

# Our Voice

An E-Newsletter for Those Interested and Involved in The Voice of The Faithful • Connecticut  
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## VOTF AND THE REFORM OF THE GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Thomas Doyle Voice from the Desert

**If one looks at what happened to the institutional Catholic Church since 1965, the year that Vatican II ended, one sees a roller coaster of progressive advances and regressive retreats.**

Since the reign (and I use the word intentionally, rather than "pontificate") of John Paul II the institution has been on what some call a restorationist path. This refers to the process of restoring the Catholic Church to the splendor of the pre-Vatican II days when bishops were princes, the pope was the emperor and the lay people kept their mouths shut and their wallets open.

All along, there has been a movement by some lay, cleric and hierarchical Catholics to continue with the vision of Vatican II. Today, all of the bishops in that movement in the US are either dead, retired or in exile. The "Vatican II" clergy are growing old, discouraged, tired and are either retired or have left altogether. They have been replaced by a couple of generations of younger clergy who often describe themselves as "John Paul II" priests. Others describe them as the "Catholic Taliban," "the young Nazis" or words to that effect. Lately several scholars have written about them and the assessment is worse than discouraging. It's frightening.

**The need for deep reform exploded to the surface in January, 2002,** with the revelations in Boston that Catholic bishops had been hiding, enabling and supporting sexually dysfunctional criminals in the priesthood. VOTF started off and brought with it hope, a voice for anger, disillusionment and frustration. Now we are five years down the road from January 6, 2002. This was not the beginning salvo of the clergy abuse assault. That happened in the summer of 1984 with the revelations in Louisiana that the bishop there had done what Bernard Law had done...but Lafayette is not Boston and the Times of Acadiana is not the Boston Globe.

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### *VOTF™ 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.*

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**National VOTF:** [www.votf.org](http://www.votf.org)

**Hartford Regional VOTF:** [www.hrvotf.sytes.net](http://www.hrvotf.sytes.net)

**Bridgeport VOTF:** [www.votfbpt.org](http://www.votfbpt.org)

**THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC:** [www.taonline.org](http://www.taonline.org)

#### **How to become involved:**

Want to join VOTF or start a Parish Voice affiliate?  
Just email Jayne O'Donnell at [jaynedirish@yahoo.com](mailto:jaynedirish@yahoo.com)

#### **WE NEED YOUR HELP**

Need someone to go through approximately 200 names and cull names that are NOT on an affiliate list. If you can spare an hour, email Jayne O'Donnell at [jaynedirish@yahoo.com](mailto:jaynedirish@yahoo.com)

**WANTED: WRITERS, IDEAS, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS**...write up your affiliate meeting or program..send your ideas, comments, suggestions, to Joanne Blair, Editor, at [ejblair@comcast.net](mailto:ejblair@comcast.net)

The years since have brought staggering changes that no one expected. Thus far the cost in dollars to the U.S. Church that Ray Mouton, Mike Peterson and I predicted...one billion...has been exceeded and, if all numbers were revealed honestly, it's probably doubled. The costs for California alone, thanks to the narcissism of Roger Mahoney, have gone beyond a billion.

**The U. S. bishops still live in their delusional world as far as clergy sexual abuse is concerned.**

The Dallas Charter, the diocesan review boards, the National Review Board, the Office of Child Protection...all are bureaucratic attempts to right the wrongs, make the bad memories go away, restore trust and faith in the bishops and above all, create the false image that it's all over. As Archbishop Gregory said in February, 2004, "the history of sexual abuse is today history." More inaccurate words have never been spoken! Bishops continue to force victims through incredibly painful and demeaning court processes in which they and their lawyers do all they can to revictimize them. In state legislatures throughout the country, state Catholic Conferences and the local bishops spend millions of the faithful's dollars to defeat any legislation that would offer greater protection to child victims. They insult our collective intelligence with a variety of false claims based on erroneous information. They bring in their so-called experts to tell the legislature how much they have done and how much they care and how much they respect our U.S. legal system. The bottom line is that in state after state, the only opposition to child protective legislation is the Catholic Church. How ironic! The world's largest religious organization which is based on the mission of Christ and it opposes state laws that do what it not only could not do, but would not do...protect children from deranged predators and self-centered institutional enablers.

