

## Minutes of VOTF General Meeting

November 6, 2008

7:40- Dan Sullivan called the meeting to order. Marge Hickey led us in an opening prayer. Dan welcomed the group and encouraged donations to our Voice of Compassion fund, as well as to VOTF Bridgeport to help with operating expenses.

Bob Mulligan announced next month's speaker, Margaret Farley, whose topic is "Forgiveness in Service of Justice".

Dan announced that the Rosado case is scheduled for argument December 2 at noon in the Connecticut Supreme Court in Hartford. Members are encouraged to attend this hearing.

9:05- Dan introduced our speaker, Dan Bartley, VOTF national president. Dan was elected in February 2008, and had previously served on the VOTF National Representative Council and the Board of Trustees. His topic was the new national VOTF Strategic Plan. There are five stages to this plan: 1) Gather information from leadership teams, 2) a SWAT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), 3) synthesize and analyze data, 4) develop a plan, 5) and implement the plan.

The SWAT analysis told the team 2 things: 1) VOTF has a very large and talented membership, 2) VOTF has a "branding" issue. There is no clear articulation of who we are and what we are about. The result is that VOTF is not able to sufficiently motivate enough Catholics to get involved in reform. The team noted discouragement and apathy in the membership that made it difficult to fundraise. The team came to the decision that the root cause of these problems is that VOTF, on the national level, is organized very inefficiently, making rapid communication and decision making impossible.

How to change? The team decided on 6 guiding principles: 1) VOTF must be consistent with its mission and goals, 2) consistent with SWAT analysis, 3) missions and goals must be executable, 4) have reasonable expectations that funding will increase, 5) KISS (Keep it Simple, Silly!), 6) energize and engage the membership.

VOTF must define itself by ACTIONS. To accomplish this, the team is creating 5 separate platforms designed around interests: 1) local action (grassroots, parish councils, etc.), 2) reform actions around protecting children and survivor support, 3) universal Church reform (change on the national level), 4) partnering and networking with other reform organizations and Catholic organizations, 5) spiritual and community building.

Dan is looking for core teams of 5 to 7 people to serve on each platform. Each will be expected to organize and prioritize elements in the strategic plan and develop a two- year execution plan. Also, they are expected to design a reporting mechanism, making them open, transparent, and accountable. Finally, there will be coordination among the platforms. Dan is hoping that, nationwide, people with appropriate skill sets and activity history will step forward and volunteer to serve on these platforms.

Dan Bartley's e-mail, for those wishing to step forward, is [dan@odyne.com](mailto:dan@odyne.com)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05, and closed with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Jamie Dance