



SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF VOTFSBA
June 2005 - May 2006

EDUCATIONAL SPEAKERS



Fr. Donald Cozzens

Fr. Donald Cozzens, nationally known lecturer and author, spoke on “Discipleship in a Time of Crisis” on January 7, 2006, sponsored by VOTFSBA. He explored why the current crisis gripping the church requires lay people to step forward, why this is so difficult, and how we can do so with confidence, good will and humor.

The event filled the Friars’ Lounge at the Old Mission, including members of VOTF affiliates from up and down the coast. It was videotaped by Tony Tonkin and is available on DVD.

Paul Fericano, founder of SafeNet, a support group for those abused at St. Anthony’s seminary, spoke at our February meeting, about the pending trial of Fr. Mario Cimarrusti and updated us on the work of SafeNet in seeking reconciliation and healing with survivors as well as the Franciscan community.

Angelica Jochim, the new Pastoral Outreach Coordinator for the Franciscan Western Province, spoke at our March meeting about the formation of the Franciscan Review Board that replaces the IRT (Independent Response Team). In her new role she will be providing therapeutic help for survivors and outreach to the Santa Barbara community.

Lisa Godschan, secretary of the Santa Barbara Regional Council and member of Our Lady of Guadalupe parish, explained the reorganization of the Council and their current work on the second Synod initiative regarding collaboration and accountability. Specifically, they are forcefully promoting more accountable parish finance committees.

Eight local priests – Fr. Leo Sprietsma, Fr. Virgil Cordano, Fr. Joe Scott, Fr. Paul Rospond, Fr. Cyril Nnadi, Fr. Alberic Smith, Fr. Ludo de Clippel and Fr. Jack Clark Robinson--spoke at our May meeting on their experiences as priests, especially during this time of crisis. They also spoke of what kept them centered and motivated and of their relationships with parishioners.

EDUCATING OURSELVES

We devoted three meetings to discussion of Donald Cozzens' provocative book *Faith That Dares to Speak*.



Anne Heck began our study of the history of church reform by describing two fascinating periods of lay leadership in the Church: 1) the 15th century Council of Constance, called by a layman, which resolved the dispute among three contending popes; 2) the various ways in which immigrant communities took the initiative to build churches and found and manage parishes, with or without the assistance of priests.

In two subsequent meetings, we had lively discussions of Rosemary Ruether's essay "Democracy in the Church" from *Rome Has Spoken* and Chapter 1, "The Beginnings of the Church," from Hans Kung's *The Catholic Church: A Short History*.

OUTREACH – LOCAL AND REGIONAL

Four members of the Leadership Team joined with Long Beach VOTF members and others for a candlelight prayer vigil outside the Cathedral. Our message: "VOTF

supports all priests of integrity, gay and straight.” A photograph of this event appeared in the March 10, 2006, edition of *National Catholic Reporter*.

After several years of correspondence with Fr. Mel Jurisch regarding the housing of alleged perpetrators at the Mission infirmary, we received assurance that no perpetrators will be housed there in the future.

We provided a forum for the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee of the Old Mission, as well as to Craig Ames, to explain their efforts to seek justice for Keith Paulson-Thorp, music director, who was fired.

In light of the failure of the current self-auditing procedure to identify problems in Chicago, the leadership Team sent a letter to Cardinal Mahony, urging him to press his fellow bishops, at their June 2006 meeting in Los Angeles, to adopt a policy of opening diocesan files to professional auditors. A courteous reply was received from Msgr. Vadakin.

Anne Heck attended the Santa Barbara Regional Finance Council meeting. Thomas Heck redesigned our website and added a link to the VOTF bimonthly newsletter *In the Vineyard*. www.votfsba.org/news.html

OUTREACH--STATE & NATIONAL

We hosted An Afternoon of Dialogue, for VOTF and Call to Action members in California, in conjunction with the lecture by Donald Cozzens. About 48 wonderful folks from Oceanside, San Diego, Long Beach, Santa Rosa and Sonoma attended and then gathered at Petrini's with Fr. Cozzens for dinner and more dialogue.

Four members of the Leadership Team--Christine Milne, Tony Tonkin, Kathleen Strittmatter and Marie Foley--attended the VOTF National Convocation in Indianapolis in July 2005.

A donation of \$1500 was sent to the national survivors' group Healing Alliance (formerly LinkUp). Of this, \$400 was voted by members to come from our treasury and the rest was donated by individuals.

VOTFSBA members participated in voting on the VOTF national action plan. Of the 9 resolutions formulated at the July convocations, we chose our top 3 – the establishment of lay councils at all levels of church governance, that the members of such councils shall be elected, and that financial accounting at all levels of the church be transparent. Nationally, the voting resulted in the adoption of two action plans: financial accountability and legislation to remove statutes of limitation.

Barbara Herring participated in monthly conference calls organized by John Moynihan, VOTF Communications Director. LT members continued their regular monitoring of VOTF website news and other publications, sexual abuse developments nationally and internationally, bishops' meetings, Regional Council activities, and other news related to VOTF's goals.