**What about VOTF?** The past five years have been tumultuous. The "growing pains" that some members speak of are much more than that. What we have seen has been a clash between the deeply rooted clerical dependency that has been systematically woven into our very being by the institutional church and Catholic adulthood. It's only a long, excruciatingly painful process to grow up in the Catholic Church. Most chronological adults never make it. No matter how liberated and avant-garde they believe themselves to be, there is still a very powerful core, deep down inside, that causes dependency feel-

ings to take over whenever one is faced with the challenge of taking the risk of not only thinking but acting like an adult when in the realm of the Church world. To do so means to challenge the clerical office holders and to express opinions they do not want to hear. To do so means taking the risk that some of them might try to capitalize on the magical thinking that has supported their power by threatening canonical penalties or equating disobedience to them with disobedience to Christ.

**Jesus Christ was all about love. He also was a man of action.** Whenever he encountered the religious hypocrites of his day he didn't sit down to tea with them and exchange sweet nothings so that nobody had any ruffled feathers. If he blew his top when he encountered a bunch of hucksters selling birds at the temple can you imagine what his reaction would have been if he'd dropped down to earth during the early days of the reformation? Martin Luther would have ended up the pope and the Roman church bureaucracy would have been vaporized. **What would have been his reaction had he appeared at the chancery in Lafayette, LA, in the summer of 1984 when the churchmen and the lawyers were putting together what they thought would be legal agreements that would pay off some families and insure their silence.** Even better, how do you think he would have reacted reading the Boston Globe on Sunday morning, January 6, 2002...the Feast of the Epiphany? I suspect that the epiphany the Globe brought that morning would have been followed by another "wake-up call" of cosmic proportions. Bernard Law might have found himself propelled, not to a palace in the Vatican, but to the outer reaches of Greenland to teach catechism to the natives on the edge of the North Pole.

In addition to the anger, distrust, frustration, disillusionment and spiritual aridity the institutional Church has caused because of its totally inept response to the evil of clergy abuse, there has been another equally toxic reaction and this is the profound feeling of nausea to the self-serving public relations campaign of the U.S. hierarchy by which they continue to flip the whole mess around, make themselves look like victims and demonize anyone who has ever challenged their collective stupidity, cruelty and total lack of compassion.

# CALENDAR

## PAUL LAKELAND

Chair of Religious Studies

Fairfield University will deliver a lecture at

### St. Peter Claver Church

7:30pm Thursday, March 13

47 Pleasant Street, West Hartford

(Co-sponsors are GWHVOTF and the Adult Education Committees of St. Peter Claver & St. Timothy's)

## SAVE THE DATE

Greater Bridgeport VOTF

Will hold its Annual Conference

### "Who Owns the Church"

April 26

9:30am to 4pm

At Fairfield University (More Info to Follow)

## VOTF 2008 NATIONAL ELECTIONS

**ALL REGISTERED MEMBERS  
CAN VOTE FROM  
FEBRUARY 10-24**

For all news and information about the voting process please visit the VOTF Home Page and click on the VOTF Elections Web Site. Here you'll find all you ever wanted (or needed) to know...statements by each of the candidates, election procedures, reports on the candidates from the nominations committee. etc. Read them, select your candidates and **VOTE!!!!**

## GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE continued from page 2

### Is there hope for change from within?

**As far as reform, etc. is concerned, I have lost all realistic hope that the institution will change for the better in my lifetime.** The present crop of bishops, courtesy of John Paul II, is far less pastoral, less theologically educated and more clericalist and monarchical than any I can remember. I see no hope and only constant signs of discouragement. I believe in VOTF but I do not believe that they will ever accomplish any meaningful structural change. It's simply impossible for any such change to happen unless it starts at the top. The Catholic Church is a monarchy. Period! Getting a pastoral council up and running here and there is nothing. Sitting down to tea with a bishop is no more than a sop to the activists. They are not able or willing to bend or change their approach in something as vital as clergy sexual abuse so why expect them to even think of giving up any of their power in anything else.

