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The Conscientization and Education of the Lay Membership of the
Voice of the Faithful of Southwest Florida

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THE CONSCIANTIZATION AND EDUCATION OF THE LAY MEMBERSHIP
OF THE VOICE OF THE FAITHFUL OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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diligence in review of and comment upon the thesis-project.

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PREFACE

PERSONAL MOTIVATION

The thesis of this project is that an educational program can and should be developed for the education of lay members of the Voice of the Faithful of Southwest Florida (VOTF-SWFL). My motivation for writing is to encourage Roman Catholics to take responsibility in Church governance as described in Vatican II documents. I believe Roman Catholic Church (Church) laity can and should become involved in the governance of the Church.

The road to this thesis-project took many turns and several detours. My wife and I retired on April 5, 1995, after a career in the Westchester County, New York Department of Probation. We moved to Naples, Florida, where I became active in a local homeowners association. I continued my lifelong interest in theology by joining Educational Parish Services (EPS) at Saint William's Parish in Naples and read many books by contemporary authors in the field of theology. I applied to schools that I believed were open to a person with a Master of Divinity and a Master of Social Work who was older than the usual applicant. I was overly optimistic because several universities denied my application, but I am not easily discouraged.

During one of my EPS class sessions taught by a Dominican, Father Gerard Austin, I spoke with him about my desire to study theology at the doctoral level. Father Austin mentioned Barry University as a possible school and recommended I apply.

I had not heard of Barry University, but I knew and admired the Dominicans based on my participation in the Dominican Priory in Massachusetts where I attended Mass regularly.

I applied to Barry and was interviewed by Father Mark Wedig, OP, chair of the Philosophy and Theology Department. Father Mark reminded me that it had been twenty-five years since I earned my MSW in 1975, which was a long time away from academics. I am not easily discouraged and told Father Mark about my history and experience. For example, I left high school at the age of sixteen in 1945 and spent fifteen years in the United States Merchant Marine. I was thirty-one years old when I applied to St. Philip Neri School for Delayed Vocations in Boston in 1961, and they accepted me on the strength of a high school equivalency diploma I earned in New York in 1958.

Upon graduation from St. Philip Neri in 1962, I applied to St. Joseph's Seminary and College, which is the major seminary for the Archdiocese of New York. The rector, Bishop Francis Reh, accepted me into St. Joseph's Seminary although I had no college credits beyond the forty-two credits from St. Philip Neri and did not live in the New York Archdiocese. I did not intend to study at St. Joseph's until that meeting.

I studied at St. Joseph's but went back to sea as a marine engineer during the Viet Nam war. I returned to the seminary in 1968, completed my third theology year, was ordained as a Deacon, and was sent to Sacred Heart Parish, Bronx, New York. I re-evaluated my vocation in 1969, and the seminary wanted me to complete another year in the diaconate; however, I decided to return to the sea because I needed to support myself.

I began a career as a probation officer in Westchester County, New York, in April 1970. My probation career lasted twenty-five years, and I served as a union official from

1978-1988. I attended Hunter College School of Social Work and graduated with a Master of Social Work degree in 1975.

After I told Father Mark about my background, I explained my motivation for a doctorate. First, it was a personal desire to complete the circle of my vocation and education. I told Father Mark about my desire to work in the ecumenical efforts begun in the Church after the second Vatican Council.

Second, I expressed an interest in labor relations. Churches of many denominations supported efforts to raise the living standards of immigrant workers in Immokalee, Florida. The church efforts were sometimes cooperative or pursued as individual denominational programs. I thought an ecumenical program that emphasizes cooperative works of charity could improve relations between denominations based on a common Christian heritage.

Third, I told Father Mark that a priest in an EPS class said the Church needed an ecumenical movement so various Church factions could communicate. This impressed me, and I thought it might be an interesting personal ministry. Father Mark listened patiently and said, "Why don't we try this? You enter Barry as a non-matriculating student for a semester or two and find out if you are right for Barry and if Barry is the right place for you." I agreed and began my studies at Barry.

My ministry and life journey took me down many paths; however, the paths have a common thread: service to others. As stated above, I joined the United States Merchant Marine at the age of sixteen and left high school for a broader life educational experience. My first instructors were battle-hardened unionists I met on merchant ships. Among the

most articulate were Communists, Trotskyites, and International Workers of the World (IWW) members known as “wobblies.” The first two groups were Marxist, and the IWW appeared anarchistic. I remember the IWW motto, “There will be pie in the sky when you die bye and bye,” that mocked promises of a wonderful afterlife. Their goal was the development of a worker-friendly world without concern for the hereafter.

Much of my elementary education was in parochial schools; therefore, I was educated in the teachings of Jesus. Concern for the poor, healing the sick, the Sermon on the Mount, and concern for the less fortunate and less powerful stayed with me when I went to sea. The goals of many men I met, whatever their philosophy or ideology, seemed similar to New Testament teachings.

I learned that ends do not justify means, although I admired the courageous men who fought for seamen’s rights, fair wages, and decent working conditions. During my Merchant Marine service, I often served as the Engine Department delegate, represented the crew in contract dispute negotiations with the chief engineer, and served as a delegate to the 1949 and 1953 national conventions. My early exposure to the idea of service stayed with me during my adult life.

I have been a seaman, seminarian, probation officer, student, and union activist. My lifelong motivation includes a desire to pay back my debt to the Church. The Church gave me a formal education that provided a career in probation and opened many doors. I want to do something that reflects my gratitude.

I attempted to make my diaconate permanent, but my efforts proved unsuccessful in the Diocese of Venice, Florida. The bishop refused my request because I “attempted”

marriage. As a result, I have served in a Lutheran church where my wife is an active communicant. We provided family counseling for congregants and started a grievance group in Naples with good participation and lasting results. I serve as a lector and assistant minister at the altar, and my seminary training is an asset.

In addition to my congregational work, I became involved in our community and served as president of the Pelican Bay Property Owners Association for six years (1996-2002). I began my studies with EPS at St. William's Parish in March 2002, and the EPS program satisfied my academic desire and provided a new direction in my life. I saw the program as a way to continue and expand my interest in theology and a way to offer my services to the Church. These experiences prepared me for a personal response to the sexual scandals that emerged in the Church in 2002 and to develop this thesis-project.

The Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) came to Naples as the VOTF-SWFL. I became active in the local chapter, devoted time to this ministry, and conceived this thesis project. I used my experience as a union activist for my work with VOTF-SWFL. I helped organize working people who opposed entrenched power structures, and I believed my background could be an asset in changing the institutional Church power hierarchy. I decided an educational program could help Catholic lay people understand their responsibility in Church governance. I believe lay involvement in Church governance may contribute to resolution of the clerical sexual abuse scandal.

ABSTRACT

The ecclesiology of the Catholic Church is the framework of this thesis. The historical development of communal structures in the Church and the emergence of its hierarchy are described in this paper. The study begins with the early Church its first communities, and their methods of selecting leadership. Several centuries later, the Roman Emperor Constantine legalized the Christian Church as a religion within the Roman Empire and reorganized the Church's structure in conformity to imperial governance. The emergence of the papacy as a political and a religious force followed the decline of the Roman Empire. The monarchial, aristocratic form of Church governance persists to the present time and lacks a governance role for the laity.

The American Revolutionary War period and calls for democracy in the new nation stimulated trusteeship as a form of Church governance that involved a lay role in the process. The trustee form of Church governance endured until immigrants from Europe arrived in the United States in large numbers. Immigrants brought with them the monarchial, aristocratic form of Church governance that suppressed trusteeships with the Vatican's assistance and support.

The Second Vatican Council's leaders attempted to give laity a more significant role in the Church. They identified laity as "the People of God" with a role in the "Priesthood of Christ." *Lumen gentium*, chapter three, reiterated the traditional role of the hierarchy and created an ability to interpret the document in various ways.

The 1992 clerical sexual abuse scandal in the Boston Archdiocese gave rise to the Voice of the Faithful (VOTF), an organization that called for change in Church governance. The author of this paper believes Catholics must understand the etiology and nature of the Church before governance change can be accomplished. This paper's thesis is that an educational program can be developed for VOTF lay members that empowers them.

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CHAPTER 1

METHODOLOGY

The author of this thesis-project employs the praxis-theory-praxis methodology of practical theology developed by James N. Poling and Donald S. Miller in *Foundations for a Practical Theology of Ministry*. Poling and Miller write,

The ideal types of practical theology revolve around two axes. The first axis is the critical method, which is to bring together the various interpretations available in the Christian tradition and culture. The second axis is the relationship between Church and society. The relationship between Church and society can be described as the social horizon and context of the locus and the praxis.¹

The two axes can be used to develop a method of practical theology that engenders a new vision of the Church. The theological framework for the process in this thesis is ecclesiology. Research into various types of ecclesiology that influenced the early American Catholic Church plays a significant role in developing a final praxis. The first axis will be used to explore the various traditions that influenced the development of the contemporary American Catholic Church. The second axis will be used to develop the educational program suited to VOTF-SWFL by highlighting the present social situation in the local Church in the Diocese of Venice.

¹ James N. Poling and Donald E. Miller, *Foundations for a Practical Theology of Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1985), 31.

In addition to developing the thesis around Poling and Miller's dual axes, the author employs Thomas Groome's methodology of "shared Christian Praxis."² Groome's first movement, "expressing/naming present praxis,"³ describes the initial praxis and the feelings and values attached to it. In this thesis, the first movement involves an examination of the clerical sexual abuse scandal in the Boston Archdiocese that prompted the establishment of VOTF in Boston, the role of the laity in its formation, and the formation of a VOTF-SWFL chapter in the Diocese of Venice. This requires an understanding of the laity's evolving role in the Church since Vatican Council II. Finally, an overview of VOTF-SWFL's current status highlights the reactionary response from the organized Church. This completes the first step of Groome's initial praxis.

Groome's second movement is a "critical reflection on the present practice"⁴ that deals with the praxis, thought, reason, memory, and imagination. The critical reflection focuses on members' personal experiences in VOTF-SWFL, their home parishes, and results from a national VOTF survey. This information describes VOTF-SWFL members' current practice. The first two movements facilitate a thorough description of the present VOTF-SWFL praxis.

Groome's third movement is "making accessible the Christian story and vision"⁵ that examines the faith-life story of the community as expressed through Scripture,

² Thomas H. Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991).

³ *Ibid.*, 284.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 286.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 288-289.

tradition, liturgy, and the promises and demands of the “Reign of God” (vision) that arise from the story. This involves an examination of VOTF-SWFL’s story/vision appropriate to the generative theme.

Groome’s fourth movement supplies the “hermeneutical lens” through which the author of this thesis-project views the development of an educational curriculum. Groome calls this a dialectical hermeneutic.⁶ This two-way correlation focuses on the Christian story and vision in current praxis and asks how it can affirm, question, and call participants beyond present praxis.

The process requires a description of and theological reflection on early Church governance structures that suggest a model for current VOTF-SWFL praxis. The role of laity in the early Church and the history of clerical hierarchical development provide data for a dialogue on the contemporary roles of laity and clergy. It also suggests possible action steps regarding the Church’s priestly behavioral crisis.

Groome’s fourth movement involves an examination of contemporary lay movements. Liberation theology and its discussion of the “conscientization” of the laity and structural critiques widens the hermeneutical lens and stimulates dialectical interaction between VOTF-SWFL’s vision of Church structure and the current scandal. Movements one through four identify present praxis, offer critical reflection, and supply a hermeneutical lens as a focus for this thesis-project.

⁶ Ibid., 290.

The fifth movement in Groome's methodology is “decision/response for a lived Christian faith.”⁷ This focus offers choices about how to live the Christian faith in the world. It invites renewed praxis, and decisions made in this step must have continuity with the central truth and values of the Christian vision. The decisions help answer questions of loyalty and practices outlined in Vatican II’s *Lumen Gentium*, liberation theology, and the Scriptures.

The author of this thesis-project applies Poling, Miller, and Groome’s methodologies to the problem of clerical sexual abuse in the contemporary Church. The author believes the problems are enhanced by the present hierarchical structure that is unresponsive to congregants outside the inner circle of authoritative control. The goal of this thesis-project is the education of VOTF-SWFL members about alternative governance structures.

The 400 plus membership of VOTF-SWFL includes people from northern parishes who come to southwest Florida for the winter and can carry the message beyond southwest Florida. They attend VOTF-SWFL meetings and speakers’ forums that are part of the organization’s educational programs. The author has conducted an educational series for the organization for six years and will continue the program for the foreseeable future. The series provides an educational program for many VOTF chapters and can reach a larger audience. The proposed curriculum will be used in this setting.

The recent reports of clerical sexual abuse in the United States, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, The Netherlands, Norway, and Belgium alert many laity to the

⁷ Ibid., 291.

widespread abuse of children in the Church. Many laity in the Diocese of Venice decry the behavior and hierarchical status quo. VOTF-SWFL considers critical to its mission the development of an education program that awakens the laity to its responsibilities as baptized Christians of the Church. VOTF-SWFL supports the goal of this thesis-project that emphasizes the role of the laity in the governance of the Church. The next chapter describes the clerical sexual abuse scandal and the development of VOTF and VOTF-SWFL.

CHAPTER 2
PRAXIS I, HISTORY

The Roman Catholic Church's Sexual Abuse Scandal

Cardinal Law, Archbishop of Boston, admitted in a routine June 2001 court filing that he gave Father John J. Geoghan a prestigious assignment as parochial vicar in an affluent suburban parish seventeen years earlier. Law made this assignment despite the fact Law knew two months prior to the assignment that Geoghan had allegedly molested seven boys.¹ Because of Law's revelation, the *Boston Globe's* religion reporter studied reports of other priests in the archdiocese accused of sexual abuse of minors.² Other *Globe* reporters assisted the religion reporter and revealed that Law and other members of the hierarchy knew about the abuse accusations and hid the scandal from public knowledge. The clergy did not protect the clerical sexual abuse victims; instead, they engaged in a cover-up, exposed vulnerable children to abuse, and assigned abusive priests in situations where they continued their behavior with impunity.

The revelations shocked Catholic laity who could comprehend neither the priests' betrayal of children's innocence, priestly vows, and parents' trust, nor the bishops' failure to fulfill their responsibilities. The scandal seemed unbelievable. Past bishops explained

¹ The Investigative Staff of the *Boston Globe*, *Betrayal: The Crisis in the Catholic Church* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2002), ix.

² Ibid.

the abuse accusations as the result of anti-Catholic bias on the part of the secular press or the work of dissident Catholics who attempted to embarrass the Church. This defense lost all credibility after Law's admissions in the court filing about Geoghan's assignment and the *Boston Globe's* subsequent reports about the reassignment of abusive priests.

The firestorm of disbelief and outrage created by the revelations and the scandal's extent shook the foundations of one of America's strongest Catholic dioceses. The laity's shock and outrage was soon directed at Law as a target of discontent. The laity began a series of actions that included withholding donations from the bishop's annual appeal and from parish collection plates. Protestors formed picket lines around the cathedral and called for Law's resignation.³

Mary Jo Bane, a professor of public policy at Harvard University's School of Public Policy and a member of the parish council at St. William's in Dorchester, issued a call to arms. She challenged the Church: "I will give no money to the archdiocese until steps are taken to remedy structural and cultural flaws that created the current crisis."⁴ Bane declared in an op-ed piece, "I urge my fellow Catholics to do the same. Perhaps the Cardinal will pay attention to those of us who love the Church, who grieve for what has happened to it, but who hope for what it can become."⁵

The Catholic laity questioned the Church about what many considered examples of astonishing hypocrisy. For example, the Church kept many priests that molested

³ Ibid., x.

⁴ Mary Jo Bane, "A Challenge to Lay Catholics," *Boston Globe*, February 3, 2002, http://Glackin.boston.com/globe/spotlight/abuse/stories/020302_bane.htm (accessed November 30, 2009).

⁵ The Investigative Staff of the *Boston Globe*, *Betrayal*, 185.

children on its payroll but denied benefits to priests who married adult women. The Church failed to remove priests who touched the genitals of little boys, but fired and evicted a seventy-two year-old nun, Jeannette Normandin, for touching water to a baby's forehead in 2000.⁶ Sixty-seven-year-old Mary Leveck of San Antonio said, "I cannot imagine what is going through the mind of a cardinal who lets priests who change the wine and bread into the Eucharist use those same hands to molest children. . . . It is sinful of the cardinals and bishops who tried to cover this up."⁷

Recent events in the European Roman Catholic Church reinforce the argument for a change in Church governance. The *National Catholic Reporter* headlined a story entitled "Abuse Tsunami" and provided a painful chronology of the abuse crisis "sweeping over Germany, Austria, and Switzerland."⁸ A tsunami begins with an earthquake some distance from the effects of the resulting tsunami. The clerical "earthquake" apparently began with reports of the clerical sexual abuse situation in the Archdiocese of Boston in 2002. The "tsunami" of scandal eventually reached throughout the United States and Europe. The effects of the revelations now affect Rome, and the damage to Benedict the XVI's papacy and his moral authority may be extensive. The long-term effects of the international clerical sexual scandal on the laity, clergy, hierarchy, and the institutional Church are extensive.

⁶ Ibid., 130.

⁷ Ibid., 185-186.

⁸ Christa Pongratz-Lippitt, "Abuse Tsunami-A Painful Chronology of the Crisis Sweeping over Germany, Austria, and Switzerland," *The National Catholic Reporter*, April 2, 2010, 1.

For example, the August 12, 2010, *National Catholic Reporter* included a feature article by Tom Roberts. He wrote,

In statements, speeches, interviews and at least one pastoral letter, bishops in various parts of the world have begun raising provocative questions about whether something intrinsic to the Roman Catholic Church—perhaps its clerical culture, its manner of governance or a combination of such elements—has either caused or abetted the priest sex abuse tragedy.⁹

Roberts cites critical quotes from South Africa, Australia, Austria, and Ireland. He indicates prelates believe that “perhaps deeply ingrained habits that have become inherent to clerical and hierarchical behavior yet are inimical to the message the church proclaims, have contributed to the depth and scope of the scandal.”¹⁰

The statements by the various bishops were not intentionally coordinated and came from a variety of written and spoken sources in different contexts. Roberts noted that Church prelates write and speak about the clerical sexual abuse scandal in ways that are “markedly, and in some instances dramatically, different from the responses and analyses of the problem that have been advanced by bishops in the United States.”¹¹ This suggests the wide range of concern that exists about the extent of the problem in and beyond the United States.

Roberts discussed a May 23, 2010, pastoral letter entitled “Seeing the Faces, Hearing the Voices: A Pentecostal Letter on Sexual Abuse of the Young in the Catholic

⁹ Tom Roberts, “Some Bishops Questioning Clerical Culture,” *The National Catholic Reporter*, August 13, 2010, paragraph 1, <http://ncronline.org/news/accountability/some-bishops-questioning-clerical-culture> (accessed September 24, 2010).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, paragraph 2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, paragraph 5.

Church” written by Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Canberra and Goulburn, Australia.

Roberts says Coleridge’s pastoral letter contains the following elements related to the scandal:

- A poor understanding and communication of the church’s teaching on sexuality shown particularly in a rigorist attitude to the body and sexuality.
- Clerical celibacy . . . may also have been attractive to men in whom there were pedophile tendencies unrecognized when they entered the seminary.
- Certain forms of seminary training, which failed to take proper account of human formation and promoted . . . a kind of institutionalized immaturity.
- Clericalism understood as a hierarchy of power, not service. . . .
- A certain triumphalism in the Catholic Church, an institutional pride. . . .
- The church’s culture of forgiveness, which tends to view things in terms of sin and forgiveness rather than crime and punishment.
- A culture of discretion . . . used to conceal crime and protect the reputation of the church or the image of the priesthood.¹²

The John Jay Report

A John Jay College research team presented a report, *Causes and Contexts of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950 – 2000*, to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in May 2011. The research group used quantitative and qualitative research techniques and focused on the factors that initiated abusive incidents in the 1960s and reached a peak in the 1970s. The investigators also sought to identify factors that led to an increase of incidents in the 1970s and the decline of abuse incidents in the 1980s.

Researchers reported no single cause of the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests. The study focused on social and cultural changes in the 1960s and 1970s and the increased levels of deviant behavior in American society and among Catholic priests in

¹² Ibid., paragraph 10.

the United States. The researchers speculated that social and cultural changes contributed to the vulnerability and behavior of individual priests. The increase in abusive behavior coincided with a rise in other societal behaviors such as drug use, crime, premarital sexual behavior, and divorce.

The report states, “Although no specific institutional support for the increase of incidents is found, factors specific to the Catholic Church contributed to the decline in the mid-1980s.” The factors cited in the decrease of sexual abuse of minors in the Catholic Church included: increased awareness about victimization and the harm of child sexual abuse, changes in statutes related to child sexual abuse, reporting requirements of child abuse and neglect, an understanding of the causes of sexual offending, and expanded research related to treatment of sexual abusers. The report’s finding of a decline in Catholic priests’ abuse behavior in the 1980s seems at odds with reports of many recent incidents of clerical abuse. The incidents of clerical abuse of minors and the reported attempts of diocesan officials to cover up the situation in, for example, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia demonstrate that the scandal continues to affect the American Catholic Church.¹³

Although the John Jay report focuses on the Catholic situation in the United States, the recent spotlight on abuse situations in Western European countries suggests the Catholic Church’s clergy abuse scandal continues. Perhaps the situation in Western Europe, the responses by the European hierarchy, and the Vatican’s reaction to the

¹³ David O’Reilly, “Catholic Church Sexual Abuse Scandal,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 12, 2012.

scandal mirror the American situation. This scandal continues to thwart the remedial efforts of the American hierarchy.

The John Jay researchers discuss the assumption that celibacy and homosexuality were the principal causes of priestly abuse of children. They conclude that these assumptions were incorrect. Many who believe that celibacy and homosexuality are principal causes are unlikely to be convinced otherwise.

Two questions are important about the report: “Are the data reliable?” and “How did the bishops respond to the scandal?” The first question is answered by the researchers’ admission that the report relied solely on data volunteered by the bishops. The fact that the bishops paid for the report raises conflict of interest questions or at least the appearance of a conflict of interest. The second question remains unanswered because the bishops are absent from the report. The investigators report that the bishops seemed uninterested in meeting with abuse victims until late in the process, and their primary concern appeared to be protection of the institution.

The investigators acquiesced to the bishops’ request to trust their data without the investigators’ independent verification of the information, and the report writers identify the lack of an enforcement mechanism for the 2002 Charter for the Protection of Children. Bishops can comply with the Charter or not as they choose, and therefore, the compliance process cannot be completely effective. The author of this thesis-project believes the scandal frustrates Catholics due to the bishops’ seeming ineptitude, powerlessness, or unwillingness to deal with the scandal. Cover-ups continue and increase the frustrations of Catholics, especially the victims of abuse and their families.

The report is an important document, but further reports could answer the concerns of victims and Catholic laity more completely.

The Situation in Southwest Florida

Reports of clerical sexual abuse appeared in southwest Florida, but they did not cause the same level of indignation among Florida's laity as in Boston. For example, the revelations of clerical sexual abuse in Boston did not cause any demonstrations in southwest Florida similar to those in the Boston Archdiocese. The immediate effect of the crisis was confined to a relatively small gathering for a Mass at St. John the Evangelist parish that led to the formation of Voice Of The Faithful of Southwest Florida (VOTF-SWFL).

The author of this thesis-project believes the response to reports of clerical sexual abuse in southwest Florida is less intense because the region's Catholic population is older than in most dioceses. This is especially true in the Naples area of the Diocese of Venice that includes many retirees. Many members of the Catholic population were raised in the pre-Vatican Council II period, and their idea of Church reform focuses on liturgical changes. Laity at a VOTF-SWFL meeting in December, 2010, expressed the expectation that the bishops should handle clerical sexual abuse problems within the Church hierarchy.

The author of this thesis-project observes many older Catholic laity who remember the days when they were told to "pray, pay, and obey." A clear line of demarcation separated the laity from the ordained. The governance responsibilities

within the Church were the sole responsibility and prerogative of the ordained, particularly pastors and bishops. For example, in a November 2, 1906, encyclical, “*Vehementor Nos*,” Pope Pius X stated, “The one duty [of the laity] is to allow [itself] to be led like a docile flock to follow the pastors.”¹⁴ In 1907, the American Catholic hierarchy published a similar directive:

The church is not a republic or a democracy, but a monarchy. . . . All her authority is from above and rests in her Hierarchy. While the faithful of the laity have divinely given rights to receive all the blessed ministries of the church, they have absolutely no right whatsoever to rule and govern.¹⁵

This position of the Church’s hierarchy may be the norm for many contemporary Catholics. After the revelations of clerical sexual abuse and reports of inadequate financial oversight in many dioceses, however, some laity demanded change. Lay attitudes changed when laity became increasingly critical of the hierarchy’s leadership. Some members of the informed laity realized that oversight of bishops is a lay responsibility, and a lack of oversight may have contributed to the Church’s problems.

The realization of the extent of the clerical sexual abuse problem in the Church promotes a call for change from the hierarchy and laity. This thesis-project responds to these problems through a proposed educational program for VOTF-SWFL members. The program informs participants of the laity’s extensive involvement in the early Church and Vatican II’s focus on lay participation in Church governance. This knowledge may promote increased lay governance in the contemporary Church.

¹⁴ Pius X, “*Vehementor Nos*,” quoted in David Gibson, *The Coming Catholic Church: How the Faithful Are Shaping a New American Catholicism* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), 48.

