



Voice of the Faithful™

"Keep the Faith, Change the Church"™

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SURVIVOR OF SEXUAL ABUSE TO SPEAK TO VOTF

Landa Mauriello-Vernon, the new Connecticut Coordinator for SNAP (Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests) will speak at the meeting of Voice of the Faithful in the Diocese of Bridgeport on Thursday, April 1, at the First Congregational Church in Stamford at 7:30 p.m. Ms. Mauriello-Vernon will be introduced by David Cerulli, New York SNAP chair. Everyone is invited to attend.

A young woman who was repeatedly victimized by a nun, Ms Mauriello-Vernon recently spoke publicly for the first time. In an effort to help others who have been sexually abused by clergy, she announced the start of the first Connecticut SNAP Chapter that will hold support group meetings on the fourth Monday of each month.

The evening is an affirmation of the primary VOTF goal of supporting survivors of sexual abuse. Collateral goals include support of priests of integrity and shaping structural change in the Church. VOTF's overall purpose is "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".

The Diocese of Bridgeport recently announced that in the last fifty years 32 priests had sexually abused 107 boys and girls and paid \$37,700,000 in settlement costs. That financial outlay ranks Bridgeport, an average size U.S. diocese, fifth among all 195 dioceses. The per capita cost is approximately \$104 for every Catholic man, woman, and child in the Diocese. The number of accused priests is likely higher as Walter W. Curtis, the now deceased bishop of Bridgeport, affirmed in court that he had destroyed files.

The First Congregational Church is on the corner of Bedford and Prospect Streets and Walton Place in mid-town Stamford diagonally across from the rejuvenated Avon Theater. Bedford Street is an extension of Atlantic Street, Exit 7, I-95. Merritt Parkway drivers may exit at High Ridge Road, Exit 35, and continue two miles south veering right onto Summer Street for ½ mi.; turning left onto Spring Street and proceeding northbound on Bedford Street to the Walton Place/Prospect Street triangle. Parking is available in the church's parking lot, the nearby Forest Street garage and in the rear of the Pedigree Ski Shop, 350 Bedford Street.

For directions and for further information about VOTF in the Diocese of Bridgeport consult www.votfbpt.org. Or call 203-847-4145.