The hot button issues that the popes have told us we can't even talk about will remain discussed by lay and clergy alike and closed in the minds of the pope and the bishops. All you have to do is look at the stream of Vatican decrees re-introducing the pre-Vatican II version of the Latin Mass to stomping on theologians to get the picture. The young conservatives lap it up and seem to play at church as if it's some sort of surreal dress-up game. What many fed-up people are doing is simply walking away and finding any alternative that is less toxic and more Christ centered.

**I am not much interested in working for internal church reform anymore,** mainly because my experience from within the structure over the past two decades has been so painfully revelatory for me. **It is way too toxic. Life is short and being part of the Christian community is supposed to be joyful and not poisonous.** I have turned to reading the books of John Shelby Spong and find that they give me hope and a voice to my theological ideas and related feelings. I do not expect everyone to be where I am at because no one else has been on my journey.

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## A Reader's Comment

### TO THE EDITOR... TIME FOR A CHANGE!

On Saturday, January 26, and Sunday, January 27, there were no masses said at my church. The doors were locked and Catholics forced to attend services at neighboring churches. And what is the reason for this? No priest could be found to take over for the pastor while he was on a much deserved vacation. And why could no spiritual leader be found to attend to the needs of this parish? Perhaps because many who are hearing God's call to religious life are being rejected due to gender, marital status or sexual orientation.

As a woman who is a commissioned extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, who brings the Blessed Sacrament to the sick, who lectures at Mass, teaches CCD and serves on the Church Finance Council, I ask why would I not qualify for the priesthood? Is it simply my gender? Is that reason enough to reject 50% of the population? For too long the church hierarchy has been a tightly closed society, a "good ole boys" network, if you will. Instead of including people as Jesus taught us, they exclude many who would gladly answer the call to serve God's people. How well has the Church done with the status quo? Millions of Catholics have left the Church due to scandals created by some unscrupulous priests.

It is time for a change. A reformation is needed and the time to act is now when the need for religious leaders is so critical. We have to let the current church leaders know how we feel about how our parish needs must be met. We need to allow for a married clergy. We need to accept women into the priesthood. Was it not to women that Jesus first appeared after his Resurrection? What course do you think Jesus would follow? Things need to change and that change needs to come in the near future or the Catholic Church, as we know it, will slowly fade away.

Andrea Affinito  
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As a matter of fact, one of the more painful breakthroughs I have had is that it's not only inappropriate but simply wrong to project that we are all on the same spiritual wave length and that some are right and some are fundamentally wrong about the way we believe.

I don't see any hope in trying to bring about meaningful reform of the structures. One or the other group may convince a local bishop to take an enlightened approach, but then the day will come when he retires and is replaced and then it's a crapshoot as to what happens.

**VOTF has pledged to support Priests of Integrity.** There has to be a lot more to this than words and an annual award. There are plenty of good, decent, hard working priests out there, in the center of whose mission in life is not the bishop, pope or Vatican but Jesus Christ. They will never be bishops. They need to be encouraged but not pitied because these men have an inner strength that is grounded in something far deeper and stronger than loyalty to the monarchical system. Maybe what VOTF needs to do is challenge the thousands of priests still in denial who continue to moan and groan because the identified sexual abusers make them look bad. Not so! What makes Catholic priests look bad are apathy, fear and apparent subservience to a system that is outmoded, unproductive and enabling of those who would victimize others. How many priests have looked at the landscape and privately expressed shame, disgust and anger at the sexual abuse nightmare and the bishops' leading role in it...and how many of these same priests refused to speak out even to a small group for fear of retaliation by the bishop who can't see past the walls of his imaginary kingdom.

