

**October 9, 2002**

*Memory of our gathering on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2002*

### **Prayer**

We began with introductions and prayer. Vince read from Ed Hays' book on "the fool." Does that sound a little like us?

As seems to always happen with our gatherings, there is a wonderful energy that emerges when we come together in community -- to voice, to pray, to share, to be with.

We heard from a number of people who could not attend, including some of our priests, who give their support for what we are doing, and their continued interest and prayers.

### **Voicing**

We placed our stones in the basket and shared from the heart.

- Concern for the possibility of war and who and how the decisions are being made.
- There was discussion regarding the Catholic Church's stand on the war. The Bishops have said that this is not a "just war."
- First Friday Forum topic was with Don Caplis speaking on justifying the war in Iraq and that it would be a "just war."
- Pleased that the bishops are calling together a working group to deal with the issue of accountability in the hierarchy.
- Heartened to be with the people in Boston and feel their pain, dedication, passion and commitment and be in community with them.
- Comments made about the feelings of having Juan Diego canonized and then the person who began Opus Dei.

### **Boston update - Diana**

This will be a brief review of my experience. If you want more information, please feel free to call or e-mail.

### **National VOTF**

- I stayed with Mary Ann Keyes who is one of the original members of VOTF. She is presently on staff and on the Board of Trustees. Her passion and unending energy is unbelievable. Thank you Mary Ann.
- People of Boston were amazing and so hospitable. These are "salt of the earth" Catholics who were faithful and trusted their Church. They were then hit hard with betrayal. Through their personal pain and anger they have moved into action. I experienced deeply faithful Catholics who love their Church, are passionate, committed, focused and working towards transformation of the Church. These are people who are not afraid!
- I met with members of the Board, staff, community (VOTF) participants, lawyer, the president and executive director of VOTF, priests, etc.
- I was able to participate in a number of meetings and also observe the action and direction of the organization.. I am presently writing a paper for the national

VOTF, based on these observations. There are some things with which I have concern.

- The leadership of VOTF is open to being self-evaluative and willing to admit their faults and wrong decisions. They are working on being that that they are asking the hierarchy to be.
- Voiced was: "The primacy of conscience". "Speaking truth to power". "That questioning the Church does not make one a heretic."

### **Negative Campaign:**

- It was made clear that there is an organized campaign to discredit VOTF. Many of the criticisms being articulated are using the exact language, listing the exact same issues. What is being said is purposely incorrect and misrepresentative.
- I participated in a mock press conference where some of these same accusations were made. Good responses to these accusations are being voiced.
- I recommend that if you have not registered with VOTF that you do so, so as to read the responses from VOTF. In another e-mail, I may forward those letters to you.
- If you have any questions about this, call me.

### **Boston College:**

- One of the evenings I was in Boston, Boston College (a Jesuit University), put on its first of a two-year series of presentations, discussions, and dialogue. 4,000 people attended this Wednesday evening. It was incredible. ( I have the program for the evening and their proposed 2 year plan. In another e-mail. I may give you more information.)
- In their program they wrote a piece on VOTF and what assistance VOTF is giving.
- Fr. Leahy, the president of the College, spoke about their purpose being "to seek to link faith and culture in the American Church in this society." He said that this is about renewing our vision of our faith based on trust, through the teachings of the Church, through knowledge and through dialogue and conversation.
- Fr. Leahy said that all issues would be discussed openly and that there would be presentation of all sides of issues. BC will operate out of respect and learning, and fear will not dictate.
- Other speakers talked about the idea that some priests and members of the hierarchy have forgotten their responsibility: "being servants of the people and of each other", and living the gospel. They should be listening to those who are to be served: who are they?, what are they saying?, what are the questions? where is their pain? They should be "taking the pulse" of the laity. There needs to be a system of accountability. Many have forgotten their role and are making decisions based on being on a "career track" instead of being servants of the people of God. What is being said and done is based on "will it move me up the ladder, will I be successful." Jesus didn't move up a ladder --- but up a cross.
- It was stated that professional standards need to be set for our priests, as they are for other professionals in the world. These standards should be operative in their work, service, homilies, preaching, etc.. Priests should act from a place of

wisdom, prudence, prayer, and pastoring. They need to live and be immersed in the gospel.

### Good Stuff

#### **Letter to AB:**

Marty distributed a draft of a letter worked on by the Leadership Team. This letter is in response to the "AD Policy on Sexual Misconduct." The group discussed the draft and agreed to a revision of the letter, then forwarding it to participants for input and then the letter would be mailed to the AB.