¹⁵ Ibid.

The Formation of the Voice of the Faithful (VOTF)

The laity in the Boston Archdiocese sought a positive method to express their reaction and discontent. Robert E. Muller, a fifty-nine year old cardiologist on the faculty of Harvard Medical School and on the clinical staff of Massachusetts General Hospital, led a movement that seemed to satisfy what many laypersons sought. They formed a lay organization called Voice Of The Faithful (VOTF). Hundreds of people packed VOTF meetings and their websites garnered “hits” from around the world, including the Vatican. In three months, the membership increased to over 6,800 supporters from the Archdiocese of Boston and twenty-two countries. Muller stated, “Now, here we have a billion Catholic laypeople that have no voice against this hierarchy, so we’re trying to create a structure in which one fifth of humanity can have a voice.”¹⁶

VOTF organized under the banner “Keep the faith, change the Church” and adopted a mission statement: “To provide a prayerful voice, attentive to the Spirit, through which the faithful can actively participate in the governance and guidance of the Catholic Church.”¹⁷ VOTF established three goals designed to begin the process of change and healing in the Church:

- Support survivors of sexual abuse
- Support priests of integrity
- Shape structural change within the Catholic Church¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid., 191.

¹⁷ Voice of the Faithful, “Who We Are,” Voice of the Faithful, <http://Glackin.votf.org/whoweare/who-we-are/100> (accessed November 30, 2009).

¹⁸ Ibid.

VOTF's growth was not unopposed. Some theologians and bishops considered the organization a threat to traditional Church values. Opponents expressed concern about VOTF's "structural change" initiatives that they asserted advocate married priesthood, ordination of women, acceptance of homosexuality, and gay marriage.

Some people demanded a return to orthodoxy in opposition to VOTF's goals. Progressives called for reforms such as the ordination of women and married men and a role for the laity in the selection and election of bishops, but conservatives reacted and called for a return to pre-Vatican II practices. Conservatives wanted a renewed emphasis on celibacy, a traditional standard for the training of priests, and a total barring of gay men from seminaries and the priesthood.¹⁹

Conservatives attempted to discredit VOTF and other dissenting voices, and they complained when progressive priests, such as Richard McBrien, were quoted on television or in the press. They attempted to discredit survey polling of Catholics who did not attend weekly Mass, even though the Church counts them as Catholics. Some conservatives invited dissenting Catholics to become Protestants. The *Boston Globe* reported,

Catholic commentators such as William Buckley, Jr. and Patrick Buchanan articulated the conservatives' concerns in newspaper columns, "What the church needs to restore its moral authority, is to stand up to the moral confusion of modernity, not embrace it." Buchanan wrote, "That way is total ruin." The famously conservative editorial board of the *Wall Street Journal* warned, "that we aren't about to join those whose real agenda is to leave the church crushed and humiliated." In addition, Ronald P. McArthur, the president emeritus of Thomas Aquinas College, a conservative Catholic institution in California, argued there

¹⁹ The attempts to blame the sexual abuse situation on homosexual priests began shortly after the clerical sexual abuse scandal was exposed, and continues in many statements by Church authorities.

has been an attempt by so-called theologians, liturgists, and leaders within the church to literally midwife another religion, and that has had real repercussions in the seminaries and in the wider life of the church. What is happening now, if not predictable, is at least compatible with the flight from orthodoxy.²⁰

The conservative reactions to VOTF failed to mention the impact of clerical sexual abuse on victims and the hierarchy's failure to address the situation adequately. They focused on progressive theologians and liturgists, and the traditionalists identified laity as the cause of the crisis and, by implication, the reforms of Vatican Council II.²¹

VOTF members responded that Pope John Paul II was an outspoken proponent of laypeople's important role in changing the Church, and who said in a 1999 apostolic exhortation, "The renewal of the church in America will not be possible without the active presence of the laity. . . . Therefore they [laypersons] are largely responsible for the future of the church."²² In spite of the papal exhortation, many obstacles remain in the Church, particularly by those who believe an active, educated laity threatens orthodoxy.

VOTF and Catholic laity in the Archdiocese of Boston succeeded in their efforts to hold Archbishop Cardinal Law responsible for his conduct in the clerical abuse scandal. Law resigned from his office as Archbishop of Boston, and the Vatican recalled and reassigned him to Rome. Since 2002, VOTF has grown to a worldwide organization of more than 30,000 members.²³

²⁰ The Investigative Staff of the *Boston Globe*, *Betrayal*, 197.

²¹ Ibid.

²² John Paul II, "Ecclesia in America," quoted in The Investigative Staff of the *Boston Globe*, *Betrayal*, 196.

²³ Exact membership numbers are difficult to obtain due to the various VOTF chapters that estimate their membership numbers, and they may vary from location to location.

A national survey of VOTF members reveals their extensive involvement in the ministries of the Church, and the survey results confirm that VOTF members are among the most committed members in their parishes.²⁴ They practice their Catholic faith actively and have a rich personal history of Catholic education. More than 60 percent reported membership on parish committees. Their active participation in parish life extends to service as lectors, Eucharistic ministers, Mass servers, music ministers, and greeters/ushers.²⁵

In spite of VOTF members' extensive Church involvement, the bishops have not approved VOTF's membership or participation in the Church. The lack of lay membership and governance participation are key problems dealt with in this thesis-project. The average layperson lacks understanding of VOTF's goals, and many bishops and conservative Church members describe VOTF's members as dissidents, supporters of abortion rights who favor women's ordination, the abolishment of clerical celibacy, and a married priesthood. VOTF's frequent denials of these charges have been ineffective and perceptions persist of VOTF as a dissident organization excluded from governance.

These issues can be addressed through an educational program focused on the historic, proper role of the laity in Church governance and a need to communicate these ideas more effectively to average parishioners. Many parishioners are content to attend Mass, receive the sacraments, and leave the governance of the institutional Church to the

²⁴ William D'Antonio and Anthony Pogorelc, "2004 Survey of Voice Of The Faithful Members," (paper presented at the Boston College forum "Church in the Twenty First Century," Boston, MA, October 23, 2005). D'Antonio and Pogorelc of Catholic University of America conducted survey research of VOTF members in the United States.

²⁵ Ibid.

hierarchy. Average laypersons can be educated about their responsibilities in the Church and all its ministries, including governance. The challenge is to reach a sufficient number of the VOTF members and communicate the proposed educational program to a responsive audience.

The Formation of VOTF-SWFL

The Diocese of Venice, Southwest Florida, began in 1984 when the Archdiocese of Miami, Florida, was subdivided. The Reverend John Nevins, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Miami, was installed as the first bishop of the newly created diocese. Bishop Nevins reputedly embraced the changes formulated at the Vatican II Council, which concluded in 1965.

Bishop Nevins encouraged diocesan pastors to reach out to the southwestern Florida community that extended beyond the Catholic population. Nevins encouraged community building with the less fortunate in the diocese, especially migrant farm-workers in Immokalee, Florida. He encouraged inter-faith dialogue and attended holocaust memorials held yearly in the synagogues located in his diocese. VOTF-SWFL was founded during his term in office, and he did not oppose it. Nevins allowed parish pastors to relate to VOTF-SWFL as they wished, and some parishes welcomed the organization while others ignored it. He concelebrated a mass with several other priests and deacons soon after VOTF-SWFL's first organizational meeting. VOTF-SWFL celebrates the anniversary of the 2002 mass every year.

Father Thomas Glackin led the Naples parish of Saint John the Evangelist. Glackin encouraged lay participation in parish ministries, welcomed new ideas from the laity, and always gave them credit for parish successes. St. John the Evangelist parish was one of the most successful parishes in the Diocese of Venice and supported many pastoral endeavors in the community and foreign missions. The Church funded and built more than a dozen Habitat for Humanity homes in the Naples area with funds and labor provided by parishioners. It supported a community on the island nation of Trinidad nicknamed "Father Glackin Village." The parish supported a modern music ministry led by an accomplished organist-director, and Glackin made parish facilities available to the local civic organizations for large community meetings. The parish encouraged a well-attended "Teen Life Mass" on Sunday, and the teenagers assisted in the liturgy.

Glackin supported VOTF-SWFL's formation and operations during this period. The organization held its public monthly meetings and speaker's forums in the parish hall. The Board of Directors invited nationally known theologians and speakers who lectured in Naples, and the events soon attracted large audiences. The relationship of VOTF-SWFL and Glackin was one of mutual respect and co-operation during the first two years of the organization's existence, but the situation between the pastor and the VOTF-SWFL became tense over a disagreement concerning the Board's choice of a speaker it invited to St. John's. The board invited Monsignor Joseph Fessio, Chancellor of the newly formed Ave Maria University, to address the VOTF-SWFL membership. The Board of Directors did not consult Glackin prior to extending the invitation and assumed the arrangement presented no problem.

Ave Maria University came to the Naples area with a pre-Vatican II theological and philosophical model of the Church. The university leadership believed nuns should wear medieval-style habits and stay close to the convent. The university restored the Latin rite mass to some of their oratory liturgies and encouraged the return of the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and benediction. Lay participation was confined to the altar guild, Holy Name Society, and university fund raising efforts. St. John the Evangelist parish is community oriented, Ave Maria University is institutionally oriented, and the differences between the two models are profound.

Glackin objected because the VOTF-SWFL Board and Board President Clark did not consult him prior to the invitation. Glackin believed Ave Maria University and Father Fessio's understanding of Catholic Church teachings and theology was detrimental to the Diocese of Venice, and he considered withdrawing his support for VOTF-SWFL and the use of parish facilities for its meetings.²⁶ President Clark called an emergency meeting of the Board of Directors, cited Glackin's objection to Fessio based on differences in theology and Church ministries, and asked the Board of Directors of VOTF-SWFL for a vote to rescind the invitation.²⁷

Clark voted in favor of rescinding the invitation but the remainder of the Board of Directors did not support the motion.²⁸ This was the first major controversial issue that VOTF-SWFL confronted. Fessio came to a VOTF-SWFL membership meeting in the

²⁶ VOTF-SWFL Board of Directors meeting minutes, January 2004.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

parish hall, castigated the organization as harmful to the Church, and recommended dissolution of the local and national VOTF.

Clark restored Glackin's trust in VOTF-SWFL, but members questioned the wisdom of extending the original invitation. The rift between the Board of Directors and Clark over her attempt to rescind the motion continued. The entire Board, with the exception of the president and the secretary, did not run for re-election at the end of their terms.

VOTF-SWFL's Speakers' Forum

Shortly after the founding of VOTF-SWFL, Eugene V. Kennedy suggested that President Clark and the Board of Directors invite prominent Catholic theologians and laypersons to speak at local chapter meetings. Kennedy is a former Catholic priest who wrote several books about clerical sexual abuse. He is a doctor of psychology and a retired university professor who analyzed and confronted clerical sexual abuse since 1968. The VOTF-SWFL Board reviewed Kennedy's idea and developed a speakers' forum.

Kennedy was one of the initial speakers, and subsequent speakers included Thomas P. Doyle, O.P., canon lawyer and advocate for victims of clerical sexual abuse; Jason Berry, author and creator of documentaries regarding the sexual abuse scandal; Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, and *The Gifts of the Jews*; Paul Lakeland, *The Liberation of the Laity*; Charles Curran, *Loyal Dissent*; Donald Cozzens, *Sacred Silence*; Leon J. Podles, *Sacrilege: Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church*; Dennis

O'Brien, *Finding the Voice of the Church*; Robert Blair Kaiser, *A Church in Search of Itself: Benedict XVI and the Battle for the Future*; and Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, eldest daughter of Senator Robert F. Kennedy and former Lieutenant Governor of Maryland, who was active in the cause of women's issues in the Church.

The list of prominent Catholic authors and activists elevated VOTF-SWFL to national prominence in the VOTF, and many speakers and authors sought the opportunity to meet with VOTF-SWFL. For example, the speaker for March 4, 2010, James Carroll, wrote *Constantine's Sword*. Carroll discussed religious intolerance before an ecumenical audience of Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish clergy, and a Moslem Imam. Carroll spoke at Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church because the Catholic Bishop Frank Dewane of the Diocese of Venice forbade the use of Catholic facilities or Church bulletins to advertise VOTF events, but local public television stations and radio broadcasts advertised the event and highlighted some of James Carroll's awards and life's work. His prestige as a reporter for the *Boston Globe* and former Harvard Fellow attracted many from the Jewish community. The reasons for the Dewane's opposition to VOTF-SWFL speakers will be explored in the next chapter in the history since his arrival in the Diocese of Venice.

The motivation for writing this thesis, the education of the Catholic laity, is confirmed by the aforementioned speakers since the inception of the speakers' forum. The guest speakers all emphasized that changes in the Church must come from below, from the laity. The laity has a responsibility for the future of the Church, and they cannot leave the future progress of Catholicism to the Church authorities.

New VOTF-SWFL Board Members

The author of this paper and four others were elected to the VOTF-SWFL Board of Directors in 2004. Clark hoped that the election of the new Board would heal the difficulties created by the Fessio incident. The controversy abated over time, Glackin retired, and Fessio was removed from his position at Ave Maria University.

The Board of Directors met at St. William's parish in Naples while the membership meetings continued at St. John's parish. The pastor of St. William's, Father Joseph Stearns, supported VOTF-SWFL's goals, allowed VOTF-SWFL Board meetings at St. William's, but did not allow membership meetings at his facilities. This reflected some other diocesan clergy who were supportive privately but not publicly. Many permanent parish deacons financially supported VOTF-SWFL privately, and others attended VOTF-SWFL speaker's forums.²⁹

Some members of the Board of Directors of VOTF-SWFL criticized Bishop Nevins during this period. For example, a board member claimed to know Bishop Nevins during Nevins' time as Auxiliary Bishop of Miami and believed the bishop had a role in covering up cases of clerical sexual abuse in the archdiocese. Many board members were upset with Bishop Nevins because he did not answer their attempts to communicate with him. He met with VOTF-SWFL President Clark shortly after the foundation of the organization, but did not respond to requests for a subsequent meeting.

²⁹ President Peg Clark, September 2009.

Individuals wrote letters to the local press critical of Nevins, including letters from VOTF-SWFL Board members. This may explain the Nevins' silence. Despite the lack of communication in the Venice Diocese, Church leadership tolerated and appeared to accept VOTF and VOTF-SWFL during Bishop Nevins' leadership. This tolerance did not survive the selection of Bishop Nevins' successor.

The foundation of VOTF gave rise to a movement of Catholic laypersons that continues relevant growth. The publicity given to incidents of the same clerical sexual abuse in dioceses throughout Europe, Australia, Canada and Africa threatens the moral authority of the hierarchy and papacy. Many Catholics recognize the threat and support abuse victims and the majority of faithful priests and bishops. VOTF is in the forefront of this effort, and VOTF-SWFL joins the effort.

The thesis of this paper is that a program can be developed for the education of VOTF-SWFL lay members that will educate members, encourage their efforts, and change Church governance through lay participation. VOTF-SWFL's growth stimulated subsequent negative diocesan reaction. The next chapter describes VOTF-SWFL's interactions and conflict with Bishop Dewane.

CHAPTER 3

PRAXIS I, RECENT EVENTS

A New Bishop

On April 26, 2006, Pope Benedict XVI named Francis J. Dewane Coadjutor Bishop of the Venice Diocese. Bishop Nevins apparently desired retirement for several months prior to Bishop Dewane's appointment and the Pope agreed to his request. Bishop Dewane was installed as the second bishop of the diocese on July 25, 2006.

Bishop Dewane had a delayed vocation to the Roman Catholic Church priesthood. Dewane worked for the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) in Moscow, Russia, and then for a subsidiary of PepsiCo in New York City. Upon his ordination, he was appointed to the Diocese of Green Bay as an assistant pastor and worked for the Green Bay Diocesan Tribunal from 1988 until 2001. Following that period, he began a career as a functionary for the Vatican in various assignments until his appointment to the Diocese of Venice, Florida. The three-year period in the Diocese of Green Bay constituted his pastoral experience.¹

Bishop Dewane earned a reputation as a conservative who brought his corporate experiences to his role as bishop. This style of governance puts the bishop at odds with many lay groups in the diocese. This is especially true in the case of

¹ Saint John Newman High School, "Diocese of Venice Florida, Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane," <http://www.sjnceltics.com/diocese-and-parishes.html> (accessed May 15, 2012).

organizations he believes do not conform with his ideas of orthodoxy. The bishop constantly criticized lay organizations such as Call to Action, Corpus, *Pax Christi*, and Voice Of The Faithful. Bishop Dewane does not allow these organizations to meet in Catholic Churches in the diocese, nor will he allow publication of their meetings or events in parish bulletins.

VOTF-SWFL and Bishop Dewane

The recent history of VOTF-SWFL has been impacted by the retirement of Bishop John Nevins of the Diocese of Venice. Bishop Dewane was installed as co-adjutor of the diocese. He immediately began a reorganization of the Venice Diocese in accordance with his conservative ideas of governance of Catholic dioceses.

The new bishop attended parish functions (liturgies and other devotions) in the Diocese unannounced and was critical of some practices of the individual parishes. He reportedly criticized his pastors for what he perceived as deviations from official Church policy. He began a systematic replacement of pastors he believed were influenced by the teachings of Vatican II, teachings he believed to be “liberal” and needed correction. Replacement pastors came from the ranks of newly ordained priests considered more conservative than the priests they replaced.

Father Thomas Glackin was “encouraged” to retire. He was an early supporter of VOTF-SWFL and concelebrated a Mass in 2002 for the victims of clerical sexual abuse. Bishop Dewane did not support VOTF-SWFL, and he would not allow the anniversary Mass to take place at St. John’s parish after Father Glackin retired in October 2009.

Dewane appointed a new pastor, the Very Reverend John J. Ludden, to St. John's, and Ludden reportedly said that he did not believe that VOTF-SWFL had the same beliefs about the Eucharist that he held.² Father Ludden did not specify his beliefs about the Eucharist or the beliefs of VOTF-SWFL relative to the Eucharist or any other doctrines of the Catholic Church. This vague accusation is similar to other charges alleged against VOTF when the critics of the organization state changes in Church governance require changes in doctrines of the Catholic Church.

Bishop Dewane issued a directive to all the parishes in the Diocese that parish bulletins could no longer carry announcements of VOTF-SWFL's membership meetings or any of their speakers' forums. As stated above, the bishop required prior approval of any speaker scheduled to speak on Catholic Church property, and he issued a blanket refusal to all speakers scheduled by VOTF-SWFL on the grounds he did not approve their Honorary Board of Advisors.³

Father Joseph Stearns, Pastor of Saint William's Parish, allowed VOTF-SWFL board meetings at the parish facilities once a month since its inception in 2002. Bishop Dewane transferred Stearns soon after the bishop's arrival, and the pastor appointed Father George Ratzmann in Stearns' place. Ratzmann refused further board meetings on Church property, but he gave no explanation for the change in pastoral practice.

² John J. Luden, letter to Peg Clark, President of VOTF-SWFL that denied permission to celebrate the annual anniversary Mass at St. John the Evangelist parish, February 9, 2009.

³ The Honorary Advisory Board of Directors of VOTF-SWFL includes: Eugene C. Kennedy, PhD, Thomas Doyle, OP, JCD, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Anthony Padovano, PhD, Charles Curran, PhD, Robert Blair Kaiser, James Carroll, Donald Cozzens, PhD, Jason Berry, and Leon J. Podles, PhD.

The arrival of Bishop Dewane changed the parish structure of Saint John the Evangelist Parish to the detriment of VOTF-SWFL in a dramatic fashion. For example, Bishop Dewane and Father Glackin had very diverse views on parish governance. The bishop is an ultraconservative in his governing philosophy, but Father Glackin reflected the mode of a Vatican II pastor and was more open to lay views on parish governance. VOTF-SWFL had flourished and grown in this welcoming atmosphere.

For example, Bishop Dewane desired to take control of all parish financial assets and “reform” the diocese. He wanted every parish to contribute 28 percent of their incomes to the diocesan chancery. He specified certain banks for depositing collections and wanted control of all monies collected in the parishes. Father Glackin resisted the order to turn over control of funds collected for specific charities such as Habitat for Humanity and missions the parish supported. A reported confrontation took place between the bishop and Father Glackin. The pastor held his ground that the money for those specific missions of his parishioners was separate from parish offerings and not subject to the 28 percent diocesan tax.

Shortly after this incident took place, Father Glackin announced his retirement in October 2008. This was a setback to the future of VOTF-SWFL in that Father Glackin was a key supporter of the organization. Shortly after Father Glackin retired, there were extensive personnel changes at Saint John’s parish. Employees suspected of affiliation with VOTF-SWFL were summarily dismissed. Employees were instructed not to attend any functions of the organization.

After Father Glackin's retirement and the appointment of Father Ludden as Pastor of St. John's, the VOTF-SWFL continued to meet at the Church. The situation became one of tense tolerance. Schedules of the monthly meetings could not be advertised in the parish bulletins, and some people who were not regular members of the organization began attending the meetings. The custom at the meetings is to ask if anyone is attending the meeting for the first time or is new to VOTF-SWFL. The answers given by the unfamiliar attendees were often vague; some stated they were just listening. They were made welcome and asked to take part in the meeting if they so desired. Employees of the parish sympathetic to the organization began to report that certain parishioners, friendly to the new pastor, Father Ludden, were asked to attend the VOTF-SWFL meetings and report to him.

This uncomfortable situation lasted from approximately November 2009 until April 2010 when the situation became untenable. The anniversary Mass celebrating VOTF-SWFL's founding did not take place after denial of Church facilities for the Mass. The employee firings took place during this period, and one long-time employee was suddenly let go after it was reported she attended a Mass celebrated by Father Glackin in a parishioner's home. She was not told this was the cause of her dismissal, but no reason was given after twenty- three years of service to the parish. After these incidents, the decision to change the meeting venue was made at the end of the season by the Board of Directors.

The Board of Director's monthly meetings are currently held at a local bakery restaurant, and the membership meetings at the Collier County local office, where

meeting rooms are available for public use. After a period of adjustment meeting attendance has increased to normal levels. VOTF-SWFL has built a mailing list of its membership, including email capabilities. This includes a phone list that enables the organization to provide meeting and events notices to the membership.

Bishop Dewane attempted to stifle VOTF-SWFL's growth and ignored all efforts to communicate with him regarding his effort to marginalize the organization as non-Catholic dissidents. For example, VOTF-SWFL sent numerous letters to the bishop and invitations to attend the speakers' forums as a guest, but he did not respond. He and his pastors send members of their congregations who report the presence of VOTF-SWFL meeting attendees and the topics discussed. The bishop refused requests to celebrate Mass for victims of clerical sexual abuse sponsored by VOTF-SWFL. He celebrated a separate Mass in 2008 for the victims but read a prepared statement with apologetic arguments exonerating the hierarchy of all responsibility for its role in the scandal.

Bishop Dewane interfered with VOTF-SWFL's speakers' forum. In February 2008, Dewane denied Father Charles Curran permission to speak at Saint John the Evangelist Parish or any other parish in the Diocese of Venice. Curran is a Catholic Professor of Religious Ethics at Southern Methodist University (SMU) and a priest in good standing in the Diocese of Rochester, New York. Arrangements were made for Curran to speak at Saint Katherine's Greek Orthodox Church in Naples, where he spoke to an overflow crowd. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, former Lieutenant Governor of Maryland and eldest child of the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy, was scheduled to speak

at St. Katherine's in March 2008. The pastor of Saint Katherine's notified VOTF-SWFL's President Clark of the VOTF that his bishop informed him speakers sponsored by VOTF-SWFL could not speak in his facility.

In a September 22, 2008, letter addressed to President Peg Clark of VOTF-SWFL, Bishop Dewane explained his rejection of the speakers' forum: "I am perplexed you would ask me to approve of speakers, sponsored by an organization with an 'Honorary Advisory Board of Directors' of which you (President Peg Clark) already know I do not approve. . . . I can inform you that the speakers will not be approved to speak on diocesan property." Tension continued between VOTF-SWFL participants and the bishop.

These incidents brought many letters to the *Naples Daily News*. Most of them criticized Bishop Dewane's behavior, and some called it a denial of freedom of speech. Bishop Dewane's spokesperson denied the incident was an issue of freedom of speech and stated it was based on Church doctrine, but the issue of Church doctrine was never explained in the chancery's response. Some letters supported Dewane, but others did not, including one writer who declared the laity who built and supported the Church owned it, not the bishop. The author of this paper wrote two letters critical of the bishop and his actions hoping to draw a chancery response, but to no avail.

VOTF-SWFL, Bishop Dewane, and Finances

A VOTF goal is to promote change in the church through governance revisions because increased lay involvement in diocesan and parish finances may affect church governance positively. The VOTF-SWFL membership reflected this position, called for

increased financial oversight in the Diocese of Venice, and requested financial reports from the chancery. Diocesan officials advised the correspondents to review the financial reports published in the diocesan newspaper. These reports were not audited by independent accountants and were judged inadequate by persons acquainted with accounting practices. Several VOTF-SWFL board members were accountants and had experience with major corporate financial practices.

Requests for similar information sent to Dewane were met by slow responses and outright refusal to supply the requested information. Audits were eventually provided to VOTF-SWFL, but they were incomplete and, in some cases, inaccurate.⁴ Bishop Dewane continues to ignore competent laypersons who offer help in financial matters and resists appointing financial advisory boards. When parishes and dioceses appoint financial boards, the boards lack authority and serve only consultive roles. Many informed laypeople consider this system ineffective for financial oversight.