**VOTF has pledged support for the victims of clergy sexual abuse. This should be the number one priority. Why? Because everything about the clergy sexual abuse nightmare is everything that is wrong with the institution.** This is not one of many problems. It is THE problem. People are now getting excited over the revelations of embezzlement and financial mismanagement in Church throughout the US and the world. This is terrible, but

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# AROUND THE CHURCH NEWS IN BRIEF

By Joanne Blair

**Another exasperated judge, this time in Rhode Island, has ordered the Diocese (Providence) to provide "much more" information** regarding allegations of sexual abuse dating back four decades. In this case, one of the plaintiff's lawyers, Carl DeLuca, discovered a psychiatrist's report in the diocesan files last year, after the Church lost a fight to keep its secret archive on priests closed. Superior Court Judge Nettie C. Vogel gave the diocese "one month - 30 days" to get the material together, even if it involves hiring more people. And the beat goes on -- protect the Church, neglect the victims. (Info from online Providence Journal)

**Meanwhile the Cleveland diocese has revised its policy on sexual abuse. It will discourage anonymous tips in addition to giving the direct investigation of non-clergy abusers to diocesan officials.** Advocates for abuse victims say this is a turning back of reforms prompted by the 2002 scandal. They point out that "anonymity is critical to making people safe, particularly given the Church's history of attacking victims after the reported abuse." David Clohessy, spokesman for the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) emphasized "One cannot - to use biblical terms - serve two masters...Church lawyers can't protect diocesan assets and bishops' reputations while also having a role - any role- in evaluating sexual abuse cases." Cleveland lawyer William Crosby, a victims' representative, commented, "This makes me want to weep. It is a legalistic document meant to cast a veil over their (Diocese's) own behavior." (Info from online Plain Dealer religion report, Cleveland, OH)

On the positive side **a lay group of businessmen in Philadelphia has banded together to raise money to keep Catholic elementary schools in poor neighborhoods open.** Currently led by developer Michael O'Neill, the Business Leadership Organized for Catholic Schools has raised \$6 million of their \$50 million dollar goal since October. Their plan is to take the financial burden off the parishes that can no longer support a school. (Info from The Associated Press, Mercury News, CA, online)

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**Governmental Structure** - continued from page 4

we are talking about money here and not human lives. The sex abuse nightmare is a culture of emotional and physical devastation and spiritual murder. If the local VOTF chapters can't make support and defense of victims their first priority, they should close down. If the national leadership equivocates or cowers in fear of what the bishops will think if they take strong and courageous stands, they need to quit.

A word of wisdom from my military days: "Either lead, follow or get the hell out of the way."

I respect those who continue to work for internal church reform. I am on the board of ARCC (Association for Rights of Catholics in the Church). I respect my fellow board members. I don't believe the institutional Church cares one bit about individual rights or due process when it comes to lay people or lower ranking clerics or anyone who thinks creatively. It cares greatly about protecting the rights and assuring due process for those who are bishops and above.... There are exceptions, however. If a bishop stand up for what is right and has the courage to express his stand, he will quickly find himself cast out of the sacred club and into the real church with the rest of us. Tom Gumbleton, probably the only real bishop in the U.S., publicly stood with victims. The Vatican acted quickly. He was fired on orders from the top because he "broke communio with the bishops." Bravo for Tom! He did what Jesus would have done.

I don't want to expend much more energy tilting at windmills in the world of Catholic Church reform. I have no hope that it will happen. I don't want to spend any more time trudging through what can best be describe as a swamp of toxic waste. **I believe change will happen because it has happened over the past few years.** It has not taken place through dialogue with the hierarchy however. **It's happened when the Church office holders (I intentionally do not use the word leaders) have found themselves face to face with powers greater than themselves like the law enforcement agencies or the civil court system. That's where change will take place.** That's why I have consistently urged VOTF leaders to totally support all efforts at legislative change that will provide greater protection to victims.

