

Voice of the Faithful-WATCH Charlotte  
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April 15, 2024

Dear Bishop-Elect Martin  
C/O Saint Philip Benizi Catholic Church  
591 Flint River Rd  
Jonesboro, GA 30238

It is with great joy that we welcome you to Charlotte and to introduce you to our work as an affiliate of the Voice of Faithful (VOTF), a non-profit, multi-parish Catholic laity group advocating for accountability, transparency, and reform within the Church. We are delighted you are coming as our Shepherd in a very challenging time for the Church, globally, nationally, and locally. You will find the folks of Charlotte a generous, loving, thoughtful and faith-filled flock trying to carry on the work of Jesus. As you may know, VOTF often partners with the Association of United States Catholic Priests (AUSCP) They also have been advocates in dealing with clerical sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults on the one hand and supporting wrongly accused priests of integrity on the other hand. In this last connection, we have been a strong voice in support of Fr. Patrick Hoare, a local pastor who has been deprived of ministry and even a place of residence for the last four years. Through various means of investigation, we have learned from many of his former parishioners of the two large parishes he has faithfully served of his loyalty to the bishop, his unprecedented managerial skills, his deep love for his flocks, and his unflinching love for Jesus. His blog on the daily scriptures has been an inspiration to its subscribers and kept many in the Catholic fold in this time of flux. We hope you will reach out to Fr Pat when you have the time. He needs kindness.

We also would like you to know about our VOTF affiliate. We gather together for a monthly home mass to which you are most certainly invited at any time. Among other things we strive to put synodality into action. When offered, we have participated in many face-to-face and virtual discussions on the 2023 Synod, and we intend to follow the workings of the 2024 Synod. We are gradually learning how to listen to all voices in the Church and make our voices heard. Finally, we sometimes meet to discuss topics such as development in evolutionary thought and the need to diminish clericalism among the laity as well as the clergy. Presently, we are partnering with Mecklenburg Ministries to stage an event on the role of women in the Catholic Church but also in other Christian and non-Christian churches. We have a lot to learn from each other.

We are very much encouraged by your recent remarks, and we hope that by the power of the Holy Spirit, you will help make the Charlotte Diocese a model of Jesus's love. Know that

you have our support in your important work and please feel free to call on us by letter or our email [info@votfwatchclt.com](mailto:info@votfwatchclt.com) if there is any way that we can help you in your ministry.

Your brothers and sisters in Christ,

Executive Board Members

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rosemarie Tong". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "g".

Rosemarie Tong

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jane Francisco". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "o".

Jane Francisco

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donald Garbison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "n".

Donald Garbison

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janet Garbison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "n".

Janet Garbison