VOTF-SWFL's requests for financial information were consistent with the Catholic laity's position on issues of financial oversight and disclosure. The Center for the Study of Church Management of Villanova University and Zogby International conducted a survey in 2002 for the Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities, Inc. (FADICA). Results revealed that some practicing Catholics had misgivings about the church's use of their contributions, perhaps in response to the many lawsuits that resulted from the clerical sexual abuse scandal.

⁴ General audits provided by the diocese in its regular releases to the parishes of the diocese.

Villanova University sponsors a yearly meeting of economists who gather to discuss economic issues concerning issues related to Church finances. The 2002 survey and its findings are reported on Villanova's website: Villanova University Fourth National Survey of Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities.

Survey highlights reveal:

- The percentage of regular Mass attending Catholics who agreed that the church should be made more accountable on church financial issues increased from 65% in 2002 to 70% in 2004. . . .
- The percentage of regular Mass attending Catholics who were concerned that the financial impact of the settlements would affect the ability of the church to meet its mission increased from 55% [in 2002] to 65% in 2004. . . .
- More than three-fourths (77%) of the 2004 sample of regular Mass attending Catholics agree that dioceses should publicly certify that they are in compliance with the national standards of financial reporting established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. . . .
- In both 2002 and 2004, more than three-fourths of Mass attending Catholics (78% in 2002, 76% in 2004) agreed that each diocesan bishop should give a full accounting of financial costs and settlements arising from the scandal. . . .
- More than three fifths of regular Mass attending Catholics agreed there should be an independent audit of church finances at every level, with results to be released publically, although the number decreased from 66% in 2002 to 61% in 2004.⁵

The report continues:

Catholics continue to indicate that the clergy abuse scandal has affected their willingness to support the church financially. In the 2004 survey, 14% of regular Mass attending Catholics indicated that they had decreased their parish giving or stopped giving altogether; at the diocesan level, the comparable figure was 17%; and the figure for national collections was 19%. At the same time, 8% increased their contributions to the parish; 5% are contributing more to diocesan collections, and 5% are contributing more to national second collections.⁶

⁵ Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities, "FADICA 2004 Catholic Donor Attitude Survey," No city: FADICA, Inc., 2004, <http://Glackin.villanova.edu/business/assets/documents/excellence/church/2004donorsurvey.pdf> (accessed September 20, 2010).

⁶ Ibid.

The survey illustrates average Catholic laypersons' concern that their contributions be used for positive purposes in parish operations. This survey helps justify parishioners in Diocese of Venice parishes who withhold funds from the bishop's various appeals. VOTF-SWFL's focus on financial support may help facilitate organizational change.

Bishop Dewane and John Hushon

John Hushon, a trustee of the national VOTF and involved in the American Catholic Council, which is an organization of many organizations united in their purpose to bring about reform in the Catholic Church, published an essay in the March 2010 *Catholica*. The essay detailed Diocese of Venice issues since the arrival of Bishop Frank Dewane in 2007 and criticized the bishop on the following grounds:

- Bishop Dewane had very little prior pastoral experience. He is an “efficient hyper-conservative” and very close to the Vatican where he visits frequently.
- Bishop Dewane has a controlling management style. He apparently wants to counteract the reforms of Vatican II, especially as it pertains to the role of the laity in the diocese. He appears unannounced at parish liturgies and is reported to have criticized his pastors for what he believes are liturgical “deviations.” He has replaced many pastors with priests he recruits from abroad and from newly ordained seminarians whom he considers sufficiently “orthodox.”
- He abolished the permanent diaconate program in the diocese, and the bishop has “accepted” the resignations of many active deacons as of March 31, 2010.

- The bishop calls pastors on Monday mornings if his “loyalists” report practices they believe unacceptable to the bishop.
- The bishop’s office has instructed pastors that no women are to be Eucharistic ministers, lectors, or acolytes when the bishop presides at a parish liturgy.
- Bishop Dewane requires that diocesan parishes offer a Latin Mass once a month. He purchased an unused Church building and established a Latin-only Tridentine Mass program using priests from what Hushon calls the “canonically suspect” Order of St. Peter.
- Bishop Dewane’s management style has been extended to the parishes in the diocese. Parish councils have been dissolved.

Hushon wrote the following at the conclusion of his essay:

A Personal Note: While I have not personally experienced all of the events described above, I have collected them from sources I believe to be reliable—and earlier drafts of this essay have been reviewed by others. My own experience bears out these policies. I am well educated (Brown, Harvard) and was a successful international lawyer and CEO of a multinational energy company before retirement. After retirement and obtaining a graduate degree in theology, I had been chair of a social justice group, a teacher in the RCIA program, sponsored a well-attended theology series with outside speakers, taught an adult religious education program with a syllabus pre-filed with the pastor, and was a trustee and volunteer at many charities, organizations and institutions of higher learning. I co-chair[ed the] American Catholic Council. In January 2009, I was advised by the pastor that because of my activities (which were “demonstrably at variance with the teachings of the Magisterium of Holy Mother the Church”), “we” will no longer permit you to teach or exercise positions of leadership in the parish. I was advised that I was not welcome in my parish and “should not embarrass myself” by presenting myself for Eucharist. In connection with my work for a major national relief charity, I had chaired major fund raising activities and visited clinics, schools and hospitals. The Chancery advised this organization that, if I remained a trustee, no diocesan funds would be made available to the organization and the organization would be removed from eligibility from receiving funds restricted to those on the approved “Catholic List”—nationally. I

therefore resigned from all of the diocesan and parish activities and resigned from the charity.⁷

The incidents cited above involved many of the active laity in the diocese and were reported and discussed at VOTF-SWFL meetings. The concerns expressed were punctuated by expressions of members' futile attempts to bring these incidents to the attention of Bishop Dewane's superiors. Their inquiries went unanswered as if they were of no importance. The indifference of the hierarchy, Dewane's superiors, and most of the diocesan laity concerns many VOTF-SWFL members.

The author of this paper wrote Bishop Dewane in August 2010 informing him that the author would cite some of Hushon's criticisms included in his article and gave Dewane opportunity to respond. The letter was delivered to the Chancery, on August 13, 2010. As of August 9, 2011, neither Dewane nor his office staff responded.

The author sent a similar questionnaire to author John Hushon by email requesting documentation of his assertions. Hushon responded that the difficulty in verifying many of the criticisms he cited in his article resulted from his sources' desire for confidentiality. He cited their fear of retaliation by the bishop as the reason for their reluctance because many are diocesan priests or employees.

VOTF-SWFL's Additional Challenges

VOTF-SWFL faces several additional challenges that influence its effectiveness. First, Dewane's and diocesan clergy's ambivalence toward VOTF-SWFL affects its ability to attract more members because the majority of the parishes do not allow their

⁷ John Hushon, "How to Ruin a Diocese," e-bulletin from *Catholica*, March 19, 2010.

parish bulletins to carry meeting notices or schedules of VOTF-SWFL-sponsored events. As a result, few young laypeople became members of VOTF-SWFL, which causes a problem because the membership is aging and lacks younger replacements. Currently, the same active people plan and implement VOTF-SWFL programs, but the future demands additional active members.

Second, an estimated 400 VOTF-SWFL members are “snowbirds” or part time residents who are active in VOTF chapters elsewhere. They are involved in VOTF-SWFL to a limited degree, but do not fulfill many chapter tasks when they are in Florida. They are a transient group, and they limit their commitment to the local chapter.

Third, diverse ideas surface in a group drawn from many regions and multiple dioceses about VOTF-SWFL’s mission and potential accomplishments. Some suggest that VOTF-SWFL should be involved in and promote change in Church governance. Others believe VOTF-SWFL should monitor how the institutional Church and its hierarchy handle clerical sexual abuse. These two goals raise questions about how to govern the organization and monitor it simultaneously. The combination of the two roles may be incompatible.

Fourth, VOTF-SWFL members often reiterate incidents of clerical sexual abuse in membership meetings. These tragic reports should be made public; however, they consume meeting time and limit discussion about current issues that affect the Church and VOTF-SWFL’s membership. The author’s personal observation may be too critical of members who need to express their frustrations over the ongoing clerical sexual abuse scandal their bishop seems to ignore.

Fifth, VOTF-SWFL members celebrated an anniversary mass at St. John's parish every February that marked the local chapter's foundation. The St. John's parish bulletin and local press attention to the anniversary mass celebration brought new members and contributions to the chapter. The annual celebration continued until February 2009, when St. John's new pastor disallowed the chapter's anniversary Mass on Church property. The Mass served as a chapter recruitment tool that is not easily replaced.

The author of this paper believes an educational effort that supports progressive Catholics can help make changes in Church governance. The international reports of clerical sexual abuse indicate clergys' widespread abuse of children in the Church. The need for efforts that awaken the laity to their responsibilities as baptized Christians in the Church is a critical mission of VOTF-SWFL. It affirms this paper's thesis that an educational program that emphasizes the role of the laity in Church governance must be developed. Praxis II will be concerned with oppression of the laity and the clergy in the Church.

CHAPTER 4
THEORY, THE ECCLESIOLOGY OF THE EARLY CHURCH
AND THE HIERARCHICAL SYSTEM

The early church survived for many reasons, and each Christian community faced unique challenges. For example, the writer of 1 Timothy stresses the need for structure and personal discipline. This structure includes a bishop and deacons who must live exemplary lives. The model of presbyter with teaching authority may have been adopted from the Essenes, as described in the Dead Sea scrolls.¹

Colossians and Ephesians present a Pauline structural model of the church based on the human body (Col. 1:24-25, Eph. 1:22-23). The Church is identified as the kingdom of the Son of Man on earth, and the kingdom of Christ and God (Col. 1:18). It is the element of holiness within the Church that keeps it alive.

The Pauline heritage described in Luke/Acts can be characterized as the Church and the Spirit (Acts 4:31).² Lucan ecclesiology adopts a sense of community that appeared in the history of Israel. The role of the Spirit is emphasized because the Spirit

¹ Norman Golb, *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls? The Search for the Secret of Qumran* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 71.

² The place where the meeting was held could be characterized as a Church “And they were filled with the Holy Spirit.”

was active in the prophets of Israel, the events leading to the birth of Jesus, and in Jesus who sent the Spirit to take His place on earth and insured the Church's continuity.

The concept of the gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed on all the baptized comes from the apostolic period in the Church. Paul expresses the idea of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the metaphor of the body of Christ:

Now you are the body of Christ and each of you is a part of it. And God has appointed the first of all the Apostles, second its prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, and those able to help others, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have the gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? However, eagerly desire the greatest gifts. (1 Cor. 12:27-31 NIV Rainbow Study Edition)

The different roles in the Apostolic Church community suggest a distinction of charisms, but not limited to the ordained members. This ancient form and practice of collegiality is a model and provides a basis for collegiality within the contemporary Church. A lesson from 1 Corinthians 12:27-31 is that no one possesses all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There should be no division in the body of Christ, and all should work for the good of the Church.

Elements of the Petrine heritage found in 1 Peter emphasize a sense of belonging, and include Christian Gentiles who become part of a new family and a part of the Israelites' heritage (1 Peter 1:3).³ Gentiles received God's mercy, became part of the chosen race, and Christian conversion provides a positive gain that reinforces belonging to the Church. As long as this feeling survives, the Church will survive.

³ The pericope gives us a recital of recipients throughout Asia Minor; therefore, it could be fair to assume many were Gentile converts.

The structural heritage of the beloved disciple, John, emphasizes the personal relationship of an individual to Christ (John 15:5). Jesus is the believer's animating principle, and Jesus is the shepherd, or the vine to which the branches (believers) are attached. The core of the Johannine ecclesiology is a sacramental imagery of Jesus as the life giver who remains with the Church through the sacraments.⁴ In the ecclesiology of the Epistle of John, the Church is sustained by the belief that the Holy Spirit is always with Christians and keeps them in the path of truth.

The norm and image of the Church of Matthew is the teaching of Jesus. Laws, charisms, and teaching offices are measured against the teachings and actions of Jesus. The Church that is faithful to these ideals will survive. Richard McBrien states in *The Church* that the Church existed before Pentecost and cites commentators who refer to the pre-Pentecost Christian community as a "Jesus movement."⁵ Further, McBrien writes,

The community of disciples did, in fact, remain together after Jesus was rejected and crucified, faithful to the Lord's charge at the Last Supper to "Do this in remembrance of me." The Jesus movement in the post crucifixion Church reinforced by Jesus instruction to Peter to "strengthen your brothers" gives credence to the idea that the disciples understood this as an instruction that they should remain together (Luke 22:31-34).⁶

⁴ The Catholic Church derives from the gospels (including John) that many of Jesus' acts, for example the wedding at Cana, the calling of the Apostles (Holy Orders), the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper, and the baptism of Jesus, were institutions of the Sacraments.

⁵ Richard P. McBrien, *The Church: The Evolution of Catholicism* (New York: Harper Collins 2009), 33.

⁶Ibid., 31.

For McBrien this indicates there never was a “churchless period in the New Testament following the Resurrection.”⁷

Eventually the Christian community adopted a structured hierarchical model.⁸ Perhaps Vatican II participants tried to revive a participatory body of Christ imagery in an attempt to encourage the laity to assume their responsibilities as baptized Christians. The idea of collegiality in the church universal was a focal theme of the Council.⁹

Early Christianity

This section describes the history of early Christianity from its humble beginnings to the later Catholic Church and its clerical caste system. The author of this paper believes the clerical caste system threatens the concept of the “People of God” envisioned in Vatican Council II. An examination of how the episcopacy came into being and the rise of the monarchical papacy sheds light on the development of what Cardinal Suenens described as a monarchical, oligarchical, and democratic structure.¹⁰ A premise of this thesis is that the democratic component has been neglected and stifled, and the encouragement of a clerical caste system separated the clergy from the laity. The author of this paper believes it led to the abuse of clerical power, contributed to the sexual abuse

⁷ Ibid., 3.

⁸ Hans Küng, *The Catholic Church: A Short History*, trans. John Bowden (New York: Modern Library, 2001), 21.

⁹ *Lumen Gentium* (L.G.) Chapter 3:23, in Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: Constitutions Decrees Declarations* (Northport, NY: Costello, 1996).

¹⁰ Quoted in Paul Lakeland, *The Liberation of the Laity: In Search of an Accountable Church* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 103.

scandal, violated the laity's trust in the episcopacy and the priesthood, and promoted violations of pastoral ethics.

The historical development of the Catholic hierarchical structure is based on the "apostolic succession" tradition.¹¹ Advocates of this tradition believe authority comes in a direct line from the original apostles to the current pope and Church organization. Modern analysis of the Scriptures, based on the historical-critical method, does not validate the claim.¹² The only references in Scripture that pertain to leadership in the Christian community are, for example, 1 Timothy and 1 Peter that list required qualities of Church leaders without mentioning "apostolic succession."

The Post Apostolic Church

The early Church Fathers defined the role of Church leadership, and church documents of that period describe the idea of Church leadership election by the laity. For example, *The Didache or the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* dates from the second century and states, "You must then elect for yourselves bishops and deacons who are a credit to the Lord, men who are gentle, generous, faithful and well tried."¹³ In AD 215, St. Hippolytus of Rome writes in the *Apostolic Tradition* (2-3),

Let the bishop be ordained as we appointed above, having been elected by all the people. When he has been named and found pleasing to all, let the people come

¹¹ Küng, *The Catholic Church*, 21.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, Commonly Called the *Didache*," quoted in Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *Electing Our Bishops: How the Catholic Church Should Choose its Leaders* (Plymouth, UK: Rowan and Littlefield, 2007), 14.

together with the presbyters, and any bishops who are present on the Lord's day. When all give their consent they lay hands on him, and the presbytery stands in silence.¹⁴

The teachings of Hippolytus indicate this was a two-step process, first the election of a bishop by the laity followed by ordination.

St. Cyprian was Bishop of Carthage in North Africa (248-258) and a major figure in the early Church.¹⁵ O'Callaghan quotes Cyprian's biographer that Cyprian was elected "by the judgment of God and the favor of the people"¹⁶ According to O'Callaghan, Cyprian answered objections to his election by saying the actions of his opponents were "against your vote (*suffragium*) and God's judgment."¹⁷

Throughout the first thousand years of Christianity, local laity and clergy elected bishops and sometimes the Pope.¹⁸ They often chose candidates from among persons they knew. Father Richard McBrien addressed an audience at Fairfield University in May 2006, and he stated that the election of bishops by the clergy and laity is "not a matter of speculation: it is a fact."¹⁹ McBrien quoted St. Cyprian: "It comes from divine authority

¹⁴ Hippolytus of Rome, *Apostolic Tradition*, quoted in *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Averil Cameron, Bryan Ward-Perkins, and Michael Whitby, eds., *Late Antiquity Empire and Successors A.D. 425-600*, vol. 14 of *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 222.

¹⁹ Richard McBrien, "Theologian Cites Long History of Electing Bishops," *American Catholic*, June/July 2006, 1.

that a bishop be chosen in the presence of the people before the eyes of all and that he be approved worthy and fit by public judgment and testimony.”²⁰

Cyprian is the principal early Christian writer who championed the cause of community participation in the election of bishops. He gave the most details concerning the elective process. Because of the Roman persecution of the early Church, Cyprian “felt impelled to employ the traditional and tested practice of electing bishops in order to preserve the stability and unity of the Church.”²¹

Emperor Constantine reinforced the nascent hierarchical Church structure at the Council of Nicea in AD 325. The Roman Emperor Constantine called the Council, convened the imperial synod, and guided it through a compliant bishop and imperial commissars. Constantine made the resolutions of the Council imperial laws by endorsing them, and he used the Council to organize the Church along the same lines as a state, in essence assimilating the organization of the state into the Church. The Church provinces corresponded to the imperial provinces (dioceses), each with a provincial synod that, along with other church business, elected bishops.²² Constantine created a structured Church that adopted a creed and was dominated by a slogan: “One God, one Emperor, one Empire, one Church, and one Faith.”²³

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ O’Callaghan, *Electing Our Bishops*, 17.

²² Küng, *The Catholic Church*, 21-23.

²³ Ibid., 37.

The Roman Empire in the West disintegrated in the fifth century, and a struggle for dominance in the Western Church began among various nobles, kings, and Holy Roman emperors. The Papacy asserted its right to appoint bishops during this period, but without much success. The various parties realized they could control the church by appointing bishops, a lesson Constantine learned in his struggle to unite and control the Roman Empire.²⁴

Richard McBrien stated in a lecture at Fairfield University, “An ‘unholy alliance of Church and State’ was formed (to control the process of bishops’ appointments). The political forces triumphed and election was replaced with selection, by both the secular and religious authorities.”²⁵ The current practice of papal appointment and removal of bishops appears to have begun in 1801, under a concordat signed by Napoleon Bonaparte and Pope Pius VII.²⁶

David Gibson writes that the concordat did not accomplish the goal of papal appointment of bishops immediately. At the time of Pope Leo XII, who died in 1829, the state appointed 555 of 646 (85.9%) bishops of Latin Rite dioceses under Rome, cathedral chapters appointed 67 (10.4%) , and the Pope appointed only 24 (3.7%). In the twentieth century, however, the situation reversed; of the approximately 2000 or more residential Sees in 1975, the Vatican in the name of the Pope, directly appointed bishops for about 1805 Sees (90%), while states under ancient concordat agreements appointed fewer than

²⁴ Ibid., 27.

²⁵ McBrien, “Theologian Cites Long History of Electing Bishops.”

²⁶ Küng, *The Catholic Church*, 155.

200 bishops. Cathedral chapters in about 20 ancient European dioceses appointed fewer than 20 bishops.²⁷

Power in the Church

Historically the Bishops of Rome asserted that their authority extends over the entire Church, but their claim has varying degrees of validity.²⁸ In reality, for example, the Patriarch of Constantinople, with the support of the Byzantine emperors, was the real political power in the Church from the time of Constantine until the West-East schism. The popes relied heavily on the spiritual text from Matthew (16:18), “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church,” but contemporary scholars debate the precise meaning of this text. The popes also relied on the claim that the Donation of Constantine gave the Bishop of Rome the city of Rome and the western half of the empire, but the Donation is a forgery.²⁹ Using these documents and other early writings of the Bishops of Rome, subsequent popes attempted to exert political and spiritual power in the Western Church.³⁰

Rome called the Council of Trent (1545-1563) as a Counter-Reformation effort and developed the idea of the Roman Catholic Church as a perfect society. William Lindsey writes, “Bellarmine’s perfect society model prevailed from the Tridentine period

²⁷ David Gibson, *The Coming Catholic Church* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), 312.

²⁸ Küng, *The Catholic Church*, 42.

²⁹ Ernest F. Henderson, *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages* (1910; repr., Internet Medieval Source Book, Fordham University, 1996).

³⁰ Küng, *The Catholic Church*, 43-44.

of the Church through the first Vatican Council and up to Vatican II.”³¹ This “perfect society” needed no secular influences because advocates believed it contained everything necessary for the mission of bringing the faithful to salvation.³² Robert Bellarmine, a canon lawyer raised to the title of Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius XI in 1930, raised the question: “Who is a Christian?” His answer was, “One who obeys the Pope and the pastors he has appointed over them.”³³ This may be the inspiration for what Catholic laity commonly referred to as “Pray, Pay, and Obey.”

Pope Pius IX exercised his power in 1864, published his “Syllabus of Errors,” and declared that everything he opposed in the modern world including science, philosophy, theology, and some contemporary authors were guilty of the error of “modernism.”³⁴ In 1870 at Vatican Council I, over the objections of many leading Catholic churchmen, Pius IX declared two Papal Dogmas.³⁵

1. The pope has a legally binding primacy of jurisdiction over every single national church and every individual Christian.

³¹ William D. Lindsey, “Edward Schillebeeck: An Appreciation,” *The Progressive Catholic Voice* Blog, entry posted January 16, 2010, http://theprogressivecatholicvoice.blogspot.com/2010_01_01_archive.html.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Küng, *The Catholic Church*, 175.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 166.

³⁵ Norman Tanner, ed., “Decrees of the First Vatican Council: Session 4, Chapter 3.2 and Chapter 4.9,” in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* <http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/V1.HRM#6> (accessed March 11, 2013).

2. The pope possesses the gift of infallibility in his own solemn magisterial decisions. These solemn (*ex cathedra*) decisions are infallible, by the divine assistance promised him in blessed Peter, which the divine Redeemer willed his Church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith and morals, and not by the consent of the Church, irreformable.

This assumption of power by the hierarchy can be traced back to the vacuum created by the dissolution of the Western Roman Empire that was quickly filled by secular and religious aristocracies including the bishops and powerful monastic abbots.³⁶ St. Cyprian's advice was forgotten in this transition: "It comes from Divine authority that a bishop is chosen in the presence of the people before the eyes of all, and that he be approved worthy and fit by public judgment and testimony."³⁷ The author of this paper asserts that power in any political, religious, or communal organization comes from two sources:

1. Power that comes from the consent of those affected by the use of that power.
2. Power that comes from monarchy, autocracy, and dictatorship. Usually they claim their authority comes from a "Divine Right."

The first source is the root of democracy, a concept that is unacceptable to those who derive their authority from the second source. Cardinal Suenens stated, "There are within the Church elements which are monarchical, others which are oligarchical, and others

³⁶ Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *Electing Our Bishops: How the Catholic Church Should Choose Its Leaders* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 2007), 51-52.

which are democratic. . . . The Church stands in need of a widespread exercise of apostolic co-responsibility on the part of the laity.”³⁸ The next section describes the bishop’s role in the Church.

The Role of Bishops in the Church

Early Church leaders gradually developed the role of powerful Church offices; however, the author of this paper believes the study of scripture does not support a historical hierarchy at the time of the Apostles. The development of the various offices that make up the hierarchical structure of the Church grew out of necessity in various Church communities. The history of the Johannine community is an example of the hierarchical offices development. At the inception of the community, there does not appear to be any hierarchical structure or any community leaders other than the “Beloved Disciple.” It was only later that some of the Johannine community were accepted into the more formally structured Apostolic churches.³⁹

The development of the hierarchical structure and the power the hierarchy assumed were described earlier in this thesis. The organization and the structure of the Church since the time of Constantine have great pastoral implications, but the

³⁷ Richard McBrien, “Bishops and the Pope,” *Essays in Theology*, entry posted June 6, 2011, <http://ncronline.org/blogs/essays-theology/bishops-and-pope> (accessed June 4, 2012).

³⁸ Leo Jozef Cardinal Suenens, “Our Church” (1970; repr., *Vatican II: Voice of the Church*, http://vatican2voice.org/5depth/our_church.htm) (accessed June 4, 2012).

³⁹ This analysis of events in the Johannine community is taken from Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979).

applications should be limited. Hans Küng discusses the development of the hierarchical structure of the Church and its necessary limitations:

All in all, it was a meaningful historical development that gave the Christian communities both continuity, in time, coherence in space, or as one could also put it, catholicity in time and space. So it is not to be criticized as long as it is used in the spirit of the Gospel for the benefit of men and women and not to preserve the power of the hierarchs. In a word, the succession of the bishops is functional rather than historical; the activity of the bishops is rooted in the preaching of the Gospel, and they should support other charisms rather than quench them. In particular, prophets and teachers had their own authority.⁴⁰

Chapter 3 in the documents of Vatican II, “The Churches Hierarchical,” reiterates the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church regarding historical succession of the hierarchy. However, there is an emphasis on the pastoral component of the office of bishop:

Sent as he is by the father to govern his family, a Bishop should keep before his eyes the example of the good Shepherd, who came not to be served but to serve, [cf. Matthew 20:28, and Mark (10:45] and to lay down his life for his sheep [cf. John 10:11]. Taken from among human beings and subject to weakness himself, he can sympathize with those who are ignorant and erring [cf. Hebrews 5:1-2]. He should not refuse to listen to his subjects whose welfare he promotes as his very own children and whom he urges to cooperate readily with him.⁴¹

Some theologians study the role of bishops and this revived concept of leadership in the local church. The bishops are no longer seen as papal vicars or as a high priest of the local Church; instead, they are recognized as spiritual leaders of the diocese. For example, Father Thomas O’Meara calls for a spirituality of ministry that envisions the office of bishop and presbyter:

⁴⁰ Küng, *The Catholic Church*, 22-23.

