

Voice of the Faithful Bridgeport  
Minutes of the General Meeting September 4, 2008  
Congregational Church on the Green, Norwalk

The meeting was opened with a prayer prepared by Marge Hickey.

Jamie Dance, the newly elected co-chair, led the meeting. She welcomed the members and introduced the board. Announcements included: the Long Island VOTF meeting on Sept. 13, the upcoming Conference sponsored by the VOTF Bridgeport and the Department of Religious Studies at Fairfield University on March 28, 2009, the Women in the Church lecture at Fairfield on October 1, and other Fairfield events..

Marilyn Kirchner gave the Treasurer's report. John Lee reported on the Voice of Compassion Fund and urged the membership to consider donating to this fund. Bob Mulligan reported on the progress of the program committee and announced that we had sent a remembrance to Frank Fay who will be honored by Norwalk High School.

Jamie Dance introduced the spokespersons for the Study Groups: Women's Issues, Church Governance, and Financial Accountability. Joanne Bray, Marie Rose, and John Lee reported on their respective groups.

Bob Mulligan, chair of the Program Committee, introduced the main speaker, Joe O'Callaghan, who spoke on the History of the Eucharist. Among many interesting facts about this history were:

Today's liturgy is not a replica of the Last Supper; it has grown over the centuries.

The earliest description of the liturgy in broad outline was written by Justin, Martyr, in c165.

By the 4<sup>th</sup> century, there were many different liturgies in different parts of the world.

The earliest liturgies were held in private homes with the liturgy of the word separated from the Eucharistic meal.

Roman influence was reflected in the vestments, the ranking of bishops as magistrates, and the Roman liturgy imposed on all of Europe.

Aristotelian philosophy influenced the understanding of the real presence in the Eucharist and in 1215 at the Lateran Council the doctrine was formulated.

Martin Luther believed in simplifying the liturgy and though he believed in the real presence, rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation.

The Council of Trent in 1546 was explicit in its defense of the real presence and transubstantiation, rejected vernacular in the liturgy, and viewed the priest as ontologically different from the faithful.

In 1962 Vatican II brought many changes to the liturgy returning the language to the vernacular and encouraging more participation on the part of the laity.

At present, new translations are being presented as more faithful to the Latin texts but the U.S. bishops have not accepted the new translation.

In summary, Joe O'Callaghan remarked that at this time we are in a state of profound change in the Church. Questions about optional celibacy, married priests, and the ordination of women remain the major issues of our time.

A brief discussion followed the talk.

The meeting ended with a prayer and a reminder that the next general meeting would be held on November 6 at the First Congregational Church.

Submitted by: Peg Mooney, Recording Secretary