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# OTHER VOICES AROUND THE COUNTRY

By Joanne Blair

**UPPERCAPE (MA) VOTF** featured Father Bob Bowers at their January meeting. Bowers presented trends and attitudes of Catholics based on these questions: Why do you choose to be a participating Catholic? Why do you stay? What would cause you to leave? Bowers, who is currently on the staff of the Paulist Center in Boston, implements a program aimed at helping disenfranchised Catholics and others experience reconciliation and healing.

The existing demographics of the priest shortage and its implications for area parishes was the topic of discussion at a meeting co-sponsored by the **FARMINGTON VALLEY (CT) VOTF** and St. Mary's Parish, Simsbury. Speakers were Father Lawrence Bock and Father George Couturier, co-chairs of the Parish Restructuring Committee for the Archdiocese of Hartford.

Sr. Elizabeth Brinkmann, RSCJ, spoke on "The Foremothers of Jesus and What They Teach the Church Today" at the February 7 meeting of **VOTF BRIDGEPORT (CT)** held at the First Congregational Church on the Green, Norwalk. Brinkmann is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at the College of New Rochelle.

Coming up soon is a special program featuring the founders of BishopAccountability.Org, Anne Barrett Doyle and Terry McKiernan, who will discuss "Abuse Crisis: Recent Developments, Surprising Insights & What You Can Do To Make A Difference." The meeting will take place on Saturday, March 8th, at Christ Church in Greenwich and will run from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. It is open to the public and free (unless you choose to get the box lunch for \$10).

**LYNN, NORTH SHORE AND SEACOAST AREA (MA) VOTF** affiliates are presenting a Faith Formation Program in collaboration with the Department of Theology, Boston College. On February 24 from 7 to 9 p.m., Bridget Shaheen of Lazarus House Ministries will speak on "It Is Mercy I seek, Not Sacrifice." The meeting will take place at St. John the Baptist Lower Church Hall, Peabody.

In a major undertaking for a single affiliate, **VOTF LOUISVILLE KENTUCKY** has drafted legislation to strengthen Kentucky's laws regarding child abuse; **VOTF NORTHERN KENTUCKY** is supporting the move.

## VOICE OF THE FAITHFUL SALUTES SUSAN HOGAN-ALBACH

(From **VOTF National web site**)

Voice of the Faithful pays tribute to Susan Hogan-Albach, former religion writer for the Chicago Sun Times. Her final work, "The Cardinal, His Men and the McCormack Legacy", which appeared as a blog on the newspaper's web site, linked convicted sex child sex abuser Rev. Daniel McCormack and the numerous diocesan and seminary officials who ignored the decades-long warnings about McCormack. Their omissions allowed him to abuse many children who were supposedly under his spiritual care. Hogan-Albach contrasted the jail term McCormack is now serving with the way the Catholic

Church rewarded its officials for their dereliction of duty with promotions and expansions of responsibility.

Hogan-Albach is a highly respected religion journalist with many years experience, most notably with the Dallas Morning News and the Chicago Sun Times. She has been among the hundreds of U.S. journalists who helped expose the clergy abuse crisis in the Church for the terrible scandal that it is. Her final publication underscored the ways that the Archdiocese of Chicago perpetuates the culture of clericalism by rewarding miscreants with promotions.

# Spread the Word

Invite a friend to the next meeting.

There has been a vast amount of change and progress since I first became involved in 1984 and especially since 2002. The institutional Church and its bishops would have done nothing to stop institutionalized sexual abuse and done nothing to help victims it has known about were it not for the fact that we forced them to do something. If good people back down and believe the nonsense propagated by the public relations machines of the individual dioceses and the national conference of bishops, then we will be back on the road to returning where we were in 1983. It happened before and it could happen again and it happened before because the hierarchy had too much power, too much influence and too little accountability. That has changed but it hasn't changed enough. There are still countless men and women of every age who cannot come forward to disclose the devastating abuse they have suffered. As long as the clerical-celibate system remains basically untouched, there will always be victims of sexually dysfunctional priests and spiritually dysfunctional bishops.