⁴¹ Flannery, *Vatican Council II: Constitutions Decrees Declarations*, 38-39.

As the leaders of the local churches, bishops and presbyters find their authority in their leadership but their leadership is not purely administrative or liturgical. The pastors' leadership is not simply directing but being a source of community life in ministry. The pastor directs Christians through enabling them in their own ministries—that leadership is expressed in preaching and made manifest in leading the Eucharistic liturgy. An integral aspect, then, of being presbyter and Bishop is to facilitate and coordinate ministries for the local Church. This involves attracting, educating, and directing an ensemble of ministries and not just hiring and controlling people.⁴²

The overall emphasis on the bishops' ministry as administrative has weakened the spiritual role of the office. O' Meara believes that this weakening occurred through "an attempt to elevate and isolate the will of authority, and by an exaggerated guarantee of teaching the Faith."⁴³ O'Meara identifies "anti-elements" to a spiritual ministry that include control that hinders the carrying out of ministry. As it relates to the ecclesiastic in the Roman Catholic Church, control allows for a grand sweep of authority and power that claims to be divine. Control produces, among other consequences, expensive lawsuits concerning sexual misconduct: "Controlling personalities' disdain for others explains bad pastoral decisions, insulted communities, and charismatic initiative suppressed."⁴⁴ The control issue is the "anti-element" that an educated laity must understand to develop successful collegiality among Church ministries.

The promise of collegiality that appeared imminent in 1965 is not yet a reality, and collegiality is necessary for successful shared responsibility and governance. The idea of the hierarchy leading the Church through a collegial method of governance has

⁴² Thomas F. O'Meara, *Theology of Ministry* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 182.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 236.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 242.

not been achieved, and the idea of collegiality among clergy and laity is not discussed in the institutional Church. This suggests Vatican II is not a completed success because the governance of the Church remains the same as it was prior to Vatican II.

Father John Markey, O.P., a former theology professor at Barry University, stated,

Vatican II was a revolution; it fundamentally altered the structures that no one could have foreseen or planned. It is a revolution because it is not over yet. We are in the middle or early stage of transformation that takes years to complete and it is beyond the power of anyone to control.⁴⁵

Suenens used the idea of “co-responsibility” in the Church to extend the Council’s desire for collegiality of the bishops into a collegiality of the faithful with the pastor of the local parish.⁴⁶ The extension of collegiality to the faithful and the local pastor allows the priesthood of believers to support the ministerial priesthood. The gifts or charismata of the faithful play an important role in building the church and do not usurp the role of the ministerial priesthood. They complement it.

⁴⁵ John Markey quoted in David Gibson, *The Coming Catholic Church* (New York: Harper Collins 2003), 13.

⁴⁶ Suenens, “Our Church” (accessed June 4, 2012).

CHAPTER 5

THEORY, THE ROLE OF THE LAITY

The Laity in Communion Ecclesiology

Dennis Doyle states,

There is a tension between the views of Karl Rahner and Pope John Paul II in their understanding of Church. Rahner emphasizes the role of the Spirit in the Church as key to implementing Vatican II, while the pope believes the key is the recognition that salvation comes explicitly through Christ.¹

If the role of the Spirit is emphasized, it seems that the charisms conveyed to all members of the Church imply a spiritual equality that is expressed through diversity of ministry. The role of the laity in the liturgy changes from one of passive observer to active participant in many diverse roles such as lay Eucharistic ministers to lectors and, in certain instances, as preachers. The ordained priest effectuates the Eucharist, but it is the whole community, including but not limited to the ordained, that offers community gifts to the Father.

The ecclesiology of communion implies that the laity is a part of the royal priesthood of Christ, that this priesthood is conveyed by baptism and the Holy Spirit through sacramental communion, and is theirs as a right. This right cannot be diminished

¹ Dennis Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology: Visions and Versions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 83.

by the institutional Church.² This right is not in opposition to the right of the ordained ministry but is complementary to it. Like all rights, however, it includes responsibility. Jean-Marie Tillard clarifies the connection between rights and responsibilities by stating “because they are in communion with all other Christians-fully responsible for building up the Church, and for service of the Gospel, no matter what their station in life. The hierarchy itself derives this right from the very essence of Communion and it is in the service of this right that the Church is hierarchically constructed.”³ It follows that this service of the Gospel includes encouraging the laity to exercise a more active role in the church.

Lumen Gentium seems to have two “models” of the Church found in chapters two and three.⁴ Without attempting a synthesis of the two, there need be no opposition to one or the other, but they can be viewed as two parts of the whole Church as Communion. It remains to the theologians to develop a synthesis or at least a consensus of the understanding of Church that includes both the hierarchy and the laity in their respective, active roles. Can Catholics achieve a reasonable consensus? When clergy and laity answer that rhetorical question, perhaps the dialogue can begin.

² Code of Canon Law, Canon 212: “They (the laity) have the right, indeed at times the duty, in keeping with their knowledge, competence and position, to manifest to sacred Pastors their views.”

³ Jean-Marie Tillard, *Church of Churches: The Ecclesiology of Communion*, trans. R. C. De Peaux (1987; repr. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992 [French orig, 1987]), 121.

⁴ “Dogmatic Constitution of the Church *Lumen Gentium*,” http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_fatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html (accessed June 8, 2012).

Cardinal Bernardin, just three months prior to his death, announced an initiative to restore constructive discussion between conservative and liberal factions of the American Church.⁵ He called it the Catholic Common Ground Initiative, and it was the subject of his last major public address, on October 24, 1996. By that time, the initiative had attracted wide attention in the Catholic and secular press and was received with enthusiasm and opposition. The statement was the product of three years of work by a group of laypeople and clergy. Among the items or problems proposed for discussion was the “manner of decision making and consultation in Church governance.”

The list of topics offered for discussion contained items of concern to liberals and conservatives. Liberals’ concerns included women’s roles, sensitivity to minority groups, and consultation and relations between Rome and the American Church. The items of concern to conservatives were religious education, the survival of schools with a distinct religious identity, and theological accountability to authoritative teachings. The statement touches on the differences between Church teachings and the practice of many Catholics regarding human sexuality.

Cardinal Bernardin was known as leader of the liberal wing of the American Catholic Church, but he also had a reputation as a skilled mediator.⁶ Realizing some conservatives would view his liberal credentials with suspicion, he invited many

⁵ Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, “Faithful and Hopeful: The Catholic Common Ground Project,” <http://archives.archchicago.org/JCBpdfs/JCBatcommonground.pdf> (accessed June 16, 2012).

⁶ Peter Steinfelds, “Cardinal Bernardin Dies at 68; Reconciling Voice in Church,” *New York Times*, November 15, 1996, <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/11/15/us/cardinal-bernardin-dies-at-68-reconciling-voice-in-church.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm> (accessed June 16, 2012).

conservatives, liberals, and moderates into the committee. Among others, the committee was comprised of two cardinals, two archbishops, and three bishops. Included were papal favorites Mary Ann Glendon, Harvard Law School Professor, and Michael Novak, a respected conservative author. The list of invitees included right to life advocates former governor of Pennsylvania Robert P. Casey and historian John T. Noonan. Barry Sullivan, a Chicago banker, and John Sweeney, President of the AFL-CIO represented the laity.

Cardinal Bernardin avoided the more passionate advocates of both sides and the clergy representatives were known for their scholarship and spirituality, and some for social activism. The committee included no advocates of heresy.⁷ After inviting a representative group from both sides of the issues confronting the Church, Cardinal Bernardin may have been disappointed and dismayed by the reaction of some of his fellow cardinals to his initiative. Within hours of announcing the initiative, Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston publicly criticized the document, in particular the “Call to Be Catholic” statement. Cardinal Law criticized this document as having a fundamental flaw because it appealed to dialogue as a path to common ground. Cardinal Law stated,

The Church already has a common ground. It is found in sacred Scripture and tradition, and is mediated to us as authoritative and binding of the church. Dissent from revealed truth or authoritative teaching of the Church cannot be “dialogued away.” Truth and dissent from truth are not equal partners.⁸

⁷ In fact the critique of Cardinal Bernardin’s initiative never cited the panel members, liberal or conservative, for heretical views.

⁸ A complete version of Cardinal Bernardin’s initiative can be found in Chapter 1 of Stiefels book along with Cardinal Law’s comments quoted in Peter Steinfels, *A People Adrift: The Crisis in the Roman Catholic Church in America* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2003), 25.

Cardinals Hickey of Washington, DC, Anthony Bevilacqua of Philadelphia, and Adam Maida of Detroit joined Cardinal Law in criticizing Bernadins' "Common Ground Initiative."

Cardinal Bernardin replied to the criticism in a statement on August 29, 1996, and posed questions and answers to the opposition positions. This attempt to diffuse some of the divisive issues in the American Catholic Church led to more controversy and emphasized the polarity of the liberals and conservatives. Dialogue, however, is essential for issue resolution.

The author of this paper believes that conservatives must initiate any future efforts for meaningful dialogue involving conservatives and liberals in the United States. For example, former president Richard Nixon visited communist China in the early 1970s. Perhaps only a conservative president could bring about the thawing of relations between China and the United States because conservatives would not accept efforts by a liberal president. The political atmosphere at that time was still focused on who was to blame for losing China to the communists. The Viet Nam debacle was recent and blame was argued in strident terms. The nation was polarized, but Nixon made the courageous effort and broke the logjam.

Perhaps a conservative voice will initiate a meaningful dialogue between liberals and conservatives in the Catholic Church. This effort could produce a clarification of the issues in contention, and when parties in dispute know the boundaries of the issues, they can begin to solve the problem. At the present time, however, it appears that a majority of

the United States bishops refuse to meet with groups they view as dissident. As Cardinal Mahoney of Los Angeles is reputed to have remarked, “What are we afraid of?”⁹

The idea of shared governance need not be one of control, and governance can be shared without a constant struggle for dominance.¹⁰ Democracy is a model of shared governance, and democratic principles can be the goal of the hierarchy and laity. The question is: How can this goal be achieved? Paul Lakeland calls for a conscientization of the laity that he defines as the “primary awakening of the community”:

The conscientization of large segments of the Catholic laity, at least in Massachusetts, took place in the full glare of the media spotlight during the early months of 2002 and was symbolized in the extraordinary growth of the Voice of the Faithful [VOTF] from a few hundred members to about sixteen thousand during the first half of the year.¹¹

Lakeland asserts that the oppression of the laity is a “structural oppression.”¹²

The hierarchy believes the laity is not an important part of the structure of the institutional Church and does not have a role in the governance of the church, and they give the laity a minor role in the minds of most of the hierarchy. This is not surprising because many laypersons see their role as merely serving the Church, which for them is the institutional Church. Many of the laity do not view the Church as a communion of the faithful, and they view their participation as insignificant in building the Church

⁹ Donald Cozzens, *Sacred Silence: Denial and the Crisis in the Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), 5.

¹⁰ Lakeland, *The Liberation of the Laity*, 183.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹² *Ibid.*, 187.

compared to the role of the ordained.¹³ This concept of the institutional Church is a part of the American culture, which is slow to accept the communion ecclesiology of the People of God.

Most of the American hierarchy assumed a defensive posture in the face of growing questioning of their leadership abilities by lay movements such as Voice of the Faithful and Call to Action.¹⁴ Members of the hierarchy question the motivation of these movements' constituencies and oppose them by arguing, for example, that they undermine the Church and give aid to anti-Catholic forces. The bishops and many lay persons view the public media as anti-Catholic because they think the media seek to criticize the Church.¹⁵

For many years, bishops and laity saw the hierarchy as the only source of Church authority. The liturgy included laity reading Scripture, but they were never given a prominent role before Vatican II. The scriptural messages about the exercise of Church leadership were not central to the Church before Vatican II. The Cardinal-Archbishops of the major Archdioceses in the United States were often referred to as, "New York said this" or "Boston said that." With such a mentality it is not surprising that these prelates viewed themselves as the personification of the Archdioceses.

¹³ Ibid., 216.

¹⁴ The Investigative Staff of the Boston Globe, *Betrayal*, 196.

¹⁵ Ibid., 197.

Lakeland believes governance patterns can change. He proposes that change will not come if the laity looks to the bishops, priests, or deacons for their freedom. He suggests clergy's passive role would be most helpful and could allow the laity to work out its own place in the structure of the Church. Many progressive bishops and priests can be helpful in the process, but the laity must assume a leadership position.

Lakeland points out, "This is not laity versus Church leadership, still less about laity versus clergy,"¹⁶ but he observes that change must come from below. This seems evident because most contemporary members of the Church hierarchy believe that no radical change is necessary, the few problems can be corrected, and the Church can return to where it was before the abuse problems came to light. Lakeland believes the laity must realize its oppressed state through a process of "naming and facing their oppression."¹⁷ Lakeland calls for a conscientization of the laity for it to act on its own behalf. As an example, he cites the conscientization of the laity in Massachusetts that produced the Voice of the Faithful. Lakeland claims this example demonstrates the effectiveness of the process that leads to the "Liberation of the Laity."¹⁸

The example of the Voice Of The Faithful in Boston as a model of the conscientization process indicates that this requires more than just the education of the laity. It requires the realization that the laity is oppressed when it feels helpless and

¹⁶ Lakeland, *The Liberation of the Laity*, 187.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 189.

outraged in the face of the sexual abuse scandal and the subsequent cover up by some bishops. Once the laity recognizes its oppressed state, the next step is the assumption of its rightful role in Church governance. Trusteeships in the American Catholic Church provide an example for consideration.

Trusteeships in the American Catholic Church

The organization of trusteeships in the American Roman Catholic Church developed during the Revolutionary War era when the movement for independence and self-government was popular. The American legal system endorsed the idea of the separation of church and state and encouraged the development of the trustee system by classifying churches as corporations or voluntary associations that could be incorporated with their own constitutions and with lay trustees that would be responsible for the corporation's financial and legal affairs.¹⁹ The trustees handled the temporal affairs of the parish.

Two types of trusteeships were popular in the church before 1820: the first type gave trustees control over all the financial affairs of the parish without clergy representation on the governing board. They could hire and fire the priests under this system.²⁰ The second form of trusteeship included clergy as *ex officio* members of the Board of Trustees, and priests had a voice in parish decisions.

¹⁹ Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism: History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 30.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

Popular elections were considered a natural right and a natural consequence of American democracy.²¹ Elections included selection of trustees, pastors, and bishops. Mathew Carey, a prominent American Catholic layman, suggested calling a convention of American Roman Catholics to consider the subject of the election of bishops and eventually sent an agent to Rome to negotiate the issue.²²

Freedom, described as the spirit of independence, was another principle advocated by Catholics. Carey noted that freedom exercised in the civil realm had produced a corresponding independent spirit in Church affairs. He did not believe the European style of absolutism and the arbitrary exercise of authority was suited to the American style of independence. This does not mean rejecting the spiritual supremacy of the Apostolic See, but keeping it as a bond of unity.²³

Republican principles held that there was a need for a written constitution, and constitution writing had a long heritage in the republican era.²⁴ For example, in Scott County, Kentucky, Catholics organized as a religious society in 1806, and they designed the first four articles to regulate the local Church in Scott County. This constitution served as a protection against the arbitrary use of authority by incorporating certain checks and balances into the government the local Church. The constitution also

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 34.

²³ Ibid., 35.

²⁴ Ibid., 34.

described the areas of responsibility for clergy and laity.²⁵ Four principles provided the rationale for the trustee system in the American Catholic community: the sovereignty of the people, popular elections, religious freedom, and a written constitution.

The trusteeship system confronted an institutional Church brought to the United States during the immigration period, and the trustee system caused conflict with the newly arrived hierarchy from Europe. This system of church governance lasted in the United States until the 1830s when the hierarchy, with the Vatican's approval, fought for control of the parishes in their dioceses. Eventually the trustee system was abolished in the United States, but it was not without a long and sometimes contentious struggle.²⁶ Some bishops fear a return to a trustee system of governance when they learn that the VOTF wants to increase lay participation in Church governance.²⁷ VOTF does encourage its members to participate in parish, diocesan, and financial councils, but the author of this paper has not heard of VOTF participants who advocate a wholesale return to a Church trustee system.

Vatican II: The Role of the Laity

The Vatican II documents have special relevance in this paper, in particular the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church *Lumen Gentium*. Chapter 2, paragraph 12, of

²⁵ Ibid., 35.

²⁶ Ibid., 49. A complete history of the early American Church can be found in: Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism*, 1-51.

²⁷ The former bishop of the Diocese of Venice, John Nevins, voiced this concern regarding the Voice Of The Faithful in his homilies at various local parishes. This is anecdotal and not verified in documentation.

Lumen Gentium emphasizes that the gifts of the Holy Spirit make the people of God “fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church.”²⁸ The concept of gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed on all the baptized developed in the apostolic period of the Church. St. Paul expresses this principally within the metaphor of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27-31).

The different roles within the apostolic church suggest a distinction of charismas, and not a differentiation between “lay” and “ordained.” This ancient collegial form and practice is a model that could provide a basis for the collegiality within the contemporary church. A lesson of Paul’s passage is that no one possesses all the gifts of the Holy Spirit; therefore, there should be no division of the Body of Christ. All should work together for the good of the Church. Perhaps the Vatican II writers in *Lumen Gentium* described the Church as the “people of God” to encourage the laity to assume their responsibilities as baptized Christians. The idea of collegiality in the Church universal was a focal theme of the Council.²⁹

Cardinal Suenens used the idea of “co-responsibility” in the Church to express the Council’s desire to extend the collegiality among bishops to the faithful and the pastor of the local parish.³⁰ The gifts or *charismata* of the faithful

²⁸ Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, 17. See also, “Dogmatic Constitution of the Church *Lumen Gentium*, Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on November 21, 1964, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_fatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html (accessed June 8, 2012).

²⁹ John W. O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2008), 7

³⁰ Lakeland, *The Liberation of the Laity*, 79.

are important in building the Church, complement the ministerial priesthood's role, but do not usurp it. The Vatican II Council documents describe the laity's duty:

[The laity] is, by reason of knowledge, competence or outstanding ability which they may enjoy, permitted and sometimes even obliged to express their opinion on those things which concern the good of the Church.

Let the spiritual shepherds recognize and promote the dignity as well as responsibility of the laity in the Church. Let them willingly employ their prudent advice. Let them confidently assign duties to them in the service of the Church, allowing them freedom and room for action. . . . Let them encourage lay people so that they may undertake tasks on their own initiative. Attentively in Christ, let them consider with fatherly love the projects, suggestions and desires proposed by the laity. However, let the shepherds respectfully acknowledge that just freedom which belongs to everyone in this earthly city. (*Lumen Gentium*, IV, 37)³¹

The Vatican II document *Apostolicam Actuositatem: Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People* “addresses itself to the laity, whose proper and indispensable role in the mission of the Church has been dealt with in other documents.”³² Regarding the role of the Church in the work of redemption, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* suggests that the laity, in carrying out the mission of the Church, exercises its apostolate in the world and in the Church. The document raises the question of grave errors that undermine religion, the moral order, and human society. As such, the document “exhorts laymen—each according to his own gifts of intelligence and leaning—to be more diligent in doing what

³¹ “Dogmatic Constitution of the Church *Lumen Gentium*,” http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_fatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html (accessed June 8, 2012).

³² “Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on November 18, 1965, www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_1965_1119_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html (accessed June 8, 2012). See also Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, 403.

they can to explain, defend, and properly apply Christian principles to the problems of our era in accordance with the mind of the Church.”³³

The author of this paper believes the goals of VOTF-SWFL accord with this Vatican II language. The tragedy is that many of the bishops in the United States, when confronted with the activities of an educated laity, respond with accusations of unauthorized dissent. The Vatican II Council declaration on religious freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae*, states,

The Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. [Freedom of this kind means everyone should] be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and any human power in such wise that no [men or women are] forced to act in a manner contrary to [their] own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits.

The Council further declares that the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself. (Paragraph 2)³⁴

This general principle applies to everyone including members of the institutional Catholic Church. As a result, the Bishop of the Diocese of Venice does not have the right to deny anyone the right to speak on Church property concerning religious matters. The bishop seems to believe he protects doctrines and teachings of the Church. The bishop’s position, however, contradicts Canon 215 and the right to found organizations and associations that foster Christian vocation, Canon 212 and the right and responsibility in

³³ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (accessed June 8, 2012). See also Flannery, 412.

³⁴ “Declaration of Religious Freedom *Dignitatis Humanae* on the Right of the Person and of Communities to Social and Civil Freedom in Matters Religious, Promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965,” http://www.Vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207 (accessed June 8, 2012). See also Flannery, 552-553.

keeping with their knowledge, competence, and position to manifest to the clergy their views on matters which concern the good of the Church, and Canon 220 the right to a good reputation.³⁵ Perhaps the actions of some bishops, including the Bishop of Venice, indicate they do not believe VOTF-SWFL and its speakers are concerned with religious matters, such as the integrity of the teachings of the Vatican II Council.

Thomas O'Meara writes, "[T]he spirituality of the bishop over the past century has also been neglected, weakened by an over emphasis placed on his administrative authority, an attempt to elevate and isolate the will of authority, and by an exaggerated guarantee of teaching the Faith."³⁶ O'Meara identifies what he terms "anti-elements": to a spiritual ministry that includes, among others, control as a hindrance to carrying out of ministry. As it relates to the ecclesiastic in the Roman Catholic Church, control allows for a grand sweep of authority and power that claims to be divine. The result of control produces, among other consequences, expensive lawsuits concerning sexual misconduct. "Controlling personalities' disdain for others explains bad pastoral decisions, insulted communities, and charismatic initiative suppressed."³⁷ This control issue is the anti-element that an educated laity has to be concerned with if there is to be successful collegiality among ministries in the church.

³⁵ Code of Canon Law, Title I. The Obligations and Rights of All the Christian Faithful, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/___PU.HTM (accessed June 8, 2012).

³⁶ O'Meara, *Theology of Ministry*, 236.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 242.

The Bishop of Venice apparently restricts himself to an administrative role and has neglected his role as pastor, a role that requires openness to the ideas and concerns of all laity in the diocese. He listens to traditionalists' ideas, but does not listen to progressive ideas, stating through his press secretary to local newspapers that the bishop protects Church teachings. Perhaps he holds the view that all Church teachings are infallible and cannot be discussed by the laity without an attack on the Church. This restrictive idea in defense of the Church damages the intellectual life of fellow Catholics.

Lumen Gentium, Chapter 3 reiterates the official teaching of Roman Catholic Church regarding the traditional role of the bishops; however, Vatican II emphasized dialogue and collegiality among the hierarchy, a goal that has yet to be realized.³⁸ Praxis II will explore the possibility of changing the governance of the Catholic Church by the process of the conscientization of the laity through education and an effort to select and elect bishops.

³⁸ O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 7, 11.

CHAPTER 6

PRAXIS II, OPPRESSION AND CONSCIENTIZATION

The *American Heritage Dictionary, College Edition* defines oppression as “to subjugate or persecute by unjust or tyrannical use of force.” In *The Liberation of the Laity*, Paul Lakeland asks the question: “Given the fact of lay exclusion in the Church, why it is there is little or no organized attempt to change this?” He answers,

The low level of protest at the role of lay people in the Church is a product of the systematic or structural oppression of the laity. The concept of structural oppression was developed in religious reflection, first of all in the Latin American theology of liberation, but is now a commonplace of all liberation theologies. It is particularly important to understand the precise character of this notion of oppression. The concept draws attention to actual structures within a particular society, in this case the Catholic Church, which results in oppression, while they may or may not have been set up with the intention of oppression. It also leaves open the question whether or not those who benefit from the oppressive structures do so consciously, accidentally, or by default. Certain oppressive structures, such as chattel slavery or *apartheid*, are consciously intended systematic oppressions. Others such as societies that are *de facto* rather than *de jure* racist, or which demonstrate elements of patriarchy reveal systematic oppression that may not be so consciously intended, at least in its origins, but is not necessarily less oppressive. Thus systematic oppression by no means requires that we understand the individual’s positions of power within the system to be consciously engaged in the physical or emotional abuse of those victimized by the structures.¹

¹ Paul Lakeland, *The Liberation of the Laity: In Search of an Accountable Church* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 194-195.

Based on Lakeland's views, the structural oppression of the laity in the Catholic Church does not require that the clergy oppresses non-clergy consciously and the oppressors may themselves be victims of the system. Lakeland's writings may explain why little opposition appears among the lay majority of the Catholic clerical system. The adage of "pray, pay and obey" may not be consciously taught, but it may be deeply ingrained in the system.

