

VOTF, BRIDGEPORT NOV. 1, 2007 GENERAL MEETING

The meeting began at 7:40 PM at the First Congregational Church on the Norwalk Green, with about 30 people present.. After the opening prayer, the following subjects came up for discussion.

Treasurer's Report:

There is \$21,644.52 in the Treasury and \$1000.00 in The Voice of Compassion Fund . The Fund will need more money for distributions to various charities in the Diocese. All contributions should to be sent to:

VOTF Voice of
Compassion PO Box 5044
Westport, CT 06881.

Books for Sale:

Copies of Joseph O'Callaghan's "Electing our Bishops: How the Catholic Church Should Chose its Leaders", Robert Blair Kaiser's "Cardinal Mahony," and Phyllis Zagano's "Holy Saturday" were for sale.

Study Groups:

Study Groups were to meet after Phyllis Zagano's presentation, time permitting. Joseph O'Callaghan summarized the goals and future activities for Church Governance, John Lee dealt with Financial Accountability and Marge Hickey addressed the issues of Women in the Church.

We'll remember Gerald Renner and Peg Mooney's brother in our prayers.

Speaker:

Phyllis Zagano, Ph.D., Research Associate-in-Residence at Hofstra University, was the speaker. After Joseph O'Callaghan introduced her, she told us that she was not an official advocate for ordaining women to the priesthood; her goal is to restore women's ordination as deacons.

In the Roman Catholic Church there exist three orders of ministers: bishops, priests and deacons; they perform distinct functions. Deacons are responsible for gifts to the Church, whether in the form of money from collections or from Offertory bread and wine. During Mass, they act as "stage managers": they welcome the congregation, preach occasionally, read the "Prayer of the Faithful," invite those assembled to the "Kiss of Peace" and give the final blessing. Formerly, they took care of Church social services like visiting the sick and looking after the needy.

Female deacons played important roles in the early Church. However, as Christianity became the official religion of the Western World, women

gradually disappeared from the ministry to the point of total exclusion.

With the shortage of priests, the Catholic Church is bereft of ordained ministers. Many unordained women have unofficially done deacon's work. St. Catherine of Siena, St Teresa of Avila, Mother Theresa, Dorothy Day and Sister Dorothy Stang are notable examples. In order to give women a voice in the ministry and in the governance of the Church, the training and ordination to the diaconate now available to men must also be provided to women. (For more information on this subject, see Francis X. Fay's article in the November 2, 2007 edition of the NORWALK HOUR entitled: "VOTF Hears Arguments for Female Deacons").

After a question period, the Church Governance and Financial Accountability Study Groups met to discuss their various issues.

With the recitation of the Lord's Prayer at 9:35 PM, the meeting adjourned.