

November 13, 2002

Memory of our gathering on November 13th, 2002

Prayer

We opened, as always, with prayer and the lighting of our candle. We welcomed new participants.

Speaker

At this gathering, we began a new piece, which is having a speaker to share his/her spiritual journey as a Catholic and speak to the issue of how they see the involvement of the laity in today's Catholic Church. There would also be time for questions and answers.

Christine Pertusi, recipient of the Archdiocesan 2002 Peacemaker Award, shared her story of commitment, struggle and faithfulness. She shared that her work with legislative issues for the poor and welfare reform kept her journey in the Church relevant. She spoke of those religious mentors who engendered her work in the area of peace and justice. Christine shared that it was important for her to actively live the gospel while being a person of prayer.

Thank you Christine for your openness, work and dedication to the gospel. The conversation that followed was full and quite interesting.

Our next presenter will be Mary Catherine Rabbitt who is the president for the Sisters of Loretto---December 11th.

Discussion:

Those present engaged in conversation that reflected what we, as community, needed to do:

- Work, pray and stand together in solidarity to find justice within our Church -- allow the Spirit to come and be heard.
- Find the Light within our Catholic tradition. What keeps us dedicated to the teachings of the gospel and keeps us saying "yes" to our Church?
- Keep listening to the Spirit speaking within each of us. Remember what it was that brought each of us here to this organization in the first place. Hold on to that feeling and the thoughts that come with it, keep it nurtured.
- Care and dedication to a faith that cannot exist unless we act from the place of "We all are the Church".
- Remember that Jesus was living from a similar place of struggle within his tradition.
- Be willing to listen to all -- All are welcome.

A question asked by one participant was "how can we be emboldened?". A wonderful image was given by another participant:

After Jesus was crucified, those who were with him, were afraid, embarrassed, lost, sad, confused. They gathered together in a room, shared their sins, their denial of knowing Jesus, their loss, their pain, and their fear of being shamed or killed by those around them. They came together, as community,

shared their stories --- not knowing where to go next or what to do. Then the most amazing occurrence took place -- this group of faithful men and women were gifted by the entering, the realization of the presence of the Holy Spirit. This lost and huddling community, found their courage. Their hearts were filled with the fire of the Spirit. Their minds we clear. They flung open the doors of their hearts and their minds to share their stories and their faith with the world.

Voicing

As always we put stones in our basket and shared the story or feeling in our hearts.

- I need you -- to share the ups and downs of my journey.
- What keeps me in this Church is that it has the message about justice, living in love -- I need help remembering the message.
- The Church is large enough for all of us---there is room for all.
- Angry that anyone would state the "we are not representative of the Catholic faithful."
- Concern of Bishops becoming like sheep when the Vatican speaks.
- Has anyone connected with the Survivor's Network?
- We need to protect our children.
- We need to be true to our journeys and be respectful.
- This should be more a sacramental Church, rather than primarily a Church of rules and regulations.
- We might take on the story of those who were against Pinochet -- even they voiced their disapproval by banging their pots and pans in solidarity.

Updates

Leadership Team has been meeting and working (4 1/2 hour meeting last Sunday). Their next meeting is November 24th @ 4:30. If you are interested in attending, please call.

Plan of Action:

The Plan of Action, revised by the LT, was distributed and briefly reviewed. All will receive the plan via e-mail. (The Plan of Action will come in another e-mail). All participants are asked to please review the Plan of Action and give their feedback and questions. All participants are asked to indicate, via e-mail or call (303-832-4188) the area with which they would like to help -- at whatever level you are able. Please give us your comments and ideas. Everyone's support is needed.

Communication with Archbishop:

A letter was sent to the AB while he was at the National Bishop's Conference regarding support to hold to the policy on abuse that was published by the Denver Archdiocese. The AB's response was read and discussed. There were some interesting insights presented. (There will be another e-mail with our letter and the AB's reply attached.)

Communication with Archdiocesan Pastoral Council:

Diana had another meeting with Ginny Riegel, the APC facilitator. The purpose of the conversation was to 1) question how the decision was made that we were "not representative of the faithful Catholics", and 2) to again extend the invitation to have a meeting with some of the members of the APC, with some of the members of the Leadership Team of CCC-VOTF. Following is an abridged report of the conversation.

Regarding the statement that "VOTF was not representative of the Catholic faithful," the reason behind the decision was "guilt by association." When Diana questioned the meaning of this statement, she was told that it was who was connected with us. The involvement of the Srs. of Loretto and Dennis Kennedy was cited. That response was such a surprise due to a variety of reasons. One, was inaccuracy in her observations and two that there would be a list of people, organizations or virtues that we, as "faithful Catholics" were being measured by, that are not published for all to see. Diana also articulated that all were welcome to participate in CCC-VOTF.

In addition, Ginny cited the three goals of VOTF. Goal #1. "Support for those who have been abused." Ginny said that those who were abused have said that they do not want such support. For goal #2. "Support priests of integrity". She said that those priests are already supported by their parishes and don't need our support. Goal #3, Ginny said, that was what we were really about, "Changing the Church." She said that that would never happen.

Regarding the invitation to engage in further dialogue with a wider group of representatives from the two organizations, Ginny indicated that she felt a wider meeting was not necessary. She said that the AB has been listening to the laity and the APC is the laity.

A letter was written by the Leadership Team, reviewed by those present at the November gathering and sent to Ginny Riegel, with copies to the Archbishop, and to the members of the APC. That letter will be sent to you via another e-mail.

Web page:

It is up and operational. [www.ccc-votf.org]. We need your input to make this alive and active. Please go to the site. Most of the memories, which have been edited, are available. Also our links need to be made more active. If you have ideas on this, please call us. If you have articles, book review, etc. We would like to put them up on the web site. Give us a brief review of the book or article. If it can be linked onto, please send us how we can set it up. (303-832-4188).

Education:

Mary Swann presented some articles and education opportunities

1. Mary Ann Glendon, Harvard law professor will address the laity's role in the Church. Monday, December 16th @ 7:30 PM at the John Paul II Center. Her talk is free to the public and was arranged by the Archdiocese of Denver. We are encouraging all to attend.
2. NY Times, Nov. 10, 2002 "Scandal is stirring lay Catholics to push Church for more power"
3. Regis University will have a program on Vatican II starting in January

4. Check out the links on our web site
If you have other resources, please share them with us

Next gathering:

December 11th (second Wednesday) 7 PM @ the Flahives

Things to do:

1. Review the Plan of Action, send comments and ideas and sign up for the area with which you are willing to assist.
2. Go into the web site and share other resources.
3. Tell three people about the web site
4. Attend the Dec. 16th presentation with Mary Ann Glendon
5. Come to the next gathering on December 11th
6. Bring a friend
7. Share your ideas and the voice of the Spirit

Closing:

"All are welcome"

written in hope and peace,
Diana Flahive