VOTF members often express their faith in the Catholic Church as "pray, pay and partially obey" and are labeled "Cafeteria Catholics." This designation implies VOTF members somehow are less Catholic and are dissidents. This attitude may invite further oppression and treatment of VOTF members as inferior to the "true believers," especially conservative believers, clergy, and hierarchy. The members of VOTF may conclude that the traditional division between clergy and laity systematically subordinates and undervalues the lay lifestyle, lay talent, lay leadership, lay experience, and lay spirituality.²

Lakeland writes, "Racism, sexism, and clericalism all at root are moved by a belief, however inchoate, in the lesser humanity or lesser intelligence of the oppressed group, thus justifying the subordinate position in which the underclass is then to be maintained."³ He adds,

It may seem a serious exaggeration to argue that the Catholic clergy believe the Catholic laity to be less human or less intelligent than priests or bishops. Of

² Ibid., 194.

³ Ibid., 195.

course, none of them would ever say that, and perhaps none of them would ever think that. But the patterns of behavior and the structures of the lay/clerical divide within the Catholic Church suggest the fact that the laity are systematically treated *as if* they have lesser talents and are of lesser account.⁴

The clerical authorities' oppressive behavior may be an effort to enhance the status, prestige, and authority of the clergy and reinforce their superior positions in the Church. The root of the problem may also be that increasing the ministerial functions of the laity threatens the ordained clergy and their traditional roles in the sacramental life of the Church. The accretion of power in the clerical role over the centuries may result from conceptions in the Church that all power and authority resides in the clergy.

The problem endemic to the lay/clergy distinction is not solely an administrative or attitudinal one, though there are elements of both of these at work. It is at root a theological problem inherent in the notion of relationship between ordained ministry and various forms of leadership, though one that becomes apparent as it does only because of the purely accidental exclusion of women and married men from the ranks of (ordained) leaders. In other words, any questionable or even negative elements in the historical association in the Catholic tradition between the ordained ministry and authority are masked just so long as the restriction of ordination to celibates and men goes unquestioned. When such restrictions are scrutinized, and particularly when their connection to leadership is examined, and the essentially ideological argument for continuance is uncovered, a theological argument against them is the more likely to be mounted.⁵

Women's liberation advocates in the contemporary Catholic academic community discuss the ordination of women, but theological arguments concerning the connection between the ordained ministry and positions of leadership and authority are incomplete.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 196-197.

If the Catholic Church lacks theological study of governance, how can this situation be studied from a lay perspective? The VOTF-SWFL is attempting to accomplish the third objective of VOTF: “Change the structure of governance in the Catholic Church.” The majority of bishops and many conservative lay persons, however, view this objective with suspicion and skepticism. Every Catholic theologian and scholar who addressed the VOTF-SWFL membership believes this effort must come from below, from an informed laity, and not from current Church leaders.

Lakeland writes, “The first step in the emergence from structural oppression is for the laity to move from depression to recognition of their oppression, and the prerequisite of this is to be able to name their own oppression. In liberation theology, such a step is called ‘conscientization’ and it is the primary awakening of a community, through which it begins the struggle to pass from being an object or victim of history, as defined by someone else, to subject of its own history.”⁶ The next section describes the recognition of oppression based on liberation theology and the conscientization of the laity.

Conscientization

A difficult problem for the VOTF and the VOTF-SWFL is that the Catholic laity does not seem to recognize their oppressed situation produced by the current clerical culture. In order to emerge from this oppression, they must name their oppression, and liberation theology advocates call this process “conscientization,” the primary awakening

⁶ Ibid., 197-198.

of a community.⁷ Proponents believe conscientization to be the beginning of a struggle from being history's victim, possibly defined by someone else, to a subject of one's own history.⁸ Lay people can begin to take charge of their own status in the Church through conscientization.

The laity begin to assert their independence when they take charge of their own destiny and reclaim adulthood from those who infantilized them as victims, At this point they challenge their oppressors to relinquish their monopoly on power, but the holders of power may respond and attempt to strengthen their hold on power. The following emphasizes the point: "The conscientization of large segments of the Catholic laity, at least in Massachusetts, took place in the full glare of the media spotlight during the early months of 2002 and was symbolized in the extraordinary growth of Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) from a few hundred members to about sixteen thousand during the first half of the year."⁹

As discussed earlier, the Archdiocese of Boston was the scene of large demonstrations by churchgoing Catholics who protested the behavior of their Church leaders and archbishop who was recalled to Rome (as noted in history of VOTF). The author of this paper believes the demonstrations reflected the conscientization of the laity. The demonstrators quickly moved to the issue of Church governance. They realized the

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 198-99.

⁹ Ibid., 198.

Cardinal's mishandling of the clerical abuse situation hinted at a more serious problem in the structural design of Church governance. In order to deal with their perception, they spread their message beyond the Boston Archdiocese. Many Catholic laity across the United States agreed with the Bostonian protests, and some joined VOTF. The process of conscientization did not take place in the same degree in other places, including Southwest Florida. For example, the teachings of Vatican II concerning the important role of the laity in the Church, have not been realized in the Diocese of Venice, Florida.

In order to realize VOTF's goal and change Catholic Church governance, the author of this paper provides an educational effort to reach uninvolved Catholic laity. The effort begins with the membership of VOTF-SWFL who desire fundamental change in the Church, a change that must start from below because the hierarchy maintains the status quo. The American Catholic hierarchy has the financial strength to stand up to the Vatican Curia, but they apparently have neither the will nor desire to act in an independent manner on decisions affecting the American Catholic Church. The question remains: How does the progressive Catholic laity accomplish the change they believe is necessary in the wake of the clerical abuse scandal that has negatively affected the Church and the moral authority of the hierarchy? An answer is to change Church governance including Church leadership selection methods, particularly the bishops. The next chapter explores the feasibility of accomplishing that goal.

CHAPTER 7

PRAXIS II: CONTEMPORARY SELECTION AND ELECTION OF BISHOPS

The National Review Board (NRB), appointed by the United States Conference of Bishops, issued a 2004 document and reported that witnesses questioned by the Board believed the bishops involved in the abuse scandal had departed from the ideal set forth by the Vatican II Council. The witnesses' testimony indicated they believed the pool of candidates should be reviewed. The witnesses believed priests who spoke their minds "were seldom chosen bishops and bishops who did so were not likely to be made archbishops or cardinals." The predictable result was that priests and bishops did not speak out when the situation demanded.¹ Witnesses stressed the need to broaden the search for suitable candidates and urged "greater involvement by the laity in the selection of bishops could help ensure that future bishops are pastors, prophets, and men of honor and not mere management functionaries."²

The second Vatican Council seemed to change the concept of the Catholic Church's hierarchical structure from one of pyramid, a top down authoritarian Church, to that of a communal concept: "The People of God." Advocates of this concept emphasize

¹ The National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People Established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *A Report on the Crisis in the Catholic Church in the United States* (Washington, DC: USCB, 2004), 127-129.

² Ibid.

the whole body of the faithful as the “People of God,” including pope, bishops, priests, and laity. This communal concept is not evident in actions by Church leadership. For example, the 1964 *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter 3, “The Hierarchical Structure of the Church” reinforced the prior model of a top down structure. The 1965 document *Christus Dominus, The Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops*, affirms the “apostolic office of the bishop was instituted by Christ the Lord,” and that the pope “has the proper, special, and, as of right, exclusive power to appoint and install bishops.”³ The right of the secular authorities to nominate, approve, or appoint bishops under concordats negotiated with several secular rulers over the years appears to be the main concern of this decree. On that issue the council declared that in the future:

No more rights or privileges of election, nomination, presentation, or designation for the office of bishop be granted to civil authorities. The civil authorities . . . are most kindly requested voluntarily to renounce the above-mentioned rights and privileges which they presently enjoy by reason of a treaty or custom, after discussing the matter with the Apostolic See.⁴

The two visions of community presented in *Lumen Gentium*, “the People of God and the traditional Hierarchical Structure of the Church,” offer the traditionalists and the progressive members of the Church opportunities to advance their theological points of view about church governance. The traditionalist’s position is that Jesus founded a Church and handed it down to the present by “apostolic succession;” therefore, it should

³ Joseph F. O’Callaghan, *Electing Our Bishops: How the Catholic Church Should Choose Its Leaders* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2007), 108.

⁴ Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church *Christus Dominus* Proclaimed by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965, paragraph 20, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_christus-dominus_en.html (accessed October 1, 2012).

not and cannot be changed by present day members. Progressive Catholics embrace the teachings of Vatican II Council's "People of God" image and use this image to advance their theological issues. The image of the Church as a community of believers lends itself to the idea that the community should have input into leadership selection.

Many Church leaders retain the notion that the pope, without any challenge, appoints the bishops as he wishes. In spite of this insistence of the pope's absolute power on this issue of the selection of bishops, various lay groups request and suggest a change in the system. O'Callaghan writes, "Any possible trend toward democracy in the Church, as the concept of the people of God seemed to imply, has been stifled and efforts to loosen the iron grip of the papacy on the appointment of bishops have been thwarted."⁵

The papacy's and Vatican authorities' refusal to consider a change in the system did not stop efforts and recommendations for change. For example, in the 1970s in accordance with proposals of the Canon Law Society in Baltimore, Santa Fe, and St. Louis, the Priests' Senate organized a process of consultation. The procedure called for a system that would select candidates from various sources in the diocese and submit the list to the Vatican for the pope's approval and subsequent appointment of one of the candidates. In most instances one of the three nominated was appointed.⁶ In 1970, theologian Bernard Haring maintained that "the common good demands the most competent person at a given time," and he called for "a bold revision . . . of the process of

⁵ O'Callaghan, *Electing Our Bishops*, 139.

⁶ Thomas Reese, *Archbishop: Inside the Power Structure of the American Catholic Church* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), 1-9, 22-23.

making bishops because a bishop chosen after a broad investigation would enjoy greater moral prestige than one selected after a secret consultation of the few.”⁷

O’Callaghan writes, “After Cardinal Spellman’s death [in 1967], some 563 priests of the New York Archdiocese offered suggestions for his replacement. Consultation became impossible, however, when the announcement of a bishop’s resignation or retirement is followed quickly of his successor.”⁸ This demonstrates the hierarchy’s continued resistance to democratic change.

O’Callaghan reports that a number of proposals to modify the system over the years since Vatican II have met with silence and hostility from the Vatican. The majority of the proposals included the following:

1. There should be a list of candidates drawn up with recommendations from parish councils, diocesan councils, priest’s synods and prominent laymen. There should be input from the bishops of neighboring dioceses as well as from the retiring bishop. . . .
2. Where it is possible input [should be sought] from the laity in various parishes as to their recommendations. . . .
3. After this process is complete, by the selection of a committee to narrow the choice of candidates, a list of three names should be selected, and forwarded to the Pope for his approval and the subsequent appointment of the new bishop.⁹

Cardinal Avery Dulles objects to this process. He says, “The election of a diocesan committee would lead to factionalism and power politics”. O’Callaghan responds to Dulles:

⁷ Bernard Haring, *A Theology of Protest* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971), 115-116.

⁸ O Callaghan, *Electing Our Bishops*, 123.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 119-152.

While agreeing that Christ's Body, the Church, is divine, it must also be said that the people who compose it are not. By their very nature, human beings act in political ways. Politics is the means that enables them to organize in communities, to provide for leadership, law and order and the like. To suggest that politics is not inherent in the life of the Church betrays ignorance of Church history.¹⁰

O'Callaghan quotes Pope Celestine I (AD 422-432): "The one who is to be head over all should be elected by all. No one should be made a bishop over the unwilling."

O'Callaghan writes,

The terrible moral failure of American bishops in handling the crisis of priestly sexual abuse has focused intense attention on the office of bishop. People ask: Who is our bishop? How did he get to be a bishop? How long will he be with us before he moves on to a larger wealthier diocese? Inspired by Vatican II's call for collegiality between bishops and the pope, a number of scholars raised the election of bishops by the clergy and people of the diocese. This was the practice in the Catholic Church in the first millennium but historical circumstances ended popular participation in the process. Today bishops are routinely appointed by Rome without any significant consultations with the clergy and people they will serve. If the Church is to be renewed, not only in the United States, but also throughout the world, a return to the ancient tradition of popular election of bishops is imperative.¹¹

Lakeland proposed that future bishops be chosen by regional or national Episcopal conferences from the community and with community participation.¹² The National Review Board recommended "the process for selecting bishops should include meaningful lay consultation."¹³ The author of this paper believes there is ample support for a revision of the present system of selecting bishops, but majority support is lacking

¹⁰ Ibid., 144.

¹¹ Ibid., ix.

¹² Lakeland, *The Liberation of the Laity* 272.

¹³ The National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People, *A Report on the Crisis in the Catholic Church in the United States* 143.

from the laity and American bishops. This makes the challenge of VOTF to change Church governance more difficult and important.

The thesis of paper is that an educational program to awaken the laity can be developed. The author assumes that the laity must understand its rights and responsibilities before change in governance can occur. A proposed educational program for the membership of VOTF SWFL is found in the appendix of this paper that will be introduced to the VOTF-SWFL membership for their consideration and acceptance.

Chapter 8 elaborates on the proposed educational program and the subject material that will be presented.

CHAPTER 8
PRAXIS II, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Course Overview

The proposed course emphasizes lay persons' responsibilities in their role as members of the priesthood of Christ as exercised in the early Church and expressed in the documents of Vatican Council II, especially *Lumen Gentium*. This supports this paper's thesis that a program that empowers lay persons can be developed for the education of VOTF members. VOTF-SWFL will sponsor the educational program. The audience will be chapter members who express an interest in accomplishing the goals of VOTF, especially as they relate to changing institutional Church governance.

The course will be eight, one-hour sessions conducted in seminar style. The course will be in a question and answer format focused on topics included in handouts provided for each session. The goal will be to avoid a lecture format, encourage class participation, and elicit participants' responses to discussion subjects.

Course Description

The first two sessions focus on early Church ecclesiology. Chapter 1 of this thesis will provide as a starting point for discussion of the early Church structure and lay participation in early Church governance. The early Church structure and governance will be compared with contemporary Church structures and governance.

The seminar leader will describe the historical development of contemporary Church governance. The following sessions will present Catholicism's history in the colonial era up to the Revolutionary period and the selection and election of the first American bishop, John Carroll. The course will continue through the Church's period of trusteeships until the waves of European immigration and the subsequent demise of the trustee system of Church governance. This presentation will demonstrate that governance can have a democratic ideology, not cause the end of Catholicism in the United States, and reflect American ideals of self-governance. Chapter 3 of the thesis will be the material used in a handout for this discussion.

The European model of an aristocratic hierarchy replaced the trustee system in the American Catholic Church and operates presently. The course, based on materials included in this paper, will trace the history of bishop election through recent history that produced the present system of exclusive papal appointment of bishops. Whether this system can be changed or modified will be explored including discussion of recent democratized proposals suggested since the end of Vatican Council II. Participants will explore Vatican II documents to determine if they contain teachings that guide changes in contemporary Church governance. The educational program will educate the VOTF-SWFL lay membership about their rights and obligations as lay members in the post Vatican II Council era.

Conscientization

Conscientization was described by Lakeland in *The Liberation of the Laity*, and a synopsis of his book will stimulate seminar discussion. This may engender discussion in the home parishes of VOTF members who come to South Florida during the winter months. Conscientization is described in this paper, and the narrative will be given to participants as a resource.

The national organization of VOTF has many educational programs that participants may be familiar with and surface in the discussions. The materials found on the VOTF website page titled Voice of Renewal and Lay Education include: *The Faithful Revolution, Vatican II and the Laity*, and *The Promise of Vatican II. Vatican II and the Laity* in particular will be helpful in the discussions of lay responsibility of the laity in Church governance.

The Conscientization process may help laity recognize their oppressed status under the present system of governance. This discussion may alert VOTF members and others about hierarchical oppression of laity. They may realize that United States bishops do not intend that laity have a role in bishop selection and election, but that an energized laity may cause change in Church governance.

Conclusion

Some dioceses allow a limited lay role in Church liturgy, but no diocese allows meaningful lay leadership in the diocese or parishes. A few dioceses or parishes permit diocesan, parish, and financial councils, but they are advisory and lack meaningful

authority. Laity will never have authoritative leadership roles in the Catholic Church until laity realize they can change Church governance and help select and elect bishops. This paper's thesis and educational program may stimulate these changes.

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE 2004 SURVEY OF VOTF MEMBERS¹

Our survey of VOTF members was designed to accomplish a number of goals, which include the following:

1. To complete a demographic portrait;
2. To make a summary of basic religious practices and attitudes of VOTF members;
3. To examine the extent of the members participation in VOTF activities;
4. To look at VOTF members' participation in church life, including the parish;
5. To examine their knowledge of Catholic Documents
6. To look at their behavior and attitudes toward Church policies in relationship to VOTF goals
7. Where possible and relevant, to compare VOTF Catholics with recent national surveys of American Catholics.

To obtain this information, we constructed a questionnaire with 85 items, including 15 open-ended items that were placed at the end of the questionnaire. The survey was conducted online, employing the services of *Survey Monkey*, a company that specializes in conducting surveys over the Internet. The format allowed respondents, who wanted to elaborate on a question, to write in comments at the end of each page. While the overall total of completed questionnaires was 1273, the actual number of responses to key variables varied slightly, and the tables provide the actual N for the five key or independent variables used to identify variation among VOTF members.

When relevant we have also provided summary statements of findings from the 2005 survey of the general American Catholic population carried out by the Gallup Organization for D'Antonio, Hoge, Davidson and Gautier.

¹ A study conducted by William D'Antonio and Anthony Pogorelc of the Life Cycle Institute of the Catholic University of America. http://www.voiceofthefaithful.org/DAntonio/Dantonio_summary.pdf.

We now begin our overview of VOTF members with a summary of basic findings. We stress that this is an overview of our findings; we have purposely refrained from suggesting specific conclusion. This is the task for our panels of sociologists and theologians.

The Demographic Overview

Women predominate in VOTF membership 59% to 41%. (Among Catholics nationally, women constitute 54% of the total Catholic population; 2005 Survey)). We invited respondents to indicate their ethnic ancestry including multiple roots; 64% claimed some Irish heritage, followed by English (22%), Italian, French and Eastern European (13%, 11% and 9% respectively). Two percent were Latinos and 0.2% African Americans.

One of the most distinctive characteristics is VOTF members' high level of education. The vast majority (87%) had at least a college degree; six out of ten had graduate or professional degrees. Furthermore, a majority was educated in Catholic schools, from a high of 70% at the elementary level to a majority of 57% at the college level. Not surprisingly almost all (93%) were cradle Catholics; the great majority (85%) was also registered in a parish (true of 68% of the national population; 2005 Survey).

Almost a quarter of VOTF members had earned a degree in either theology, canon law or scripture studies; half said they had taken an extensive number of theology courses, and almost as many had taken diocesan or parish sponsored theology courses. It is perhaps then not surprising that one in four VOTF members had some experience of formation for priesthood or religious life. Of these 16% of the men were ordained and 22% of the men and women professed religious vows. While these figures may be astonishing, they were supported by figures from the list of VOTF members. Thus, a small but important minority of VOTF members had even deeper roots in the Roman Catholic Church than the deep roots of the general VOTF membership. (It appears from membership lists that about seven percent of those ordained are listed in active ministry.)

An examination of family background affirms VOTF member's strong roots in Catholicism. More than 85% of fathers and 90% of their mothers were Catholic. A third

of their fathers and a quarter of their mothers were college graduates. Two out of three VOTF members were married. Moreover, of those who were married, 92 % said the Roman Catholic Church recognized their marriages. Of the married, three quarters had children, and half of these had children in parochial schools. They estimated that one in three of their adult children attended Mass regularly. Only 8% were divorced. Fifteen percent were single; this may reflect the percentage of priests and professed religious among their members.

Almost half of the VOTF members were employed while one third was fully retired. These figures reflect the imbalance of generations in VOTF, which leans heavily toward the Pre-Vatican II and Vatican II generations. Not surprisingly, given their educational levels, their occupations tended toward the professional (30%), the academic (20%) and the upper levels of business management and ownership (22%). Less than 10% identified clerical, service or skilled trades occupations. The high levels of academic, professional and business achievements were reflected in their income levels, with thirty percent stating annual household incomes of \$100,000 or more, and another 50% with incomes between \$75,000 and \$100,000. Some of the 8% reporting incomes under \$30,000 may reflect the retired members or priests or religious.

Member Participation in Church and VOTF Activities

The next set of items attempts to help us understand how members became involved in VOTF and the degree of their participation in VOTF. A majority went to their first VOTF meeting alone; the rest went with another, some having been invited to do so. More than half of them then invited others to attend VOTF meetings.

A large percentage of VOTF members are not members of an affiliate and gave the following responses to explain this: "I have never attended a VOTF meeting, but have followed the movement by email." "I joined VOTF from another city and do not know of any meetings here." And this: "I am a Boston College graduate—a friend who still lives in Boston referred me to VOTF a couple years ago. I have forwarded email bulletins on to family members and friends." In a sense, the Internet becomes a kind of affiliate for many.

More than half (60%) said that their parish pastor publicly responded to the sexual abuse scandal; of these pastors more than a third (36%) were supportive of VOTF. Another third of VOTF members (38%) declared their pastors neutral on VOTF, while one in four (26%) said their pastors were unsupportive.

Among the critical comments about pastors' responses to the scandal are the following: "He said 'pray for the Church, pray for the priests.' He did not mention the victims." From another: "My pastor was supportive of VOTF in the beginning. He subsequently denounced VOTF and all its members as evil and divisive." Other responses bordered on denial: "Our pastor mentioned it was wrong in the beginning but has avoided any discussion and not encouraged a VOTF." "My pastor's response to the scandal was to tell us it was unimportant. He promised never to mention it again from the altar. I thought that was terrible." And finally, this comment: "At the time that Cardinal Law resigned, my pastor wrote and had published a letter to our local paper in which he supported Cardinal Law. He cited the cardinal as a scapegoat, stated that Cardinal Law would never had [sic] done anything to harm children."

The following comments reflect those who found their pastor defensive about the scandal and neutral about VOTF. "Yes, the pastor mentioned the scandal in homilies. He also was strongly encouraged by parish members to hold a parish meeting to address sexual abuse that had taken place in the past that had recently come to light. The accused had been a priest that had served under this pastor's watch." She added: "The pastor was greatly loved by parishioners but he had to be pushed to publicly address the abuse that had taken place on his watch. He, like so many other priests, was defensive and found it difficult to face the truth and apologize for what had happened." She concluded that she was unsure about her pastor's support of VOTF.

From someone who said the pastor was supportive came this comment: "With the cooperation of my pastor, this past spring I organized an exploratory VOTF group, and after meeting weekly or every two weeks we ultimately voted to become a VOTF affiliate, which I have chaired. It included a multi-week seminar/discussion format for all parishioners." And from another: "My pastor encouraged our parishioners to meet and the outcome was the founding of VOTF."

Mass attendance and Other Measures of Commitment

One of the most predictive indicators of Americans' behavior, regardless of religious denomination, has been regular attendance at religious services. This has been no less true for Catholics than for others. Previous research has shown that there are a group of variables related to church attendance that sharpen the focus on religious commitment; we have used them in this study. Regarding Mass attendance, two out of three VOTF members attend Mass at least once a week, while only one in ten said they seldom or never attend Mass. The 2005 national survey reported 34% of Catholics attending at least once a week. VOTF members have active prayer lives with eight out of ten reporting that they pray once a day or more.

When asked how important the Church is to them personally 62% said it is the most or among the most important parts of their life. At the other end, only 6% said it was not very important to them.* One VOTF member added: The Catholic Church is an important part of my life because I look to it for an example of how to live the gospel, to have the courage and conviction to see truth, to have the opportunity to share and express my faith with others." At the national level 44% said the Church was the most or one of the most important parts of their lives (2005 Survey).

Two additional questions inquired about their degree of commitment to the Church and its teachings. Since Vatican II, the church has stressed "a preferential option for the poor." We asked how often, if at all, they served the needy in programs such as soup kitchens, tutoring programs, etc. One in four said they did so weekly, another 25% did so at least once or more a month, while only one in five said seldom or never.

A final question in this set asked about knowledge of the Second Vatican Council. About one in five had read all of the documents, 16% read some of them and 23% had not read any of them. Among those who had read some or all the documents, some 42% said they participated in seminars on Vatican II and its documents.

With regard to activities in their parish we found that half were members of Parish Councils, 45 % were on Liturgy Committees, and one in four served on Parish School Boards or Finance Committees. More than six out of ten reported membership in other

* Another 5% did not answer, or were not sure.

parish committees. Their active participation in parish life extended to service as Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers (45% for each), with one in four listing Mass Server, Music Ministry and Greeter/Usher. Some 52% reported teaching in religious education or RCIA; while 25% reported teaching in a Catholic grade or high school. Two out of three were members of small faith sharing groups, including Parish RENEW groups. In sum, VOTF members have an extraordinary amount of knowledge about the Catholic Church, its teachings and its liturgy.

VOTF members were active in a variety of groups beyond the parish level. Five percent were members of organizations under the U.S. Bishops' sponsorship; one in four were members of Diocesan Pastoral Councils; a majority was in some other Diocesan Council or Committee. One in four participated in Marriage Encounter, *Cursillo* and Call to Action (CTA). Smaller numbers were active in the Charismatic Movement, The Christian Family Movement (CFM), The Catholic Worker Movement, and the Right to Life Movement, Young Christian Students, Dignity, and Catholics for a Free Choice.