**Is there any hope at all? Yes! The hope is not in the institution or in bureaucratic policies, programs or empty pronouncements. The hope is in the ever increasing number of deeply committed men and women** who are being compassionately present to people in need and in pain. These are the men and women of any denomination or belief system or of no denomination but still with a powerful belief system who work with each other to get right to the heart of Christ's message without stopping at any denominational door to get approved by any bishop in order to express charity.

***(The VOTF National response to this statement, which was issued without polling the membership, will be published in the next Our Voice. I will also publish comments on Tom Doyle's article from Our Voice readers.)***



## **PRIEST ABUSERS AND YOUTH ABUSED - A FIVE YEAR REPORT CARD**

By Joanne Blair

Two years ago, while Catholics were still reeling from the sexual abuse crisis, Dr. Leslie Lothstein, Director of Psychology at the Institute of Living, now part of the Mental Health Group at Hartford Hospital, joined a panel at St Francis/St Anthony's Church Hall. Lothstein's long history of treating priests with psychological disorders of all kinds, including hundreds of sexual abusers, enabled him to present the facts that were unknown to most of the audience, whom he held spellbound.

On January 10 he spoke again, this time to the Greater Bridgeport VOTF organization at the First Congregational Church in Fairfield. His topic this time was "Priest Abusers and Youth Abused -- A 5 Year Report Card."; the report was not good. It is Lothstein's opinion that Church leaders had to be forced into accountability at their well-publicized Dallas meeting in 2002. (Previously, in 1995, they had refused to cooperate with a research project.) Lothstein, who has traveled all over the country to meet with Church officials, was particularly dismayed at the bishops' reactions at a meeting he attended in St. Louis. When he asked "what about the victims?" they looked at him without a response, as if the question had no relevance to them. They simply did not care about the victims; the focus was on getting the offenders back to work.

Church officials have also consistently used language such as "inappropriate touching" and "inappropriate contact", not sexual abuse, rape, sodomy or, in Lothstein's terms, "soul murder." He emphasized that such abuse is both a long-standing and an international problem for (but not limited to) the Catholic Church. His statements about priests in general were somewhat eye-opening, i.e., 2% of priests are celibate, 18% try to be celibate and 80% are not celibate. He also described the isolation of priests, leaving them open to substance abuse problems including alcohol, cocaine, crack, percoset, etc.

On the positive side, Lothstein affirms that, in some cases, sexual disorders can be treated (not cured) with the patient deciding to ignore his impulses. Actually, 15% of abusers do not abuse again. The evening ended with a standing ovation and an invitation to speak again.

# Love in Action: A Direct Action Handbook for Catholics Using Gospel Nonviolence to Reform and Renew the Church

By Richard K. Taylor. R.K. Taylor Publishing 2007, 144 pp. \$12.95 (Available at Barnes & Nobel, Amazon.com)

## Reviewed By Tom Malone

This handbook has been assembled by Richard Taylor for "those who care deeply about the Catholic Church and who, because of their love, are committed to Church reform and renewal." Taylor is coordinator of ministry development at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Philadelphia. In this book, he has drawn on fifty years of participation in hundreds of demonstrations for peace and justice – a background that has already led him to write five books, five training manuals and more than ninety articles.

Nonviolence, as used here, is a faith-based method for achieving reform and renewal by building "a nonviolent movement made up of direct-action campaigns – highly energized, intensely focused, concentrated streams of action with specific goals, steps, well-reasoned strategies, concrete timelines and the expectation of success." In this sense, it is responsive to the injunction in Vatican II's Decree on Ecumenism to "undertake with vigor the task of renewal and reform." But this movement does not have the objective of diminishing or replacing the essential leadership role of pope, bishops and clergy in "safeguarding the Church's unity and preserving sound teaching." What is intended is to honor the teaching of Vatican II by ensuring that "the sacred dignity of every member of the Church be respected and affirmed."

