearts, in our minds, in our bodies? We are called to open ourselves to hear the challenging voices of others, the voices of our own hearts, and the voice of the Spirit. At this gathering, we remember the vision statement of CCC-VOTF, our core values, and our commitment to act from love.

We pray that we can face our challenges, hand in hand, with new insights and courage in our work---and that we stand together.

Voicing:

After our sharing of prayer and reflection, there again was the heartfelt sharing of faith and pain regarding 9/11 and the experiences of being faithful Catholics.

Closing Prayer: Luke 6:27 "But I say to you who are listening: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who treat you badly.

While embracing the darkness that arises, let us open our hearts to hear a new way---Let us truly love one another, not just with the action of our lips, but with the true action of love from the heart. We can find a new way to live.

Business

- Some new participants attended this evening. One participant shared the pain of physical abuse suffered many years ago by a priest. The faithfulness, care and courage of this individual was very moving and motivating for many of us. Some

ideas were shared with others in the group of possible thoughts of practical support. These ideas will be addressed by the Leadership Team.

- Fr. Michael Sheeran's article in the "Post" was discussed. Overall those in attendance found it to be supportive of VOTF and the work we are doing. The information that Fr. Sheeran shared regarding the history of the Church was important for people to know. There was hope that Fr. Sheeran might be willing to attend one of our gatherings and engage in dialogue with us.
- Archdiocese Pastoral Council: Diana was told, that after reading materials given to them about VOTF, (we are not sure what info was given or even if any information about CCC-VOTF was given) that they (APC) felt that "VOTF was not representative of the Catholic faithful." Dialogue with the APC, at this time, may be difficult. The Leadership Team will review this information.
- Mike Farley distributed an article that was in the September 2, 2002 "New Yorker". This article is recommended reading for everyone.
- Denny Swann shared a very respectful and positive letter sent by the AB regarding our letter of clarification to him on the issue of us sharing with all our participants, our communication from him. Our next letter will be developed as we have information/ invitation we would like to share with the AB.
- Diana will be going to NYC and Boston for the next two weeks. While in Boston, she will meet with some of the VOTF leadership. If you have ANY questions that you would like to have asked----please send them to Diana by this Friday.
- Next gathering will be Wednesday, September 25th @ 7PM. Mary Casper will facilitate the gathering. (someone remind Marty to organize the house).

Closing song: "Let there be peace on earth---and let it begin with me."

Thank you all you deeply faithful Catholics.
Peace on this important day,
Diana Flahive