

Bellarmino Chapel Voice of the Faithful Affiliate  
Account of meeting on 1/10/05

Present: MaryAnn Reese, Jack Van Benken, Bob Giessl, Marilyn Kaiser, Jane Friel, Bob Friel, Bob Schoettinger, Dan Averbeck, Flo DeWitt, Tom DeWitt, Jane Ruhmkorff, Joe Bracken, S.J., Karen Brandstetter, Gary Brandstetter, Christi Eisenberg

Meeting was called to order and commenced with a prayer for peace and harmony.

After introductions, Karen announced upcoming **educational opportunities** that would speak to the some of the learning needs expressed by members of VOTF in the past.

- **“Baptism: What does it Call us to?”** As offered by Bellarmino on Friday, Jan. 21 and Sat. Jan. 22.
- **“What’s Happening to my Church?”** By Louise Akers on 1/29/04 9 a.m. to 3:30 pm at the Sisters of Charity Motherhouse on the campus of Mt. St. Joe.
- Lenten Series every Monday night 2/14 – 3/21:

**Empowering the Laity:**

**Mission, Ministry and Responsibility in the Church of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

*(Monday Nights, 7:30-9:00 p.m., in the Conaton Board Room, Schmidt Hall  
except for March 14<sup>th</sup>, which will be held in Bellarmino Chapel)*

February 14: **“Lay Ministry, its Place in Our Vision of Church”,**

Ed Hanhenberg, Theo. Dept., XU

February 21: **“Baptism as a Source of Mission and Transformation”,**

Harriet Luckman, Theo. Dept. Mt. St. Joe’s

February 28: **“Energy, Healing and Empowerment---Awakening Capacities”**

Mary Duennes, Parish Nurse/Spiritual Healing Touch Practitioner

March 7: **“Lay Collaboration as a Source of Accountability in the Church”,**

Paul Knitter, Theo. Dept., XU

March 14: **“Laity in the Mission of Peace and Justice”,**

Louise Akers, S.C., Office of Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation  
for the Sisters of Charity

March 21: **“Ignatian Spirituality and the Formation of Lay Leadership”,**

Sheila Doran, Xavier Faculty Participant in Ignatian Program

All topics are appropriate to VOTF list of knowledge that we as a group sought when starting this affiliate.

There was discussion of the St. Stanislaus parish in MO, and the outrageous thing that is happening there. In the late 1800’s this Polish parish was given the rights to run their own parish including all the finances, and in the agreement it said “forever.” Currently the bishop is saying they must join with the diocese. They voted as a parish not to turn over their \$9 million dollars to the diocese and 6 of the leaders have been threatened with “interdict” by the bishop.

This was followed by much discussion about the future plans of VOTF. Many ideas were bandied about. We felt that due to the open nature of Bellarmine, we did not have the same strong impetus to change our structure as did some other parishes, and for this we were grateful. We did feel that if we wrote up some of our processes, and made them available thru Cinti. VOTF board, or the National VOTF board they might be helpful to other parishes that are trying to develop new methods. (for instance, our hiring process)

We further remembered that Paul Lakeland advocated for going where we were uncomfortable if we were to really make meaningful changes. We mentioned the pitfall of replacing the current clerical structure with a lay structure that behaved in the same ways that the clerical structure had behaved before.... We need to bear in mind that the Structure into which we fit ourselves breeds the results, not necessarily the people in the structure.

We discussed the fact that so few of the population are aware of VOTF, and the need to market the concept so that more and more folks know what a difference they can make, and are called to make through Baptism.

We were challenged to make a goal for this year, so that at the end of the year we could say what we had accomplished. A suggestion to host a citywide VOTF conference was suggested with various ideas for content suggested including inviting the Archdiocese to present the Futures project and allow discussion and feedback from the group. We decided not to move on this at this time, and instead to continue our moves to work within our parish to further educate our parish, look to change our structures, and document our processes.

It was shared that the Parish Advisory Committee has met with Ed Schmidt, the Jesuit Provincial, to discuss how to manage the replacement of Richard Bollman when he resigns as Pastor. The heartening thing about our parish is that idea was first raised at a VOTF meeting last year, and has now surfaced as an action step taken by the Parish Advisory Board. There are many ideas/mindsets that our discussions have spawned, and have come to fruition.

We talked about the fact that so many of the issues in the Church at large today have to do with the finances and how they are accounted for, and how decisions are made on how to spend them. We discussed that the person in the pew did not really understand how the finances were tied to the diocese, and how that relationship worked. It was brought up that we really did not know if the Bellarmine Finance Committee had open meetings or not. Karen agreed to pose this question to that group. Possibly this could be an area that we could model a change in structure.

We decided that since the Lenten series thankfully met many of our educational goals we would work to improve attendance at these meetings, and meet after them for an additional ½ hour to discuss how the topic of the evening might impact Bellarmine VOTF. We further decided to have our next regular meeting on a Monday evening in

the week or two after Easter. At that time we would decide further steps in our move forward.

Finally we viewed the latest “draft” of the VOTF video whose idea came from the Cincinnati VOTF Outreach Committee, and whose development happened to come from members of Bellarmine Chapel. Thanks go to David DeWitt, Bob Schoettinger, and Flo DeWitt for its incredible development. (and others I’m sure!) It is a POWERFUL 15 minute video that does a wonderful job depicting the reasons for VOTF’s being and the goals of the organization.

Following this viewing some ideas surfaced. We decided to offer the video after all the Masses some Sunday prior to the Lenten series. We can use this to encourage folks to attend the Lenten series. We also mentioned that if we produced multiple copies of the DVD we could offer that as an opportunity to be viewed at Small Faith Groups, Young Adult Group, and others... Possibly even share with National.

We felt that VOTF brochures, and the newsletter could be present in the Narthex, and minutes from our meetings could be placed on the website.

We ended the meeting with a prayer.