VOTF members were also part of traditional Catholic organizations: of the men, 31% and 16% respectively were in the Knights of Columbus and Holy Name Society. Thirty-one percent overall were in the St. Vincent DePaul Society. Eight percent of the members had been members of the Jesuit volunteers, most probably in their immediate post-college years. Four in ten were affiliated with organizations such as PAX Christi and Habitat for Humanity. Women were less active in specifically women's groups: only 6% were members of the National Council of Catholic Women, and only 1% in Catholic Mothers or Daughters of Isabella.

Broad and extensive participation in various aspects of church life have provided VOTF members the opportunity to have strong views about the Church. So it may not be surprising that fully 85% strongly agreed that the "Hierarchy is out of touch with the laity;" only 19% of the national sample did (2005 Survey). Almost half (44%) strongly agreed: "priests generally see laity as followers, not as leaders;" while only 17% of the national sample did. Another 41% agreed somewhat with that statement. And 1 out of 5 (19%) strongly agreed: "when the hierarchy is unresponsive to the views of the laity on matters which concern the good of the church, withholding financial contributions is an

appropriate means of getting their attention.” With regard to the size of parishes only 29% strongly agreed that parishes are too big and impersonal, but an additional 43% agreed somewhat with that statement. While 18 % strongly agreed that priests generally do a good job, an additional 58% agreed somewhat.” Ninety two percent of the national sample gave these responses (2005 Survey).

VOTF members are in almost unanimous agreement (from 99% for the local parish and 90% for the Vatican) that decision-making not involving the doctrine of the faith should allow wider participation by the laity. For example, 99% say the laity should have the right to participate in “Deciding how parish income is spent;” Here there is a strong similarity with the national sample where 89 % say the same (2005 Survey). In regard to selecting priests of their parishes 84% of VOTF Catholics and 71% of the national sample say the laity should have the right to participate. The same number of VOTF Catholics says they should have a role in selecting bishops for their dioceses.

To get an indication of the salience of these beliefs we asked about the amount of time and resources they would be willing to invest to promote meaningful participation by the laity in church decision-making. Forty-five percent said they would devote two to five hours per week of their time, while an additional 7% said they would devote 6-10 hours per week. Another six percent would devote more than 10 hours per week. Only 12% said they were not willing to devote any time. Regarding financial resources, 6% were willing to give more than \$500 a year, while 1 in 5 were willing to donate between \$100 and \$500 a year. Sixty percent were willing to give up to \$100, and only a minority of 14% said they were not willing to give any money to such a cause.

During 2004 two important reports about the Protection of Children and Young People were produced, one by the National Review Board, and the other by the John Jay College of Law. One in four members were not familiar with either report; 11% had a great deal of knowledge about them, and about 4 in 10 said they had some knowledge of each group and of their respective study and report.

Members gave overwhelming support to the three goals of VOTF: to support victims of clerical sexual abuse (86%), to support priests of integrity (85%), and to shape structural change in the church (91%). Just over half are in an affiliate group, almost half

attended an affiliate meeting during the past year, and a third donated money to a local affiliate, while 45% have donated money to the national office in the past twelve months. Half the members (51%) signed the VOTF Petition for Reform. The overwhelming majority (84%) saw the national office as providing effective day-to-day leadership enabling VOTF to persist and fulfill its mission. The same percent said the elective officers and the Board of Trustees were charting an effective direction for VOTF to persist and fulfill its mission. Likewise more than 80% saw the Representative Council doing an effective job.

In response to a question about the reading of Catholic periodicals, the largest percent (39%) subscribed to their local diocesan paper; and in descending order, they subscribed to: the *National Catholic Reporter* (37%); *America* (22%); *Commonweal* (13%); *St. Anthony Messenger* (13%); *U.S. Catholic* (11%); and *In the Vineyard* (10%). Small percentages also subscribed to *Our Sunday Visitor*, *Crisis*, *First Things*, and *The Wanderer*.

Almost half described themselves as politically liberal, economically moderate, and as social-cultural liberals. Just over 1 in 10 described themselves as conservative on any of the three. Almost two out of three identified with the Democratic Party and 18% with the Republican Party.

Evaluating the Impact of Five Independent Variables

Research on American Catholics has found that gender, generation, region of the country, Catholic school education, and regular attendance at Mass have been predictive of differences in Catholic beliefs, practices and attitudes.² We have prepared sets of tables using each of these variables in turn. We report the results below for each of these variables, with our attention given only to those cases in which differences are significant or indicate a trend in that direction. We begin with gender.

² Other variables like membership in a parish often are predictive, but in the case of VOTF members, with 85% registered, there is little to vary.

The Role of Gender

There were small gender differences across generations with a higher percentage of men among Pre-Vatican II Catholics and the reverse pattern among Vatican II Catholics. There were no gender differences among the youngest generation, and there were also no gender differences along ethnic lines.

The only difference in level of education was that men were more likely than women (68% to 55%) to have earned a graduate degree. Men were more likely to be married than were the women (80% to 71%), and more likely (50% to 40%) to be employed full time. But they were also more likely (41% to 31%) to be retired. With regard to specific occupations, men were more than twice as likely (24% to 11%) to be found in the managerial-executive group; men also were more likely to have reported household incomes in excess of \$100,000 (33% to 26%), the differences in the other income categories were not significant.

On the extensive series of questions relating to religious practices and attitudes the men and women members of VOTF were very much alike. The only significant difference is that men were more likely than the women (33% to 20%) to have attended a seminary or other religious formation program. However, the number of men who were ordained (16%) was not significantly different than the number of women professed (13%). In addition, 9% of the men were professed to one or another religious order.

There were some differences between the men and women regarding their participation in VOTF activities, and their evaluation of VOTF and its goals. Women were significantly more likely than the men (63% to 44%) to have invited others to attend VOTF meetings. Women were also significantly more likely (49% to 36%) to belong to a VOTF affiliate. Again, women were more likely (55% to 45%) to have signed the VOTF Petition for Reform. While a large majority of both men and women said the Executive Office, the officers and the National Council were doing an effective job, the differences between them averaged 14% (87% to 73%). These differences suggest different levels of commitment to VOTF. What these differences mean to VOTF's future will need careful exploration.

In a number of areas of participation in church and parish life significant differences were found, many not unexpected, reflecting the traditional church models with which the laity have grown up. Men were more likely to be members of Parish and Finance Council, and Parish School Boards, while women were often found in other parish committees.

In liturgical ministries the old mores were still evident; almost 40% of the men had been mass servers in their youth, but only 7 % of the women had done so. This is not surprising given that females were officially recognized as mass servers only in the 1990s. Again following traditional roles, women were more likely than the men (58% to 45% to have taught CCD or other religion classes, and to have taught in Catholic grade schools (18% to 8%).

There were no differences in the degree of participation in parish groups or Catholic social movements such as CFM, CTA, Right to Life, etc. The men were much more likely to have been members of organizations like the Knights of Columbus than the women were of comparable women's groups.

The differences between men and women were small with regard to the knowledge of the Documents of Vatican II, what they knew about the National Review Board and its Report on the Protection of Children and Young People as well as with the John Jay College Study.

VOTF men and women were united in their attitudes about how they perceived priests to relate to them, the bigness of parishes, the hierarchy's being out of touch with them, that most priests do a good job and that it could be appropriate to withhold financial contributions to gain the attention of the hierarchy. They were also united in their belief that they had a right to participate in decisions affecting parish, diocese and even the Vatican. Perhaps surprisingly, although the percentages were small (10% to 5%), men were twice as likely as the women to say they would be willing to devote at least 6-10 hours per week to participate in church-decision-making.

We asked the members of VOTF about their reading habits regarding religion-related journals and newspaper. Almost half the men (46%) but only 36% of the women reported subscribing to the local Diocesan paper; The National Catholic Reporter,

America, and Commonweal followed in that order, with no gender differences. Less than 10% of the members subscribed to the St. Anthony Messenger, U.S. Catholic and In the Vineyard with no gender differences. There were no other gender differences.

We asked them to describe their ideological orientations (Table 1) while only [*sic*] A small percentage (less than 20%) identified themselves as politically, economically and socially conservative; in all three instances men were almost twice as likely as women to call themselves conservative. At the other end, more than 4 in 10 of both sexes called themselves liberal, with the women just slightly more so. The men were less likely to see themselves as moderate. It was only in economic matters that both sexes saw themselves as more moderate than liberal.

When asked with which political party they identified, more men (22%) than women (15%) identified themselves as Republican; two out of three women (66%) and 60% of the men said they were Democrats, with the remaining calling themselves Independents or Green Party.

We conclude that among VOTF members, gender is not as differentiating a variable on matters Catholic as it is among Catholics in the general population.

The Significance of Generations

Researchers assert that the historical and cultural phenomena to which one is exposed during adolescence and young adulthood affect one's worldview for life (Mannheim 1952, Walrath 1987). Generation is a variable that has been used by sociologists to explain differences between groups. In studies of Catholics, the Second Vatican Council has been used as a reference point to distinguish age cohorts of Catholics (D'Antonio et al. 1989, 1996, 2001, Davidson 1996). There is a difference between Catholics socialized before Vatican II and those socialized during and after the Council.

The pre-Vatican II Church has been described as a culture of authority in which the hierarchy regulated the laws and sacraments that were the means to salvation (Dolan 1985). The church conceived of itself as *the perfect society*: complete in itself and free from the need to interact with secular institutions. In this era American Catholicism formed a parallel society removed from mainstream America (Dolan 1985, Cogley and

Van Allen 1986). Researchers of the 1950's and 1960's maintained that Catholic parents supported intellectual heteronomy (obedience to authority) over intellectual autonomy and emphasized this in their child rearing practices (Lenski 1963, Kohn 1977).

Vatican II precipitated a big shift; tight boundaries were expanded. The church's perception of the world changed. The modern world was no longer considered the enemy of eternal truths, and the church acknowledged modern progress as beneficial to humankind. The church sought to embrace the modern world and enter into dialogue with it (Dolan 1985, Davidson and Williams 1997, Greeley 1998). Since this time Catholics' reliance on external authority has decreased and acceptance of internal authority has increased (Alwin 1986, D'Antonio 1989, 1996, 2001 Ellison and Sherkat 1993).

In the 1987 study of American Catholics (D'Antonio et al) researchers found it useful to consider variations in the beliefs and practices and attitudes of generations of American Catholics in relationship to the proximity of one's birth year to the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Those born before 1940 are "Pre-Vatican II Catholics" because they came of age well before Vatican II; those born between 1940 and 1960 are called "Vatican II" Catholics because their formative years occurred during the Council. Those born from 1961 on are "Post-Vatican II Catholics." For them the council is a piece of history rapidly receding into the past. This tripartite differentiation is used in this examination of VOTF members.

Research shows that the Pre-Vatican II generation is most loyal, church going and prayerful. They lived through the Great Depression and WWII. Many remember the prejudice and discrimination against Catholics that marked the first half of the 20th century. This was the generation that finally convinced other Americans that it was possible to be a good Catholic and a good American citizen. They were involved in building the Catholic infrastructure of parishes and schools. They have deep roots in the church, and are the most devastated by malfeasance. As one member wrote "The senior set has too many years and too much heart invested to take a hike." Today they are retired, and have the time and resources to devote to reforming the Church. Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (2000) suggests they were the last generation to display high levels of organizational engagement; it is not surprising that they are so well represented in VOTF.

The Vatican II generation grew up during a period of transition from stability to change. Many remember the 1950s when the nation experienced post-WWII tranquility as well [*sic*] the tensions that mounted with the cold war. They watched “Father Knows Best” and trusted strong and fatherly men to lead the nation and the Church. The 1960s brought a change in national and Church leadership. The Irish-Catholic John F. Kennedy was elected president. Pope John XXIII called an ecumenical council. The period that followed was one of radical changes. This generation is committed to the spirit of Vatican II and the importance of conscience and collaboration. Many are disappointed by what they perceive as a deceleration of the reforms of the Council. As one member said: “We are the ‘over the hill gang’ in love with the changes promised in the Vatican II documents only to find that our hierarchy ‘deep-sixed’ them and hoped we would forget.” Such sentiments fuel their participation in VOTF.

The Post Vatican II generation raised in the 1970s, 1980s and later saw previously accepted forms of discrimination curtailed. Accepting some of this trend in society, Church officials balked when some suggested the need for changes in the central institution of the priesthood. Watergate exposed hypocrisy at the highest levels of power; individuals became less trusting of institutions and even of others, and sought to become more self-sufficient. Church and community experienced the effects. This generation is most affected by the American ethos; they rely more on their own judgment and are less committed to institutions. A portion of this generation seeks comfort in trying to reproduce the security they imagined existed in a 1950s world. These factors do not encourage membership in VOTF.

One VOTF member commented: “All or nearly all are white senior citizens. The youngest person I saw at any of the six meetings I attended was my daughter, age 35. She was completely turned off by (what she perceived as) the applause of dissent from VOTF attendees on the issue of church reform.” Another expressed a desire to have younger members but concluded that most of them “are suspicious of institutions, and are also raising their kids at this time” and thus too busy to join VOTF. Another echoed this sentiment: “VOTF needs more ‘boomers’ and young people. It appeals to upper class not

ethnics. The young are not into the reform of institutions—if it's broke throw it out—they say.”

The Demographics of the Generations

At the first VOTF Convocation in July 2002 it was noted that the heads of the participants formed a sea of silver. So it is with most of VOTF's leaders and national membership. One member wrote “At our regional and parish voice meetings there are mostly ‘gray tops’; the young people are absent from our group.” The table below shows the generational contrast between the Catholic Church in the U.S. at large, and VOTF members.

	Pre-Vatican II	Vatican II	Post-Vatican II
2005 National Survey of American Catholics	17%	34%	49%
Survey of VOTF Members	41%	48%	11%

“Pre-Vatican II Catholics” are now 65 years of age or older while “Vatican II” Catholics are now between 64 and 45; “Post-Vatican II” Catholics are now 18 to 44. There are important implications to these differences. VOTF members are older than Catholics at large. At least 9 in 10 VOTF members are over 40; almost half of American Catholics are under 40.

In regard to ethnicity the predominance of Irish ancestry spreads across the generations. There are few Latinos (2%) but there are a greater number of them in the Post Vatican II generation than any other (5%). “One member wrote: “I’m 44 and clearly one of the youngest members in our group. We have no people of color and no young people.” Another member said: “We need more Hispanics, African Americans and younger members.”

The vast majority of VOTF members across the generations are married; the largest proportion of single members is in the youngest generation. This may reflect modern marital trends in which the young and especially Catholics tend to marry later, in sharp contrast to their Pre-Vatican II grandparents. Across the generations VOTF

members are highly educated and 60% have graduate degrees. As expected, the parents of the latest cohort are more highly educated than those of the earlier ones.

Political Party

There is little variation across the generations in terms of political, economic and socio-cultural outlook. About 1 in 10 identify themselves as political conservatives, a third are moderates and 44% identify as liberals. Nearly a fifth across the generations identify as economic conservatives, 44% as moderates and a quarter as liberals. Close to 1 in 10 identify as socio-cultural conservatives, a third as moderates and almost half as liberals. Nearly two thirds identify with the Democratic Party across the generations which is more than the general Catholic populace where about two fifths across the generations identify with the Democrats and more than a third identifies with the GOP; fifth of VOTF does [*sic*]. Around a fifth of VOTF and American Catholics identify with Independent Parties.

Religious Practices and Attitudes

Across the generations, 9 in 10 VOTF members are cradle Catholics coming from families where both parents are Catholic. They have been exposed to relatively high levels of Catholic education at every level. We see a decline in Catholic education between the earlier generations and the latest; 7 in 10 Pre and Vatican II Catholics went to Catholic Grade Schools, 5 in 10 Post Vatican II Catholics did. Six in 10 of the earlier generations attended Catholic High Schools, about 5 in 10 of the latest generation did. This generational gap is also seen in Catholic College attendance. The structural issue of the decreased availability of Catholic Schools over time, as well as significant increases in tuition may have an effect on the latest generation's attendance.

One third across the generations have studied theology. In each of the earlier generations, a quarter of them were at one time enrolled in a seminary or religious formation program; this decreases to 14% in the latest generation. This is still a relatively high number since seminary enrollments and the number of religious sisters and brothers have declined by over half since Vatican II (Froehle, Gautier 2000).

There is no difference across the generations for parish registration (8 in 10). The table below indicates the rates of Mass attendance for VOTF members, and compares them with the rates for the general population of American Catholics (2005 Survey).

At least weekly Mass attendance	Pre-Vatican II	Vatican II	Post-Vatican II
2005 National Survey of American Catholics	60%	41%	20%
Survey of VOTF Members	77%	61%	38%

There is a decline in the mass attendance rates between earlier and later generations for both samples. However there is also a significant difference between the attendance rates of VOTF members and American Catholics. In each generation VOTF members have nearly a 20% higher rate of mass attendance rate.

Across the generations, nearly 8 out of 10 VOTF members pray at least once a day. Seven in 10 of the earlier generations of American Catholics pray at least daily, while 5 in 10 of the latest generation does. This is also a significant difference especially in the latest generation. Nearly 8 out of 10 VOTF members help the needy at least once a month.

There are significant differences both across generations and in the comparisons of VOTF and Catholics generally. Seventy percent of Pre Vatican II Catholics in VOTF consider the church “among the most important parts of my life.” For the later two generations a little over half say this. Among general American Catholics, 59% of those over 65 say “most important” and only 40% of both later cohorts say this. Across the generations VOTF members give the Church more importance than the general Catholic population.

When asked about the possibility of leaving the Church, 6 in 10 of the VOTF Pre-Vatican II generation say “never leave;” 1 in 10 say “might leave.” The later generation, 42% say “never leave” and in the Post Vatican II generation a third says “never leave.” In the aforementioned generations 3 in 10 say “might leave.” In the general Catholic

populace, over 60% of the two earlier generations say “never leave,” while 1 in 10 say “might leave.” Of the latest generation 4 in 10 say “never leave” and only 1 in 10 say “might leave.” In the latest generations there is no difference between American and VOTF Catholics when it comes to “never leave” but more of the youngest VOTF Catholics say “might leave.”

Participation in VOTF

Because earlier generations tend to have higher levels of social engagement (Putnam 2000), as expected Pre-Vatican II VOTF members were most likely to invite others to attend a VOTF meeting (61%) and the Post-Vatican II generation was least likely (38%). Five in 10 members of the middle cohort invited others to attend. Five in 10 of the earliest generation attended their first VOTF meeting “on my own;” 6 in 10 of the later generations did. A third of the earliest group attended with another; of the later and latest cohorts a fifth and a twelfth respectively did so. One in 10 from the earlier cohorts were invited by another; a fifth of the latest cohort was.

People of the earlier generation were also most likely to be members of an affiliate (51%). As expected this declines with later generations; Vatican II membership is 42% and Post Vatican II membership dips to 26%. Again the question arises of the importance of membership in an affiliate arises.

The Pre-Vatican II generation was also most likely to donate money to the national office (40%), and the Post Vatican II generation was least likely (20%) with the Vatican II generation in the middle (27%). About a third of the oldest generation donated to local affiliates, a fifth of the middle generation did so and only 6% of the latest generation donated money. Two in five of the earliest generation attended meetings, 3 in 10 of the middle generation did so, and barely 1 in 10 of the youngest generation said they attended meetings. In the two earlier generations 1 in 10 attended Regional Conferences; but this was less for the youngest generation. Nearly half of VOTF members across the generations signed the Petition for Reform.

Nine in 10 VOTF members support the goal of “shaping structural change” in the Church. Nearly 4 out of 5, across the generations, support VOTF’s first two goals, and affirm the effectiveness of its leadership.

Participation in Church Life

As a whole VOTF members have a relatively high rate of participation in parish committee work. When you control for generation, the earlier two generations have been more active. For example less than half as many of the Post-Vatican II generation (17%) served on Parish Councils as members of the earlier generations (2 in 5). This proportion is the similar for finance councils, school boards and Liturgy Committees. The proportion is closer for other parish committees (3 in 5 for the earlier generations and 2 in 5 for the later).

When it comes to participation in parish liturgical ministries, across the generations VOTF members are quite involved: 2 in 5 were lectors; it is similar for Eucharistic ministers. Nearly a fifth have served as Usher/Greeters or Mass servers and Music ministry. Nearly 1 in 10 have served in other liturgical ministries.

There is a high level of participation in religious education. Nearly half of VOTF members across the generations have taught Catechism classes. Nearly 1 in 10 has taught in a Catholic high school or grade school. Of the earliest and latest generations about 1 in 10 have assisted in the RCIA, in the Vatican II generation it is 2 in 10. One in 10 of the earlier generations have served in other educational ministries; it is less for the youngest generation.

A quarter of the earlier generations have participated in RENEW, and 13% of the later generation has. Over a third of the earlier generations participated in a Small Christian Community, and a fifth of youngest generation has. Across the generations nearly 10% participated in the Catholic Worker Movement; 2 in 10 of the earlier generations and nearly 10% of the youngest generation participated in Call to Action. Nearly a fifth of the earlier generations and over 10% of the youngest have been in Marriage Encounter. One in 10 of the earlier generations have been in the Charismatic

Movement, and *Cursillo*, it is less for the youngest cohort (6%). Ten percent across the generations have been involved with Right to Life.

One in 3 of the men across the generations were Knights of Columbus, with higher numbers in the earlier generation; 16% of the men in the Pre-Vatican II generation were in Holy Name. For all the generations nearly 1 out of 10 was involved with the St. Vincent DePaul Society. About 2 in 5 of all the generations have been involved with social justice organizations.

Knowledge of Vatican II and other Documents

Knowledge of the Documents of Vatican II and of current matters in the church varies across the generations. Three in 10 of the Pre Vatican II and Vatican II generations have read all of the Vatican II Documents; only 1 in 10 of the Post Vatican II generation has. One in 3 of the earlier cohorts have read some of the Documents, while 2 in 5 of the latest cohort have. Two in 5 of the earlier generations have participated in seminars on Vatican II, while only 1 in 5 of the latest generation has.

At the June 2002 meeting of U.S. bishops in Dallas, measures were taken to respond to the abuse of children by priests. The National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People was established. A fifth of VOTF members across the generations had heard of the Board. Two out of 5 members of the earlier generations had some knowledge of the Board, but only 3 in 10 from the youngest generation did. About 1 in 10 VOTF members across the generations claimed a great deal of knowledge about the Board. A quarter of the earlier generations of Catholics were not familiar with the Board while 42% of the youngest cohort was not familiar.

In February 2004, the National Review Board made a report known as the Bennett Report. 1 in 5 VOTF members across the generations said they had heard of it. Of those claiming some knowledge of the Report, 2 in 5 in the earlier generations did so, and 1 in 5 youngest generation did so. About 1 in 10 across the generations claimed a “great deal of knowledge” about the report. A quarter of the first two generations claimed no familiarity with the report, while nearly 40% of the youngest generation did the same.

At the same time the Bennett Report was released the John Jay School of Criminal Justice also released a report. Across the generations 1 in 5 VOTF members claimed to have heard of it. Nearly 2 in 5 across the generations claimed some knowledge of this report. About 1 in 10 claimed a “great deal of knowledge.” About a fifth of the Pre Vatican II and Vatican II generations had not heard of it, while about a third of the Post Vatican II generation had not.

About two fifths of the earlier generations read their Diocesan papers, and over a quarter of the latest generation does. *The National Catholic Reporter* is the most read of the national periodicals listed in the survey. Thirty nine percent of the Pre-Vatican II and 30 % of the Vatican II generations subscribe; only 13% of the latest generation does. Nearly a quarter of the earlier generations read *America*, the second most read national periodical; about 12 % of the latest cohort do. About 1 in 10 read *Commonweal*. Less than 10% across the generations say they read *In the Vineyard*, VOTF’s online publication.

Behavior and Attitudes toward Church Policy

Across the generations 4 out of 5 VOTF members strongly agree with the statement that the “Hierarchy is out of touch.” It is the same with the statement, “Priests expect laity to be followers.” Nearly a third of VOTF members in the Pre Vatican II and Vatican II generations say that “Catholic Parishes too big and impersonal;” it is only half of that (16%) in the Post Vatican II generation. In the earliest and latest cohorts nearly a fifth “strongly agree” that “Priests do a good job;” in the Vatican II cohort it is only 1 in 10. Regarding withholding financial contributions, nearly a quarter of the earliest generation “strongly agree” that this can legitimately be done; in the later cohorts it is 1 in 10.

Across the generations VOTF members share common views regarding the participation of the laity in the Church. It is nearly unanimous that at the local level VOTF members favor wider participation by the laity. At the diocesan, national, and international levels 9 in 10 members do.

VOTF members are nearly unanimous in saying that the laity has a right to participate in decisions about parish spending. Eight in 10 say that they have a right to participate in selecting priests for their parishes and bishops for their dioceses.

To measure the salience of their views, we asked how much time VOTF members would be will to give to church decision making. Of the earlier cohorts, 2 in 5 said they would be willing to devote 1 hour per week; in the latest generation 3 in 5 said they would be willing to give an hour. Nearly half of the earlier cohorts would be willing to give 2-5 hours a week, while a third of the latest generation would be willing to do so. Less than 1 in 10 across the generations would be willing to give 6-10 hours per week.

We also asked how much money per year members would be willing to give to VOTF to promote the laity's role in church. Over a third across the generations said they would be will to give \$50 or less. Across the generations over a quarter would be willing to give \$51-\$100. About a fifth of the earlier cohorts and 1 in 10 of the latest would be willing to give more than \$100 per year.

The Role of Region

Introduction

The United States is a large country, and its regions reflect variations related to the time of initial settlement, the ethnicity of those original settlers, and the geography and economy of the particular region. The church in these different regions is also affected by these variables.

