

VOTF TO CONTINUE ITS EMPHASIS ON FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Voice of the Faithful will continue its emphasis on financial accountability in the Catholic Church at its meeting on Thursday, June 7, at 7:30 p.m. at the First Congregational Church on the Green in Norwalk. Everyone is invited to attend.

Financial scandals at St. John Parish in Darien and St. Michael Parish in Greenwich are just two examples of the misappropriation of parish funds throughout the United States and the lack of any sense of financial accountability to the parishioners. If the faithful are to trust that their financial contributions to the parish and the diocese are being used wisely, VOTF believes that essential reforms in fiscal practice on both levels are necessary.

Members of VOTF will be asked to bring their questions about the most recent diocesan financial report to the meeting. In addition to ongoing study of this issue, members will also be asked to consider other projects for study, for example, the status of nursing homes formerly owned by the diocese; the ownership of church property; the status of priests, their compensation, benefits, and retirement plans; and outreach to young Catholics.

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.” VOTF believes that a reasoned dialogue among bishop, priests, nuns, and laymen and women will contribute to the renewal of the Church.

In order to encourage greater lay participation in the governance of the Church, VOTF developed five proposals for structural change: (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 full text of the proposals can be consulted at www.votfbpt.org/proposal.html.

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.