This richly documented and comprehensively detailed handbook has been acclaimed by Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton with his question, "What better way to bring about reform than through the 'active love' (nonviolence) modeled by Jesus?" and by Fr. Thomas P. Doyle as setting forth "goals that are real and solidly rooted in the mission of Christ" and "a handbook for how to live out one's baptism" and also by Jim Post (Cofounder of the Voice of the Faithful) as teaching us "to be true to our deepest beliefs in Jesus, in justice and in the gift of using our knowledge and faith to make a difference."

Taylor's "action plan" can be summarized as involving twelve steps:

- **Discern personal and group commitment**

-make reasonably sure that your group has the time, effort and spiritual energy that will be required.

- **Prepare spiritually**

– seek to transform righteous anger emerging from frustrated attempts to change the Church into the service of love.

- **Organize your group**

– foster a positive group spirit and hold effective prayerful meetings.

- **Investigate**

– get your facts straight, understand the other side and look for alternative solutions.

- **Strategize**

– develop a vision, be clear about values and set goals.

- **Negotiate**

– name a negotiating team, set the agenda and negotiate with people who can make change.

- **Educate and build broader support**

– intensify your outreach, speak to peoples' values and encourage one-on-one conversations.

- **Prepare for direct action**

– do a strategic estimate, write a covenant of nonviolence.

- **Train for direct action**

– use an experienced outside trainer and learn the basics.

- **Make a final appeal**

– for example, an open letter to the power-holders.

- **Take strong but loving direct action**

– develop plans for before the demonstration, on the demonstration day and at the site of the demonstration, and in case of disruption, to end the action.

- **Celebrate, evaluate, and plan next steps**

– do something enjoyable for the group to celebrate, reflect on what has been done and how the process might be improved and don't rush into a new campaign.

In sum, Taylor has provided a unique point of departure for action by the array of fragmented institutional initiatives such as the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church, Call to Action, Catholic Organizations for Renewal, Catholics Speak Out, CORPUS, Dignity USA, Future Church, National Federation of Priests' Councils, Priests for Equality, Voice of the Faithful, and Women's Ordination Conference.

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Perhaps Voice of the Faithful which seems to be at a point of transition might take the initiative by responding to a new and greater challenge articulated by Taylor in these words: "This is a task not just for the sake of the Church but for the sake of the world. A Church reformed and renewed can do much more to change the world. A reformed Church can work to diminish or transform hatred, injustice, oppression, racism, poverty, war, ecological destruction, killing of the innocent and all the other evils that plague humanity. Ultimately, such a renewed faith community will lead the way in replacing these with freedom, love, and respect for life."

Is it possible to imagine that some of the great visionaries at Vatican II dimly envisioned such a role for the laity in the twenty-first century? A searching reexamination by the laity of human values, attitudes and behavior may well be required!



## **ADD CASH TO VOTF NATIONAL COFFERS WITHOUT SPENDING AN EXTRA ¢ENT!**

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**Click on the store's logo and VOTF will get at least 3% of your purchase price!**

**Up to 37% if you're a BIG spender!**

**Catholic Charities comes to the rescue at the Lakewood Southwest Emergency Assistance Center**, located at the rear of an aging strip mall. It is here that people line up for food and for money for groceries, prescriptions, rent and utilities and it is here that Patti Carr works with a group of dedicated volunteers. According to Carr, "Somehow, we always manage to have food. Sometimes I don't know where the resources are coming from. It's a God thing." And maybe it is. Last winter, Catholic Charities of Denver (parent organization) had to dip into its reserves to balance its budget. "The purpose of our system is not to control its bottom line," said its chief executive, James Mauck. "The purpose is to enhance services." (Info from online Denver Post)

**On the other side of the world, the Catholic Church in Kenya is both a strong voice calling for an end to violence and a refuge for those escaping from it.** It has opened its churches for sleeping and provided blankets for those who choose to sleep outdoors. Father Paddy Highland, pastor of a small church with 500-600 refugees in its compound, has stressed the need for blankets, tarps and clean drinking water. CAFOD (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development) is supplying humanitarian aid.

