



VOICE OF THE FAITHFUL-NEW YORK CITY

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Dear Voice of the Faithful Participant,

*There is a season for everything,
a time for every occupation under heaven. Ecclesiastes 3.*

As this quote from Ecclesiastes reminds us, change, movement, and growth are inevitable and are, in fact, healthy. With this in mind, we want to inform you of some important changes in Voice of the Faithful in New York City – changes which we believe are the result of gradual and grace-filled evolution.

As you know, for almost three years the East and West Side Affiliates of VOTF-New York formed as grass roots responses to the church sex abuse scandal; each operating as separate entities, with its own leadership, committees, and monthly meetings. To be sure, the groups have collaborated on many occasions. For example, the October 2003 conference at Fordham; the May 2004 symposium at St. Paul the Apostle Church; the annual fall anniversary celebration; and several jointly-sponsored meetings which featured particularly significant speakers and topics. Currently, a team of both East and West Side members is working on an important and timely symposium: “Parish Encounter: Preparing for Change in the Archdiocese of New York,” scheduled for May 14, 2005.

Frequently movements which develop as the result of crises find it necessary to modify their structures to insure continuing life. Energy needs to be directed towards concrete actions for longer range change. Efforts need to be focused on unified issues.

This is where VOTF in New York City finds itself now. And so, in what we feel is the direction in which the Holy Spirit is leading us, the East and West Side Affiliates are being merged into one group: Voice of the Faithful – New York City. Here are some of the details.

- This merger seems to be the best course of action at this point in time. It is the “season” for it. As VOTF-NY moves into the future and hopefully grows and expands, other models may emerge to meet changing needs.
- Meetings and events will continue to be held at both St. Ignatius Loyola and the Church of St. Francis Xavier. Indeed, there is the continuing hope that monthly meetings might be held at additional locations in Manhattan.
- For now, Mary Pat Fox, East Side Chairperson, will assume the leadership responsibilities for the merged group. Elections for future leaders will be held shortly after the May 14 symposium previously mentioned.

We encourage all to attend the May 14 symposium sponsored by our newly merged affiliate and invite those who wish to work towards making this event a success to e-mail us at votfny@votf-nyc.org.

Thank you for your interest and perseverance over the past few years. We hope that this announcement will encourage you to recommit your energies to VOTF-New York City.

With sincere wishes for peace, joy and hope,

Rose Allocca

Mary Pat Fox

Carlos Martín