



Dateline

Monthly News Bulletin
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June 2008

DignityUSA works for respect and justice for all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons in the Catholic Church and the world through education, advocacy and support.

Contents:

- Pride, the Pope, and Marriage Equality – 1
- Vatican Ban on Gay Seminarians Creates Climate of Fear – 2
- Chapter Visits – 2
- Chapter News – 3
- Gay Pride Celebrations – 3
- President's Chapter Leaders Conference Call, Tuesday June 10th – 3
- Support for Dignity Chaplains – 3
- DignityUSA's Candidates for National Board of Directors – 4
- Upcoming DignityUSA Board of Directors Meeting – 4
- DignityUSA Fundraising News – 4
- Future **QV** Quarterly Voice of DignityUSA Themes – 4
- New DignityUSA brochures – 5
- April 2008 Board Meeting Minutes – 5
- Two New Dignity Discussion Groups Formed – 5
- Nexus Mysteriorum: God/Church/Bible & Homosexuality Seminar – 5
- Opening the Door to the Inclusion of Transgender People – 5
- Transitions – 6
- DignityUSA Convention 2009 – 6
- Convention Fun & Entertainment – 7
- Scholarship Available for Call To Action Next Generation Retreat – 8
- Call to Action Seeks New Executive Director – 8
- Corrected Operating Statement of Revenue and Expense – 9

Pride, the Pope, and Marriage Equality

By Marianne Duddy-Burke, DignityUSA Executive Director

Shortly before I sat down to write this Pride month message came the news of the California Supreme Court's ruling in support of lesbian and gay couples' right to marry. What a joyous moment! What impetus that will give to LGBT Pride celebrations throughout the country this year!

Yet even as I embraced the joy of another court acknowledging the validity and equality of commitments made by same-gender couples, I began scanning the websites of the California Catholic Conference and the Catholic News Service for the responses of the state's bishops and the Vatican. Sure enough, it was not too long before statements appeared. Though their comments were not as vitriolic as statements issued when civil marriage equality was recognized in Massachusetts, Canadian provinces, and some European countries, our church's leaders were still among the first to condemn the California Court, and to pledge support for efforts to overturn the ruling through a constitutional amendment.

During the recent Papal visit, I could not help but notice that the media almost always used the term "the Church" to refer to the Pope's statements and actions. During each of the dozens of interviews that Dignity leaders gave to a host of media representatives, we carefully drew the distinction between the Church as the People of God and the hierarchy of the Church, and asked the media folks to avoid shorthand that made Catholicism seem monolithic and unbendable. We would then describe the many ways in which lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Catholics are, in fact, full participants in today's Catholic Church. We discussed the overwhelming number of Catholic families who embrace their gay members—and, often, their partners. We pointed to the growing list of parishes where lesbian and gay couples and singles feel perfectly at home, without having to hide their identities or relationships; where they serve as lectors, Eucharistic ministers, music ministers, catechists, associate pastors, and, yes, even priests; where their children are enthusiastically baptized and welcomed in the parish schools; and where they may even be photographed as a family in the parish directory. We spoke of the gay-straight alliances that thrive on more than 40 Catholic college campuses across the country, and of the 63% of Catholics who support equal legal protections for committed same-gender couples. We talked about how our own faith is a source of joy, strength, and nourishment to us, and about our ability to share our faith journey with communities of gay and straight, young and old, women and men who are family members, friends, and coworkers. I firmly believe that each of these conversations redefined "Church" for these reporters, and through them, for their audience.

Clearly, as official church response to the California court decision in our favor demonstrates, there is still great work ahead for us. However, the steady progress we can claim, even in the face of the incredible authoritarianism of our church's leaders, is reason to celebrate. And especially to celebrate how all of us who are and who have been Dignity have made all of these achievements possible.

Proud to be gay and Catholic? Yes, yes, yes! And this year, more than ever—Blessed Pride!

DignityUSA
PO Box 376
Medford, MA 02155-0004
Phone: 1-800-877-8797 or
202-861-0017
Fax: 1-781-397-0584
Email: info@dignityusa.org
Website:
<http://www.dignityusa.org>
DATELINE Editor: Bill Welch
DUSAEditor@comcast.net

DignityUSA Board of Directors**Executive Committee**

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National Office

DignityUSA
 PO Box 376
 Medford, MA 02155-0004
 Voice: 202-861-0017 or
 800-877-8797
 Fax: 781-397-0584
www.dignityusa.org
Info@dignityusa.org

Staff

Marianne Duddy-Burke,
 Executive Director
executivedirector@dignityusa.org

Mailing address and voice phone for Executive Director **only**. All other communications should be directed to national office address and phones shown above.

