



Voice of the Faithful™

"Keep the Faith, Change the Church"™

December 28, 2004

PRESS RELEASE

**THEOLOGIAN JOHN W. HEALEY TO DISCUSS STRUCTURAL
CHANGE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**Contacts: Joe O'Callaghan. 203 853-9578
Bob Mulligan. 203-847-5128**

Dr. John W. Healey of Fordham University will address Voice of the Faithful in the Diocese of Bridgeport at its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, January 6, at 7:30 p.m. at the First Congregational Church on the Green in Norwalk. Everyone is invited to attend.

Dr. Healey, who retired from Fordham in 1999, served the University as the founding Director of the Archbishop Hughes Institute on Religion and Culture, Dean of the School of General Studies, and Vice-President for Planning and Budget. He received his B.A. and M.A. from St. Louis University, his doctorate in theology from the Gregorian University in Rome, and his M.B.A. from the Hagan School of Business at Iona College. He is active in interreligious dialogue and has published articles on "The American Catholic-Jewish Conversation;" "Buddhism and Christianity;" and "From Diversity to Pluralism: The Roman Catholic Challenge and the Roman Catholic Opportunity." Dr. Healey will offer a Theological Reflection on Structural Change in the Catholic Church.

In a document entitled "Counsel and Consent as Christian Virtues: Five Proposals for Structural Change in the Catholic Church," VOTF in the Diocese of Bridgeport calls for 1) the election of bishops by the clergy and people of the diocese; (2) the right of parishioners to participate with the bishop in the selection of their pastors; (3) the establishment of elected, representative diocesan pastoral and finance councils with real authority; (4) the establishment of elected, representative parish pastoral and finance councils with real authority; and (5) the right of the faithful as members of a parish corporation consisting of their elected representatives, the bishop, and the pastor, to own church property.

The stated mission of Voice of the Faithful, an organization of mainstream Catholics, is to be "a prayerful voice, attentive to the Spirit, through which the faithful can actively participate in the governance and guidance of the Catholic Church." These proposals are intended to stimulate conversation concerning the role of the laity in the governance of the Church. A reasoned dialogue among

bishop, priests, nuns, and laymen and women will contribute to the renewal of the Church.

For further information about VOTF in the Diocese of Bridgeport and for directions to the First Congregational Church on the Green in Norwalk consult www.votfbpt.org.