The cradle of the Catholic Church in the U.S. is the Northeast more specifically the city of Baltimore. Its first bishop, John Carroll was the first in the U.S. Initially he fostered a church with a clear American identity, but he never secured bishop-collaborators to effectively extend his vision. Carroll increasingly was swayed by the designs of Rome, a factor that moved American Catholicism into a more conservative posture.

Northeastern Catholicism became ghettoized and defensive; the Irish led church lived in the shadow of unfriendly WASP elites and stood apart from society. The largest dioceses such as New York, Boston and Philadelphia were headed by cardinals and were

the hubs of feudal empires that permeated the East. By the beginning of the 20th century twice as many Catholics lived in the Northeast as in the Midwest, and it set the tone for Catholicism throughout the country (Morris 1997).

Midwestern Catholicism brooked greater pluralism. Germans, Poles and Irish sought to establish their own regions of influence, as did other smaller ethnic groups, so there was a greater toleration of diversity. The largest diocese in the Midwest was Chicago but moderate sized dioceses such as Milwaukee, the headquarters of German Catholicism, and St. Paul also exercised influence in the region. Archbishop Ireland of St. Paul was a champion of a more American style of Catholicism.

The Catholic Church in Chicago was embedded in the social movement culture of the city. From the 1940s Chicago Catholicism's pioneering role in social, liturgical, and ministerial reforms as well as lay activism was expressed in the Catholic Action Movements that cultivated the spirit of participation and activism among the laity.

The seeds of California Catholicism are found in the Spanish missions tended by the Franciscan Friars. Irish and Italian transplants formed the church in San Francisco. A wartime boom affected the development of the area and of the local church. After WW II a typical Catholic family was headed by a professional, educated on the GI Bill and staunchly anti-communist; his wife tended the house and children. Such an upstanding citizen was not the recipient of prejudice, but was welcomed warmly by the Protestant business elite (Morris 1997).

In the Southwest the metropolitan archbishop of Texas, Robert E. Lucey, advocated social justice, by criticizing racism and segregation, and supporting labor. He encouraged a progressive social agenda while he wielded his ecclesiastical authority without qualms (Bronder 1982).

This portrait of Catholic regional diversity contributes to a sense how churches in the regions of the U.S. developed out of differing historical and social circumstances.

The Demographics of Region

Similarities stand out when looking at VOTF members by region; the generations of Pre-Vatican II, Vatican II, and Post-Vatican II are evenly distributed. In regard to

ethnicity the only notable variation is that there are fewer members of Irish and Italian descent in the Midwest, and more Latinos in the West. As for education there are no significant variations by region either for members or their parents. Marital status, employment, nature of employment, and income are all about the same.

VOTF members living in the West were more likely to identify as political and social liberals, while in the South they were more likely to identify as political conservatives. Across the regions they tended to identify themselves as economic moderates.

Two thirds of VOTF members identify with the Democratic Party in all regions except the South, and even there it is over half (54%). One quarter identify as Republicans in the South and Midwest compared to less than a fifth in the East and West. About 1 in 10 identify with Independent or Green Parties across the regions, except in the South where it is over a fifth. Compared to the general Catholic populace, in every region VOTF members tend to identify with the Democratic Party. In the south they are more likely to identify as independents; in the Midwest and West they are less likely to do so.

Religious Practices and Attitudes

There is consistency in the religious practices of VOTF member across the regions. In all regions 9 out of 10 are cradle Catholics; eight out of ten have Catholic fathers and nine out of ten have Catholic mothers. Four out of 5 are registered members of parishes. For the general Catholic population the average is a little above 3 out of 5 (2005 Survey).

In the East and West 7 out of 10 went to Catholic Grade Schools, in Massachusetts and the South it is 3 out of 5, and in the Midwest it is 4 out of 5. In the general Catholic population only half went to Catholics schools in the East and Midwest, and 2 out of 5 in the South and West (2005 Survey). In Massachusetts, the South and West over half went to Catholic High Schools, and in the East and Midwest it is nearly two thirds. This compares with the general population where across the regions less than a third went to Catholic High Schools (2005 Survey). Close to 60% went to Catholic Colleges in Massachusetts, the East and West about half in the Midwest and South. In the

general Catholic population across the regions about 1 in 10 went to a Catholic College (2005 Survey).

Across the regions over a third of VOTF members have taken theology courses. In the East, South and West over a fifth have been in a seminary or religious formation program during the course of their lives; in the Midwest it is a third. Across the regions about 10% professed religious vows, in the Midwest and West 10% were ordained and in the other regions it is closer to 6%.

Regarding their marriages and family lives, in Massachusetts, the East, South and Midwest 9 out of 10 VOTF members are in sacramental marriages; in the West it is 8 out of 10. As for church recognized marriages in the general Catholic population, in the East and Midwest 7 out of 10, and in the South and West 6 out of 10 are in such marriages (2005 Survey). In Massachusetts, the South and Midwest 80% or more VOTF members have children; in the East and West it is a little over 70%. Over half of these children, with the exception of Massachusetts, were in Catholic Schools.

In regard to church attendance, in the East and South about 70% of VOTF members attend mass weekly or more, in the other regions it is 60% or more. This is significantly above the attendance rates of the general Catholic population where attendance in the East, South and Midwest is over a third, and in the West a quarter (2005 Survey). Across the regions about 80% of VOTF members pray daily or more. In the general population, over half pray daily or more in the East and West, and over two thirds do in the Midwest and South (2005 Survey).

Across the regions, with the exception of Massachusetts (22%), close to a third of VOTF members help the need [*sic*] on a weekly basis. In all the regions about half or more do so at least monthly.

In assessing the importance of the church for them personally, about two-thirds of VOTF members across the regions say it is the most important or among the most important parts of their lives. This is significantly higher than the general Catholic population's response (2005 Survey).

Leaving and Staying

Respondents were asked to indicate where they stood on a seven-point scale ranging from 1, “I would never leave the Catholic Church” to 7, “I might leave,” Around half of VOTF members across the regions said “never leave,” though they slightly trail the general Catholic population in this response. In the table below we see that by region VOTF members are more likely to say, “might leave” than the general Catholic populace (2005 Survey). How can this be explained?

Response 1-2 “Never Leave”	Total	East	South	Midwest	West
VOTF	48%	55%	54%	45%	44%
General	56%	60	63	52	47

Response 6-7 “Might Leave”	Total	East	South	Midwest	West
VOTF	22%	17%	23%	25%	30%
General	14%	12	7	15	20

We have seen that VOTF members display levels of commitment to the Catholic Church that are higher than those of the general Catholic population. This is shown by their frequency of mass attendance, prayer, active participation in Church life and service to the needy. At the same time it is more likely for a member of the general Catholic population to say I will never leave the Church, and it is more likely for a VOTF member to say I might leave. How do we understand this seeming contradiction between expressed intention and action?

Hirschman’s classic work *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty* (1970) discusses the behaviors of consumers and members in firms and organizations, and he notes these come in two types. Some are inert or non-critical and others are alert and critical. Non-critical consumers are likely to stay with a particular supplier as long as their basic needs are met. There is little need to think about leaving. If a consumer becomes critical and there is a viable alternative, the consumer can leave one supplier and go to another; here exit becomes an option. Stark and other researchers have characterized the American religious

landscape as a vast market, and explain religious switching in just this way. However when one is a member rather than a consumer, the variable of loyalty enters the picture and the exit option becomes more costly. Our study indicates that VOTF Catholics tend to see themselves as members, and thus they are both active and critical.

In his study of political influence Banefield (1961) says “The effort an interested party makes to put its case before the decision maker will be in proportion to the advantage to be gained from a favorable outcome multiplied by the probability of influencing the decision”(p.333). The profile of VOTF members shows that they are highly educated, hold professional positions, have high incomes, and are active in their professions and communities. They are people of influence. This profile is consistent with previous research on loyal members, who remain with troubled organizations in order to reform them. The ability of VOTF members to influence outcomes in other forums have affected their understanding of how one can act as a member of the Catholic Church. Far from giving up on the Church they have demonstrated their belief that as an organization, the Church has the capacity to be reformed.

According to Hirschman (1970) voice and exit can be complementary, but the former does not rule out the latter. “If customers are sufficiently convinced that voice will be effective, then they may well postpone exit” (p.37). This suggests why VOTF Catholics can on the one hand show a higher level of commitment to Catholicism and on the other express a higher likelihood that they “might leave” the church. Theologian Paul Philibert (2005) predicts: “We can expect to see more examples like Voice of the Faithful and more exasperated defections from the Catholic Community until meaningful lay consultation and participation become a greater part of parish and diocesan life.”

Participation in VOTF Activities

VOTF originated in Boston in response to the clergy abuse scandal and its cover-up. Quickly it spread to other parts of the Northeast, and then to other regions of the country. Boston and the Northeast acutely experienced the initial outrage that was the germ for VOTF. In other regions it is likely that concern about clerical malfeasance in

that area, as concern for the survivors of abuse, and church reform would be motivating factors for joining VOTF.

Interestingly enough, in all regions nearly 6 out of 10 VOTF members went to their first VOTF meeting alone. In Massachusetts and the East a little over a quarter went with another person. In the South, Midwest and West being invited by another person was a key factor for one out of five members. To mobilize the groups more than half of the members in Massachusetts, the East and South invited others to join them at meetings; it is less in the Midwest and West.

There are few regional differences in regard to identification with VOTF's stated goals. Over four out of five strongly identify with goals one and two. Nine out of ten strongly identify with the goal of shaping structural change in the church. Half of the members in Massachusetts and the East are members of VOTF affiliates. In the South and Midwest it is over a third, but only 27% in the West. It may be that the availability of more local affiliates encourages increased participation in local groups.

In questions meant to measure the salience of members' beliefs about VOTF, over half have signed VOTF's Petition for Reform and this is consistent across the regions. Under a third have donated money to the national office, and this too is consistent across the regions. In Massachusetts and the East about a third have donated money to local affiliates, in the South and Midwest about 15% and in the West one in ten have done so. Two out of five attend meetings in Massachusetts and the East; this drops to about one out of five in the South, Midwest and West. This mirrors the levels of affiliate membership across the regions and suggests that local affiliates may be a helpful resource for involvement.

In general around four out of five members believe the executive office, and the board are providing effective leadership. Nearly eight out of ten believe the Representative Council is providing effective guidance, but the numbers here are slightly lower in the Midwest (73%) and West (70%).

Participation of VOTF members in Church Life

In general, there is little variation in the participation of VOTF members in the life of the Church by region. When we look at participation in parish groups we see that the level of participation in RENEW in the Midwest is 12 percentage points higher than the national norm (36% rather than 24%); participation in small Christian Communities is above the national total (34%) in the Midwest (44%) and the West (47%). In the Midwest a third participated in Call to Action, in other regions, with the exception of Massachusetts (12%) it is about a quarter. In the Midwest membership in the Knights of Columbus is 8 points above the national total (14%). Nearly half of VOTF members across the regions are members of Social Justice organizations; in the Midwest it is the highest (54%). This may suggest that social engagement is higher in the Midwest.

Knowledge of Vatican II and Other Documents

When asked about their knowledge of the Vatican II Documents, about 1 out of 10 VOTF members said they read all the Vatican II Documents. In the West, 1 out of 5 said they read some of them; in the other regions it is again 1 out of 10. Across the regions close to half participated in seminars on Vatican II.

About 1 in 5 VOTF members had heard of the National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People except in the West where it was only 13%. In the East, Midwest and West nearly half said they had some knowledge of it; in Massachusetts and the South it was about 40%. In almost all regions 1 in 10 said they had a great deal of knowledge of it.

Regarding the Bennett Report, across the regions a fifth or more had heard of it, and 2 out of 5 claimed some knowledge of it; In all regions 1 in 10 said they had a great deal of knowledge of it. Close to 2 in 10 had heard of the John Jay College Study with the exception of the South (14%). In the East over half claimed some knowledge of it with the regions following with about 2 in 5. In all regions with the exception of Massachusetts (6%) 1 in 10 said they had a great deal of knowledge of it.

In the South and Midwest over half read their diocesan newspapers; in the West and East it is over 40%, with Massachusetts at a low of 20%. *The National Catholic*

Reporter is the most read national publication. Across the regions round a third read it, and in the East it crests to 40%; only Massachusetts is low with a readership of 21%. Over a quarter read *America*, with the exception of the South and Massachusetts where it is 1 in 10. Across the regions, 1 in 10 read *Commonweal*. Less than 1 in 10 read *In the Vineyard*.

Behavior and Attitudes toward Church Policy

The profile of VOTF members shows them to be people who are accustomed to actively participating in professional, community and church life. It is expected that those who are more highly committed will also be more concerned and critical about shortcoming in the institutions in which they are committed. Because they see themselves as part of the organization this can be a form of self-criticism focused on a sense of responsibility to reform an unsatisfactory status quo. This is displayed by the responses of VOTF members to questions about Church policy.

Few would dispute that the clergy abuse scandal and its cover-up exposed serious deficiencies in the value bishops placed on children and families. When asked if the hierarchy was out of touch with the lives and experiences of the laity, across all regions 4 out of 5 VOTF members strongly agreed. In the general Catholic population only about 1 in 5 displayed such a strong response (2005 Survey).

A second area where VOTF members were critical of Catholic polity concerned their relationships with priests. When asked if “priests expect the laity to be followers,” in the East, South and West nearly half responded, “Strongly agree;” in Massachusetts and the Midwest it was over a third. By contrast, in the general Catholic population less than a fifth strongly agreed, with the exception of the South where a quarter strongly agreed.

When asked about the size and atmosphere of Catholic parishes, over 1 in 5 in Massachusetts, the East and Midwest strongly agreed: “parishes are too big and impersonal.” In the South and West about a third strongly agreed. Again this contrasts with the general populace where only 1 in 10 strongly agreed.

Because they are highly educated and committed participants in the Church, VOTF members are likely to have higher expectations of priests than the average

Catholic. When asked if priests do a good job less than a fifth across the regions strongly agreed. In the general population about half strongly agreed. VOTF members claim a right to actively decide whether and to what extent they will use their resources to support the church. Nearly a fifth of the membership throughout the country strongly agreed that it was legitimate to withhold financial contributions when the hierarchy is unresponsive. Among VOTF members across the regions more than half agreed that it was appropriate to do so.

More than 9 in 10 across the regions strongly agreed that there should be wider participation by the laity at the local level. It is the same at the diocesan and national level and just slightly lower at the international level. VOTF members nationally are almost unanimous in strongly agreeing that the laity has a right to participate in decisions concerning parish spending. Here VOTF members and the general Catholic population are in agreement about 9 in 10 of the general population feel the same. Regarding the selection of priests for their parishes, in all regions 8 out of 10 VOTF members strongly agree that they have a right to participate in the selection. In the general Catholic population about 7 out of 10 strongly agree.

Regarding the salience of their beliefs in the East and South a third of VOTF members across the regions say they would be willing to devote an hour a week to church decision making; in Massachusetts, the Midwest and West it is over 40%. The same figures apply to those who would devote 2-5 hours. A high of 11% in the West are willing to devote 6-10 hours a week; in the other regions it is single digits. Between a quarter and a third of members nationally would be willing to donate up to \$50 a year to VOTF to promote the laity's role in church decision-making. In Massachusetts, the East and the South a quarter are willing to donate \$51-\$100 per year, in the Midwest and West it is 17% and 18% respectively. Across the regions 1 in 10 is willing to donate over \$100 per year.

Formal Catholic Education: A Key Feature of VOTF Membership

One of the most striking ways in which VOTF members differ from the general population of American Catholics is in their level of formal Catholic education. Among

Catholics generally, half (49%) attended Catholic elementary schools, 29% Catholic High Schools, and only 12% a Catholic college or university (2005 Survey). By contrast, 70% of VOTF members had a Catholic elementary school education, 62% a Catholic high School education, and 57% attended a Catholic college or university. In this section we examine the question whether VOTF members who had a Catholic college education (57%) differ in important ways from those VOTF members who did not.

With regard to the three generations of Catholics, we see that the earlier generations were more likely to receive a Catholic College education than the later generation. Attendance at a Catholic College correlated with significant differences in the study of theology, and rates of going to a seminary or center for religious formation.

A key question has to do with whether there were important differences in religious practices and attitudes between those who graduated from Catholic colleges and those who did not. Church attendance is a key variable named in the media as differentiating levels of religious commitment. Catholic college graduates attended mass somewhat more frequently, but their personal prayer practices did not differ. Catholic college grads were more likely than others to participate in programs or activities to help the needy on a weekly basis. They were also more likely to say the Church was the most or among the most important parts of their lives, and somewhat more likely to say they would never leave the Church. It made no difference at the other end of the scale; about one in four of both groups said they might leave the Church.

The influence of Catholic education is more evident in their differential participation in church life. For example, the Catholic college grads were significantly more likely to have been members of some parish committees like Liturgy and the School Board, and to be Lectors and Eucharistic ministers, CCD teachers, Catholic grade and high school teachers, RCIA leaders, as well as members of small Christian communities, and Call to Action.

The Catholic college grads were twice as likely to have read all the documents of Vatican II, and less likely to have read none of them. They were also more likely to have some or a great deal of knowledge about the National Review Board and its Report and about the John Jay College Study. Religious reading habits also varied significantly by

whether or not members went to a Catholic college. Those who did were significantly more likely to subscribe to the *National Catholic Reporter*, and *America*, and slightly more likely to get the Diocesan Paper, and *Commonweal*.

Differences on the ideological items and party identification were very small. They were more liberal and moderate on political and social matters [*sic*], and more moderate on economic matters, and a majority of both educational groups were Democrats.

Regarding “Behavior and Attitudes toward Church Policy.” There were no significant differences between those who went to Catholic Colleges and those who did not. Nor did this distinction impact participation in VOTF. However, Catholic college grads were a bit more likely to have invited others to VOTF meetings, and to be members of a VOTF affiliate. Overall, while there is evidence that formal Catholic school education makes a difference, even among VOTF members; [*sic*] the differences are not great perhaps because of the goals of VOTF, and the impact of the scandal.

Mass Attendance as a Control Variable

Church attendance is consistently claimed to be the single most predictive variable in measuring the impact of religion on values, beliefs and practices; this was especially stressed in the analyses of the 2004 election. In this section we will examine if frequency of Mass attendance is correlated with differences in the values, beliefs and practices of VOTF members. While more than 8 out of ten VOTF members were registered in parishes, 84% of those who attend at least weekly are registered in comparison to 16% of those who seldom or never attend. While more than 9 out of ten members’ marriages are recognized by the Catholic Church, even those who seldom or never attend have a percentage of 80% which is higher than the norm for all Catholics. Regular mass attendance correlates with Catholic school attendance (53%, weekly and 37%, seldom/never). Eighty eight percent of weekly attendees pray at least once a day, but even 60% of those who seldom go to Mass pray daily. Half of those who attend Mass at least weekly help the needy at least once a month. With those who attend seldom or never it is a third.

Three-fourths of VOTF members who go to Mass regularly say the church is the “most” or “among the most” important parts of their lives. Only 27% of those who attend seldom or never gave that response. Again while 2 in 3 regular Mass goers say they would never leave the church, only one in five of the seldom or never attendees say this; 2 in 3 of the latter say they might leave. Only 14% of the regulars acknowledge the possibility.

Higher levels of Mass attendance correlate with membership on the Parish Council, the Liturgy Committee, and other parish committees. But those who attend monthly or seldom also claimed participation on the Parish Council (25%), and Finance Council (10%). One VOTF member reflected: “I have been in a state of flux since 2002. I took a break from being a Catechist, and I don’t attend Mass as often as I did. The Church was very important at one time, but that is no longer true.”

The regular Mass goers were most active in the liturgical ministries, although 42% and 37% of those who answered that they attend Mass monthly or seldom claimed they were lectors or Eucharistic ministers. The regular Mass goers were significantly more active than the other two groups in CCD, and RCIA activity. Small percentages of all three groups were teachers at both grade and high school levels. Regular Mass attendees were most likely to have participated in RENEW, small Christian communities, and *Cursillo*.

Do Catholics with different patterns of Mass attendance differ in their knowledge of the events of Vatican II? We inquired about knowledge of Vatican II, and as expected, regular Mass attendees were more likely (36%) than monthly (19%) or the seldom(28%) attendees to have read all the documents , and significantly less likely to have not read any. With regard to the National Review Board and its Bennett Report, 3 in 5 of the regular Mass attendees claimed to have at least some knowledge about them; less than half the monthly and 2 in 5 of the seldom attendees said the same. This pattern held regarding the John Jay College Study.

Regarding VOTF members’ attitudes and behavior toward Church policy, seldom attendees were more likely to see the priests as expecting the laity to be followers. All three groupings saw the hierarchy as out of touch with the laity; seldom attendees were

nearly unanimous in this. They are less likely to agree that the priests do a good job and most likely to say that the laity can withhold financial contributions to gain the attention of the hierarchy. Mass attendance rates had no effect on attitudes toward wider participation in church decisions. They all insisted on that right.

Over half of the regular Mass goers were willing to give at least two hours a week to promote church reform; that was not the case with the others. Weekly and month attendees were about the same in terms of giving money to promote reform. Weekly Mass attendees are more likely to subscribe to the local Diocesan Paper, the *National Catholic Reporter*, and *America*. A majority of all three groups identified themselves as Democrats. How does Mass attendance affect VOTF participation? Regular attendees were most likely to invite others to attend meetings.

Perhaps the one feature that emerges through this comparative reading of Mass attendance is that the 10% of VOTF members who seldom if ever go to Mass now were at one time active in the Church. One VOTF member wrote: "I stopped attending Mass on a regular basis because the pastor who married us four years ago went to jail as part of the scandal and the church basically swept it under the carpet after the initial outcry." Another wrote: "After a couple of years of regular church attendance, I have fallen away, very much discouraged by developments in the Church. It doesn't help that we moved away from our old parish; we have been desultorily looking for a good new one." VOTF sustains for some of them at least a minimal level of interest in the church.

APPENDIX B

2004 CATHOLIC DONOR ATTITUDE SURVEY

FADICA

2004 Catholic Donor Attitude Survey



**Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities, Inc.
(FADICA)**

in association with

**The Center for the Study of Church Management
of
Villanova University**

and

Zogby International

FADICA Catholic Donor Attitude Survey

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FADICA, Inc.**Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities, Inc.**

Organized in 1976, Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities, Inc. (FADICA) is a consortium of private funders. In addition to facilitating the exchange of information on important trends and needs relevant to the future of religious life, FADICA serves as a forum for the discussion of common grant requests and programs of mutual interest.

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*“Within a sound ecclesiology of communion,
a commitment to creating better structures of participation,
consultation and shared responsibility...
(is) an intrinsic requirement of the exercise of episcopal authority.”*

Pope John Paul II to U.S. Bishops
September 11, 2004

Introduction

For the past three years our association of grant makers has sought to learn more about the opinions of Catholics who are especially active in their parishes as measured by church attendance. This is the segment of the Catholic population that the church relies upon the most for its financial support.

When we began this series of surveys in 2002, we were troubled by the prospect that the clergy sexual abuse crisis could eventually impact the capacity of the church to meet its mission. We felt that there should be more data available on what Catholics in the pews were thinking about the crisis and on how current events would impact decisions to give.

Through our research we have documented a growing uneasiness among Catholics not only about the crisis itself, but the way in which their donations are handled. This year's survey follows a published report by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice that \$572 million dollars had been spent by the church in legal settlements with the victims of abuse and for treatment over the past five decades. We were especially interested to know how such revelations would be received by typical Catholics in the pew. How would their decisions to support the church be influenced by the flow of events?

Working with the Center for the Study of Church Management at Villanova University, as well as Zogby International, FADICA found that the desire for fuller financial accountability and transparency continues to grow – almost half of American parishioners now *strongly* agree that the church should be made more accountable for its finances. A startling three quarters of parish donors want to see their dioceses in compliance with financial standards that have been developed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Large numbers of parish donors say they are unaware of what happens to their contributions while over one quarter of them state that they do not even know whether their diocese had conducted an annual audit.

Worry continues to mount over whether the church will be able to meet its mission due to the impact of litigation related to clergy sexual abuse. Almost two thirds of American Catholics feel that present fundraising methods in the church – largely the collection basket – are antiquated and that newer, more effective approaches should be employed.

These are significant findings and call for appropriate and well publicized improvements to broaden parish donor involvement in the financial life of the church. Creating a culture of trust and transparency will not occur without deliberate attention to the way in which the church engages its donors in the future.

In presenting the results of this year's survey, FADICA again expresses its appreciation to Professor Charles E. Zech of Villanova's Center for the Study of Church Management, to Dr. John Zogby of Zogby International, and to those individual members of FADICA whose generosity enabled this important survey to be undertaken.

Dr. Francis J. Butler, President
Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities, Inc
Washington, DC
December, 2004

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Survey Highlights 2004

While the opinion of regular Mass attending Catholics towards the performance of the bishops in their handling of the clergy sexual abuse scandal has improved, lay attitudes concerning the importance of church financial transparency and accountability remain high, and in some cases have intensified.