#### **Letter to APC:** (Arcdiocesan Pastoral Council)

Diana spoke about the decision that was made by the APC about VOTF, based on the members of the APC receiving some information and no input from CCC-VOTF. A quote from Ginny Reigel, who is the facilitator for the APC: "Since the APC is the body that the Archdiocese uses for advice on pastoral issues within the Archdiocese, I (Ginny) sent materials on VOTF to those members and asked for their feedback. After reading the materials, they, too felt that VOTF is not representative of the Catholic faithful."

Diana had given Ginny CCC-VOTF's vision statement and core values. CCC-VOTF has no idea what materials or presentations were given to the members of the APC in order for them to make the decision they did. We were not asked to give any input.

A letter has been drafted to the APC from CCC-VOTF, stating our concerns about the decision and how it was made and inviting them to participate in a discussion with the Leadership Team. When this letter is ready to go out, it will first be e-mailed to the participants of CCC-VOTF for your input.

#### **Web Page:**

Marty is working with Chris Humphrey's to develop a web site. It was agreed to move forward with the web site. The web site is [CCC-VOTF.org](http://CCC-VOTF.org)

#### **Vision statement:**

The following changes to the "vision statement" were recommended and accepted:

- Instead of "open to" the ongoing transformation ---- "seeking" the ongoing----
- Putting "transformation of ourselves" before "the transformation of our Church"
- At the end of the vision statement adding: and hope "in service of the people of God."

(Please share your thoughts)

#### **Education:**

Regis University will be offering courses on Vatican II, second semester. Mike Farley spoke with Fr. Mike Sheeran about how we can support Regis' work. Fr. Sheeran was given one of the programs Diana brought back from the Boston College presentation. We hope to work with Regis to develop more programs. Regis is a wonderful resource

for our community to assist the people of God to become more educated in their faith and the history of the Church. CCC-VOTF supports the development, offerings and participation of any theological education offered to our community.

It was suggested that a letter be written in support of Fr. Sheeran and Regis University in this endeavor. Denny will draft the letter.

10:30 Community has books and videos available that can be checked out regarding Vatican II. It was suggested that as many as possible take advantage of that resource.

Also recommended was a book called: "The Church Emerging from Vatican II" by Dennis Doyle. It can be ordered through Creator Mundi (303-322-1901).

### **Plan of Action:**

The questions posed to our Leadership Team at our last LT meeting were: "What is the focus of this group?" "What are our long range goals?" "What are we trying to accomplish?" The reasons members of the Leadership Team stated for being here and involved with CCC-VOTF are:

- Learning to be Church in a different way
- Seeking transformation
- Outcome is important, process is more important
- Journeying of active participants who are sharing the thought processes for the Church
- This is essential for my continued life as a Catholic to work for and have hope for change in the Church
- Sense of vitalization for the community
- Laity involvement as Vatican II has stated
- The Church being responsive to all Catholics
- People have a voice in the decisions of the Church
- Participate in a movement that may reach the objective of "change".
- A prophetic voice - that is heard and respected
- Speaking from our essence of our faith
- Engagement of respectful and open conversation with those who hold different points of view
- Working towards a "Council of the People of the Church"

All present felt their reason for being involved was listed. Maybe an emphasis on last five. As we reviewed this list, it was obvious that the statements were more about a "process", a "movement" and less about hard, clear goals. There was discussion that our endeavor is different from others we may have been involved with before. The goal is not as clear. We are being called by Spirit to a path that only some have walked before us. Reaching the goals of certain "changes in the Church" may not be as important as forming a community that is working together and being "in process" -- a prophetic voice, and learning about what it means to be those core values/driving principles -- "seeking transformation of ourselves and of our Church."

( It was suggested that all CCC-VOTF participants look at this list, spend some quiet time with each of the statements and see how they resonate with you, what you want and with what we are doing. What are your reasons?)

Mike Farley will see if there is any statement they may come out of this discussion.

**Today's Gospel:**

It was also suggested that the gospel of October 9th be read and reflected on. At the homily at Good Shepherd this morning it was voiced that "we must remember that dissension has always been part of our Church."

**Closing:**

Another great gathering. We closed with singing the first two verses of "All are Welcomed" ( I will forward the words of this song, later)

The Spirit is clearly speaking to each of us. We need your input, your thoughts, your comments. You hold a part of the voice of the Spirit. All information and participation is needed for this to come together. Keep the energy alive and growing!!!!!!! Share your reflections --- they are welcomed.

Next gathering, October 23rd. If you haven't yet been with us, COME. If you have come, bring a friend. Spread the word. Remember our "driving principles" We are working towards learning how to be them in our lives.

Written in hope and possibility,  
Diana Flahive