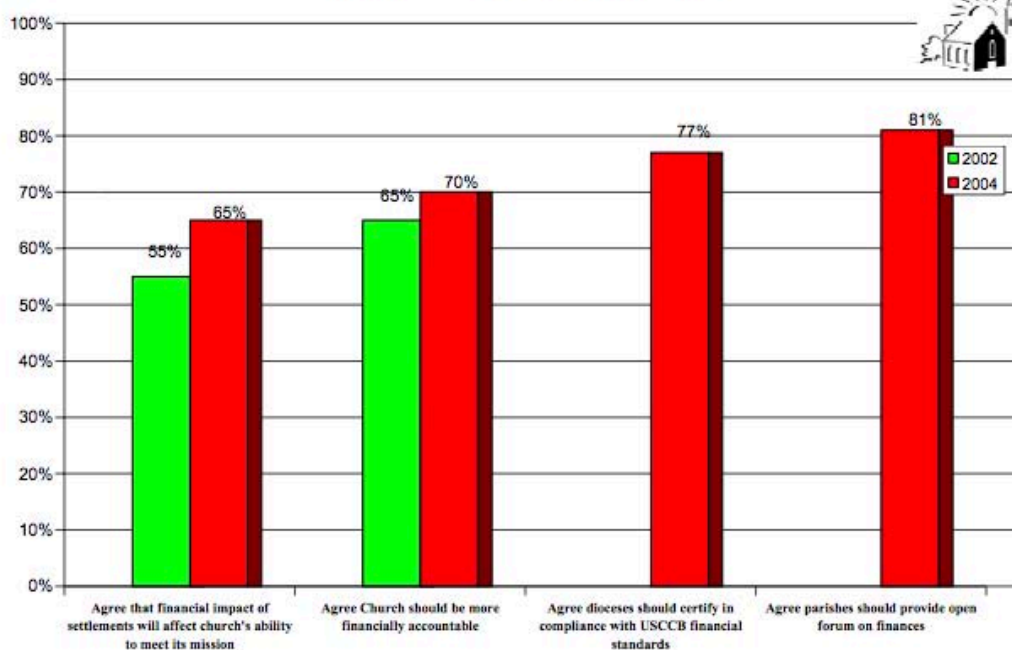
- The percentage of regular Mass attending Catholics who agreed that the Church should be made more accountable on church financial issues increased from 65% in 2002 to 70% in 2004.
- The percentage of regular Mass attending Catholics who were concerned that the financial impact of the settlements would affect the ability of the Church to meet its mission increased from 55% in 2002 to 65% in 2004.
- More than three-fourths (77%) of the 2004 sample of regular Mass attending Catholics agree that dioceses should publicly certify that they are in compliance with the national standards of financial reporting established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- In both 2002 and 2004, more than three-fourths of Mass attending Catholics (78% in 2002, 76% in 2004) agreed that each diocesan bishop should give a full accounting of the financial costs and settlements arising from the scandal.
- More than three-fifths of regular Mass attending Catholics agreed that there should be an annual independent audit of church finances at every level, with the results to be released publicly, although the percentage decreased from 66% in 2002 to 61% in 2004.
- Catholics continue to indicate that the clergy abuse scandal has impacted their willingness to support the Church financially. In the 2004 survey 14% of regular Mass attending Catholics indicated that they had either decreased their parish giving or stopped giving altogether; at the diocesan level, the comparable figure was 17%; and the figure for national second collections was 19%. At the same time, 8% have increased their contributions to their parish; 5% are contributing more to diocesan collections, and 5% are contributing more to national second collections.

Other findings included:

- Only 47% of a 2004 sample of regular Mass attending Catholics agreed that they have an adequate understanding of how their contributions to the Catholic Church are used.

- Only 49% of a 2004 sample of regular Mass attending Catholics rate the Church as above average in its competence in the handling of money.
- Many Catholics remain ignorant or uninvolved in Church financial issues. Among the 2004 sample of regular Mass attending Catholics, 27% were not aware that some dioceses had declared bankruptcy, 27% did not know if their diocese had issued certified audited financial statements in the last year, and 22% did not know if their parish had issued certified audited financial statements in the last year.
- Among options available for dioceses to pay for the clergy abuse financial settlements, the 2004 sample of regular Mass attending Catholics gave highest priority to selling Church property (38%), followed by conducting a diocesan special collection (36%), declaring bankruptcy (35%), reducing diocesan program offerings (30%), and closing parishes (28%).
- The 2004 sample of regular Mass attending Catholics strongly favored some innovative (for the Catholic Church) financial arrangements, including holding open forums for discussing parish financial plans (81%) and developing more modern methods of fundraising (60%).

Survey of Parish Catholics
Attitudes toward Financial Accountability



On Financial Accountability and Catholic Church Support: Findings of the 2004 Donor Attitude Survey

**Dr. Charles E. Zech
Center for the Study of Church Management
Villanova University**

This study reports the findings of a FADICA sponsored Zogby International poll which was a follow-up to a similar poll conducted each of the previous two years. In 2002, we surveyed 1001 Catholics, of whom 732 indicated that they were regular Mass attenders. Results were reported on the opinions of the regular Mass attenders. In 2003, we attempted to re-survey these same regular Mass attenders. Unfortunately, the number of respondents to that survey was too small to identify many significant patterns. In 2004, we surveyed a separate sample of 1000 Catholics, 803 of whom indicated that they were regular Mass attenders. This report presents the results of that sample and, where appropriate, compares any findings with those of the 2002 survey.

It is clear from this survey that, as many observers had predicted, the financial implications of the clergy sexual abuse scandal have continued to linger. This is true for both the laity's expressed desire for greater Church financial accountability and transparency and for the impact of the scandal on Catholics' willingness to support their Church financially.

It is important to remember that the analysis in this report is based on the opinions of regular Mass attending Catholics, those who attend Mass daily, weekly, or almost every week. The opinions of those disaffected Catholics who only attend Mass twice a year (Easter and Christmas) or perhaps twice a lifetime (weddings and funerals), while of interest from the perspective of evangelization, are not included here. The fact that regular Mass attending Catholics are speaking here confers some additional weight to these findings. This population can be considered the major source of donor support for the church.

Financial Accountability and Transparency

In the fall of 2002, as the full scope of the clergy abuse scandal was still unfolding, respondents to our survey of regular Mass attenders indicated that they desired greater financial accountability and transparency and, in fact, more lay input into Church financial matters, at all levels. That same desire is still evident among regular Mass attenders two years later. For example, in 2002, only 46 percent of our sample rated the bishops as a group as above average on their financial accountability. By 2004, that figure had fallen to 38 percent. Likewise, in 2002, 65 percent of the sample agreed that the Church needed to be more accountable on its finances. By 2004, that figure had risen to 70 percent.

Specifically, what kinds of accountability and transparency are the laity expecting? First, they want each bishop to give a full accounting of the financial costs arising from the scandal. In 2002, 78 percent of the sample agreed with this idea, and in 2004 it was still supported by nearly the identical proportion (76 percent). Steps were taken to provide this information through the

release of the John Jay College Report in February, 2004. (*The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors By Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States 1950-2002*, USCCB, 2004). The John Jay College Researchers surveyed each diocese in an attempt to learn the scope of the scandal, both in human and financial terms. Unfortunately, fully 14 percent of the dioceses and religious orders failed to report any financial figures at all in the John Jay Report. In addition, other dioceses only reported partial figures: 40 percent failed to provide data on the cost for priest treatment expenses, 38 percent had missing data on attorney's fees, and 20 percent failed to provide complete cost figures for victim compensation.

The laity also want publicly released annual independent audits at every level. That was supported by 66 percent of the sample in 2002, although support dropped to 61 percent in 2004. Are they receiving this information? When asked about diocesan audited financial statements, only 38 percent of the 2004 sample indicated that their diocese had issued audited financial statements within the past year. The record was slightly better at the parish level, where 51 percent of the same sample stated that their parish had issued certified financial statements within the past year. As a result, only 47% of the 2004 sample believed that they had an adequate understanding of how their contributions to the Church are used. This is especially noteworthy, since the USCCB has issued national standards for financial reporting. (*Diocesan Financial Issues*, USCCB, Dec., 2002) More than three-fourths (77 percent) of the 2004 sample agree that dioceses should certify that they are in compliance with these standards.

Finally, Catholics want to be consulted on Church financial matters. This is most practical at the parish level. A substantial majority, 81 percent of the 2004 sample of regular Mass attenders, agrees that parishes should provide open forums where parishioners can have an input into the parish's financial planning and methods of fundraising. Of interest here is the fact that 60 percent of this same sample believe that the Church needs to develop more modern methods of fundraising to complement the traditional collection basket.

Decisions on Individual Household Contributions

Both the 2002 and the 2004 surveys asked about the impact of the clergy abuse scandal on parishioners' decisions to contribute financially at three different levels: to support their parish; for diocesan collections such as Catholic Charities, or the Bishops' Annual Appeal; or to support the national collections sponsored by the USCCB, such as, *Aid to the Church in Central and Eastern Europe*. The questions across the two years were not identical, so the results are not exactly equivalent, but some insights can still be gleaned. At the parish level in 2002, 12 percent of the respondents chose a response that indicated that they had either given less or had ceased to contribute to their parish altogether. In 2004, 14 percent of the respondents selected comparable options. For diocesan giving, the figures were 19 percent in 2002 and 17 percent in 2004. When asked about USCCB second collections, 19 percent of the sample in both 2002 and 2004 selected responses that revealed either a decrease in contributions or an unwillingness to contribute at all.

At the same time, some parishioners responded to the scandal by increasing their financial support to the Church. In 2002, 3 percent of the respondents told us that they had increased their

national collections levels the figures were identical in both surveys: 2 percent of the 2002 sample had increased their contributions, and in 2004 that figure increased to 5 percent. These findings are consistent with some national tallies that reported a decrease in the number of givers at each level while dollar giving has remained fairly constant.

Paying for the Scandal

In the 2004 survey we asked the respondents about a number of options available to dioceses to pay the costs resulting from the scandal. None of them received the endorsement of a majority of the respondents, but some were viewed more favorably than others. The most popular was to sell Church property (38 percent) followed closely by holding a diocesan-wide special collection with the funds specifically designated for the settlements (36 percent). Somewhat surprising, declaring bankruptcy was supported by 35 percent, followed by reducing diocesan programs (30 percent), and closing parishes (28 percent). Parishioners would rather see their diocese declare bankruptcy than experience a decrease in diocesan services or parish closings.

Parishioner attitudes on bankruptcy were revealing. For this sample of regular Mass attending Catholics, more than a quarter (27 percent) were not aware that any Catholic dioceses had declared bankruptcy. Of those who were aware of the bankruptcies, a solid majority (57 percent) indicated that the bankruptcies would have no effect on their decision to contribute. A few (7 percent) told us that as a result of the bankruptcies they were likely to contribute more, while 9 percent were contributing less because of the bankruptcies.

Recommendations

Clearly, nearly three years after the clergy abuse scandal broke, one of the lingering elements is that parishioners are still not content with the financial stewardship of the church. Dioceses and parishes that seek to live by the values of Christian stewardship should consider constructive measures that help parishioners understand where their donations go and how parishioners can become more familiar and informed about the financial dimensions of Catholic life.

Constructive steps that might be taken could include:

- The publication of diocesan and parish audits in their entirety. To insure greater transparency, each diocese and parish should publish a “reader friendly” annual financial statement, as well as an approved budget and strategic plan for the coming years.
- Diocesan compliance with all USCCB approved financial standards and practices and fundraising policies. The latest technology should be employed to increase the accuracy of financial reporting with the possibility of the USCCB providing a website to deliver financial management training to members of diocesan and parish finance councils.

- Parish and diocesan forums with finance council members present who can explain and respond to parishioner questions. Bishops should provide ongoing forums where financial issues and decisions of the dioceses and the parishes can be discussed.
- Best practices should be published in financial reporting and diocesan financial councils should encourage professional and consistent reporting in every parish.
- Every diocese should provide competent centralized resources to assist every parish within its territory in development and fundraising.
- Financially experienced parishioners should be selected for the parish finance councils and should be engaged in training and developing additional members.
- Educational efforts for professional church employees, clergy, financial council members and parishioners on accounting standards and church policies on the use of donations.
- Every parishioner should have access to a written report on all national and diocesan appeals which contains complete financial information and a progress report.

**Questionnaire Survey and Answers
from Zogby International
Percent of Frequent Mass Attenders Familiar
with Clergy Sexual Abuse Who Expressed an Opinion**

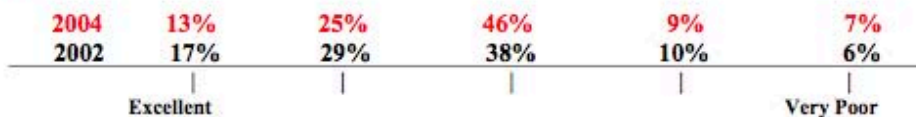
How to read the data: The figures in red represent Zogby International polling data for 2004. The black figures represent a national survey taken in 2002 by The Gallup Organization. Note: Some survey questions included in 2004 were not included in 2002.

How often do you attend mass?	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
• At least once a week	79%	81%
• Almost every week	21%	19%

1. How many hours per month do you spend participating in activities at your parish?

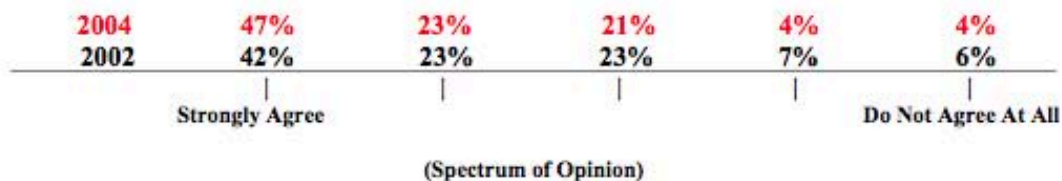
	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
• None/Less than one hour	27%	46%
• 1 to 3 hours	25%	29%
• 4 to 7 hours	23%	10%
• 8 to 10 hours	10%	8%
• 11 hours or more	14%	7%

2. Using a five-point scale where 5 means excellent and 1 means very poor, how would you rate the U.S. bishops as a group on their accountability on issues such as church finances?

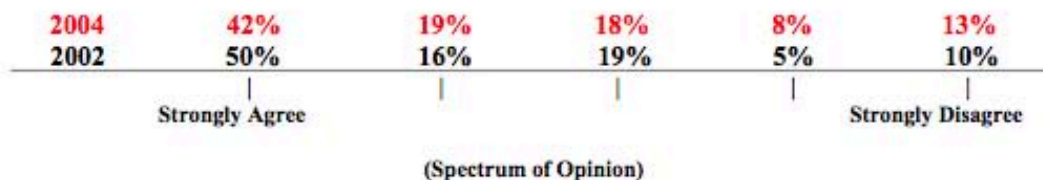


(Spectrum of Opinion)

3. Using a five-point scale where 5 means you strongly agree and 1 means you do not agree at all, to what extent do you agree that the church should be made more accountable on issues such as church finances?



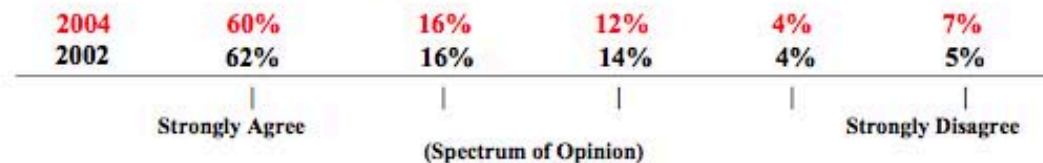
4. Using a five-point scale where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement that there should be an annual independent audit of church finances at every level, with the results to be released publicly?



5. Overall, do you think the U.S. Catholic bishops have done a good job or a bad job in dealing with the problem of sexual abuse of young people by Catholic priests?

	2002	2004
Good job	37%	41%
Bad job	63%	59%

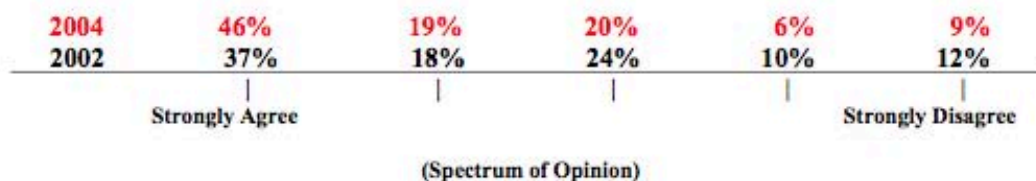
6. Using a five-point scale where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree, to what extent do you agree or disagree that each diocesan bishop should give a full accounting of the financial costs and settlements arising from the sexual abuse by priests?



7. Which of the following would be the (“acceptable way” – 2004) (“best way” – 2002) for a diocese to pay for the financial settlements resulting from the sexual abuse by priests, once all diocesan insurance has been exhausted? (2004 respondents permitted to offer more than one option.)

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
• The sale of church property	33%	38%
• A special diocesan-wide collection with funds specifically devoted to paying for the settlements	22%	36%
• A reduction in diocesan program offerings	11%	30%
• Declaring bankruptcy as an appropriate way to protect Church assets		35%
• Closing parishes as a way to save money		28%

8. Using a five-point scale where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the financial impact of the settlements will affect the ability of the church to meet its mission, including programs that assist the disadvantaged members of society?



9. Which of the following best describes how your household has contributed to your local parish since the recent sexual abuse of young people by Catholic priests?

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
• I am contributing more to my parish.	3%	8%
• It has had no impact on my household's decision to support my parish financially.	64%	60%
• It has had no impact, but my household will reduce contributions if it is learned that collection money will be used to pay lawsuits.	22%	19%
• I contribute less to my parish.		5%
• My household has given parish funds to other Catholic causes.	6%	6%
• My household is not inclined to support my parish right now.	6%	3%

10. Which of the following best describes how your household has contributed to church national collections, such as the American Bishops' Overseas Appeal or the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, in the wake of the crisis of sexual abuse by priests?

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
• I am contributing <u>more</u> to church national collections.	2%	5%
• I have <u>not changed</u> my contributions because I support the bishops.	31%	37%
• I have <u>not changed</u> my contributions because I didn't want to punish church-sponsored charities.	23%	23%

- I have not changed my contributions but I will change if I learn that the funds will be used to pay lawsuits. 25% 17%
- **I now contribute less to national collections.** 10%
- I did not want to support these appeals this year. 19% 9%

11. Which of the following best describes how your household has contributed to diocesan collections such as Catholic Charities or the Bishops' Annual Appeal, in the wake of the crisis of the sexual abuse by priests?

- | | <u>2002</u> | <u>2004</u> |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| • I am contributing <u>more</u> to diocesan collections. | 2% | 5% |
| • I have <u>not changed</u> my contributions because I support my bishop. | 31% | 40% |
| • I have <u>not changed</u> my contributions because I didn't want to <u>punish diocesan charities.</u> | 22% | 21% |
| • I have <u>not changed</u> my contributions <u>but I will change</u> if I learn that the funds will be used to pay lawsuits. | 25% | 17% |
| • I now contribute less to diocesan collections. | | 9% |
| • I have <u>given diocesan funds to other Catholic causes.</u> | 6% | 4% |
| • <u>I did not want to support</u> the appeal this year. | 13% | 4% |

12. Using a 5 point scale where 5 means you strongly agree and 1 means you strongly disagree: "I have an adequate understanding of how my contributions to the Catholic Church are used".

5. Strongly agree	34%
4	13%
3	24%
2	11%
1. Strongly disagree	15%
Don't Know	2%

13. Using a 5 point scale where 5 means excellent and 1 means poor, how would you rate the competence of the Church, in general, with regards to the handling of money?

5. Excellent	22%
4	27%
3	38%
2	7%
1. Very poor	6%

14. Over the past year, which has had the greatest impact on your decision to support the Church financially?

1. The economy	20%
2. The sexual abuse scandal	8%
3. Concern over church financial accountability issues	6%
4. Concern over the unfair treatment that the church has received in the secular press	6%
5. Recognition that the church needs my contributions	41%
6. Some other reason	20%

15. Has your DIOCESE issued certified audited financial statements within the past year?

Yes	38%	No	35%	Don't Know	27%
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16. Has your PARISH issued certified audited financial statements within the past year?

Yes	51%	No	27%	Don't Know	22%
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17. Using a 5 point scale, where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means you do not agree at all, to what extent do you agree that the Church makes good use of the managerial and financial expertise of its parishioners?

5. Strongly agree	35%
4	28%
3	27%
2	5%
1. Strongly disagree	5%

18. Using a five-point scale where 5 means you strongly agree and 1 means you do not agree at all, to what extent do you agree that the Catholic Church needs to develop more modern methods of fundraising to complement the traditional collection basket?

5. Strongly agree	40%
4	20%
3	23%
2	6%
1. Strongly disagree	10%

19. Using a five-point scale where 5 means you strongly agree and 1 means you do not agree at all, to what extent do you agree that dioceses should publicly certify that they are in compliance with the national standards of financial reporting established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops?

5. Strongly agree	58%
4	19%
3	17%
2	2%
1. Do not agree at all	5%

20. Using a five-point scale where 5 means you strongly agree and 1 means you do not agree at all, to what extent do you agree that **parishes** should provide an annual open forum for parishioners where the **parish's** financial planning and methods of fundraising can be aired?

5. Strongly agree	63%
4	18%
3	13%
2	4%
1. Do not agree at all	3%

21. To what extent has the financial bankruptcy of three U.S. Catholic dioceses affected your decision to contribute to the Church?

1. Knowing about the bankruptcies makes me want to contribute more.	7%
2. Knowing about the bankruptcies makes me want to contribute less.	9%
3. Knowing about the bankruptcies has had no effect on my decision to contribute.	57%
4. I was not aware of the bankruptcies.	27%

Demographics

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
1. Gender: Male	31%	46%
Female	69%	54%
2. Age: Under 30	6%	13%
30-44	28%	30%
45-65	44%	33%
Over 65	21%	24%
3. Race: What is your race? Are you white, African-American, Asian, Native American, or some other race?	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
White	83%	75%
African-American/black	2%	2%
Asian	2%	1%
Native American	1%	
Hispanic	11%	17%
Other		5%

4. Income:	<u>2004</u>
1. Less than \$15,000	8.8%
\$15,000 to less than \$25,000	12.3%
\$25,000 to less than \$35,000	15.8%
\$35,000 to less than \$50,000	15.9%
\$50,000 to less than \$75,000	21.7%
\$75,000 or more	25.5%
No Answer	18%
	<u>2002</u>
1. Less than \$10,000	2%
2. \$10,000 to less than \$15,000	3%
3. \$15,000 to less than \$20,000	5%
4. \$20,000 to less than \$30,000	11%
5. \$30,000 to less than \$50,000	25%
6. \$50,000 to less than \$75,000	23%
7. \$75,000 to less than \$100,000	14%
8. \$100,000 or more	17%

Notations on Methodology

Sampling Technique

The data supporting this report was collected through two telephone surveys. The first was conducted by The Gallup Organization, Inc. during the first three weeks of October, 2002. The second was conducted by Zogby International during the first week of December, 2004.

Dr. Francis J. Butler of FADICA and Dr. Charles E. Zech of Villanova University's Center for the Study of Church Management developed the survey questionnaires. While many of the questions were identical in order to allow for some inter-temporal comparisons, a few were added to the 2004 survey instrument to capture attitudes on issues that were topical at that time. A draft of the 2002 questionnaire was previewed by some members of FADICA as well as by Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, at that time, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Archbishop Gregory, in particular, made several useful suggestions that served to improve the questionnaire, although neither the FADICA members, nor the Archbishop bear any responsibility for the final form of either the 2002 or the 2004 questionnaire.

Both of the final samples included only self-identified Catholics, who were eighteen years of age or older, and who reported their Mass attendance as weekly or almost weekly. This resulted in sample sizes of 732 for the 2002 Gallup poll and 803 for the 2004 Zogby poll.

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APPENDIX C
PROPOSED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Instructor: Raymond J. O'Connor

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Ecclesiology provides the framework for the educational program.

The course objective is the education of the laity as to its rights and responsibilities as the "People of God" and baptized Christians, as outlined in the documents of the Vatican II Council.

The course will be conducted seminar style. Handouts will be provided that relate to the assigned topics.

Recommended Readings:

Lakeland, Paul. *The Liberation of the Laity: In Search of an Accountable Church*.

New York: The Continuum International, 2003.

Hannenbergh, Edward P. *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II*.

Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2007.

Additional resources:

The Promise of Vatican II: A series of presentations on issues of the role of the laity found in the documents of Vatican Council II. They are available on the VOTF website for use in educational programs.

Discussion topics:

1. An overview of the ecclesiology of the early Church.
 - a. Church as community.
 - b. Criteria for the selection and election of early Church leadership.
 - c. The emergence of hierarchy, the influence of the Emperor Constantine, and the hierarchical system as experienced in the contemporary Church.
2. The Counter-Reformation and the Council of Trent.
 - a. The Church as a perfect society as posited by Robert Bellarmine.
 - b. The Church as an insulated society opposed to the evils of the Enlightenment and Modernism.
 - c. Pope Pius IX and the concept of Papal infallibility
3. The American Church.
 - a. History of American Catholicism during the colonial period, including the Revolutionary War and the selection and election of John Carroll as the first American bishop.
 - b. The Catholic Church in the United States before the great immigration waves of the 1850s. The trustee system of Church governance that existed in many American parishes at that time.
 - c. The immigrant Church in the United States and the end of the trustee system of parish governance. The European concept of an aristocratic hierarchy, supported by the Vatican, and established in the United States.

- d. The Vatican Council II of 1962-1965 and the “opening of the Catholic Church to the world” by Pope John XXIII.
- e. The role of the laity as presented in the documents of the Vatican Council II.

4. Summary session, discussion, and evaluation.

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