Marianne Duddy-Burke
 DignityUSA Executive Director
 734 Beechmont Street
 Boston, MA 02136-1327
 Voice: 617-669-7810

Peggy Burns, Operations Mgr
Info@dignityusa.org

Richard Ressa, Database Mgr
DigDataMgr1@verizon.net

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DignityUSA Press Release**Vatican Ban on Gay Seminarians Creates Climate of Fear****Gay Catholics Say Vatican's Order Will Damage the Whole Church**

Boston, MA, May 21, 2008. – Leaders of the gay Catholic group DignityUSA criticized the May 18, 2008, Vatican announcement that it will broaden the ban on gay seminarians. The recent announcement enlarges a ban on gays in diocesan seminaries promulgated in November 2005. The recent announcement demands that religious orders and missions also enforce the ban.

“This ban contradicts the Church’s fundamental belief in priesthood as a vocation to which individuals are called by God — not by people,” said Marianne Duddy-Burke, DignityUSA’s Executive Director. “By expanding the ban to include religious orders and missions, the Vatican is clearly attempting to intimidate gay priests, and anyone who might be perceived as gay, who currently serve the Catholic Church. This is a tragic abuse of every faithful leader to whom we entrust the lives and spirituality of millions of Catholics across the globe.”

Duddy-Burke continued, “The divide between the Church’s hierarchy and the people of the Catholic Church is widened by this pronouncement. Many Catholics accept gay people in their families and their churches. Catholics know that some priests are gay and accept them based on the fruits of their labor, not their identity. Catholics are saddened by the scapegoating of good priests and sometimes lose heart when the Vatican takes actions like this. The Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Marriage are at the heart of our faith. The Vatican’s continuing refusal to recognize the vocations of gay men, women, and married people makes it more difficult for people to celebrate them. This could lead to even more people leaving the Church.”

DignityUSA calls on the leaders of seminaries, orders and communities to continue to support the education and leadership of all people called to ministry in the Catholic Church, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or relational status.

“God calls people who have the gifts the Church needs,” said Duddy-Burke. “The people of the Church recognize the ministry of those who can bring the Gospel to life in the world. So should our Church’s leaders.”

Chapter Visits**By Mark Matson, DignityUSA President**

- **June 7, Dignity/Washington & Dignity/NoVa**
- **June 20, Dignity/Seattle**
- **June 29, Dignity/New York**

I was pleased to have had the opportunity to help Dignity/Detroit celebrate their 34th anniversary on the weekend of May 17-18, 2008. There were over 120 people at the dinner-dance as the Chapter reviewed its rich history of respectful dialogue and engagement with the Catholic Community in Detroit. Our friend, Sr. Jeanine Gramick gave the main address, and I extended best wishes on behalf of all the chapters of DignityUSA. I was made to feel most welcome, especially on the dance floor. My visit included a 90-minute exchange of information and vision with the leadership of Dignity/Detroit.

By the time this article is published, I will have also visited another of our largest chapters, Dignity/Chicago, celebrating Mass with them and participating in their

CHAPTER NEWS**Dignity/Honolulu**

Dignity/Honolulu celebrated its 32nd Anniversary on April 27, 2008, with a mass presided by Bishop Jack Isbell (United Ecumenical Catholic Church) at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Honolulu, followed by a potluck supper in the parish hall. 33 people attended the festivities which included door prizes and awards.

The St. John Award went to a "Friend of Dignity," Rev. Jonipher Kwong. Jonipher was the former leader of the Ohana Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) group in Hawaii, who has served as homilist at the Honolulu chapter's lay-led liturgies as well as coordinating interfaith retreats for Dignity, Integrity and MCC.

The St. Peter's Award was given to a "Rock of Dignity," Mike Golojuch Dignity/Honolulu Secretary, who also serves as one of the lay presiders.

**Dayton (OH), June 7th:**

Fr. Dick Young of The Living Beatitudes Community, a ministry of Dignity/Dayton, will co-preside at the second annual mass wedding ceremony during Dayton's PrideFest on June 7th. This event, scheduled for noon at Courthouse Square, will celebrate same-sex committed relationships throughout the Dayton area. Contact Fr. Young for more details at alwaysyoung7@yahoo.com.

Continued on page 4

*Chapter Visits
Continued from page 2*

Annual Meeting on Memorial Day Weekend. Future "presidential visits" include a trip to Dignity/Washington June 7, 2008, to help think out a new approach to our conventions, and celebrating the Liturgy with Dignity/Northern Virginia. On June 20th, I will enjoy dinner with the leadership of Dignity/Seattle. I am excited to be addressing Dignity/New York during Mass on Pride Weekend and marching with them on 5th Avenue during the Pride Parade. I have always wanted to do that! Then comes a visit with the good people of Dignity/Denver, my native city, who are hosting our Board Meeting July 25-27, 2008.

I am thoroughly enjoying this aspect of my position and learning a lot about the unique characteristics of each community. I share my adventures with the Board to inform our discernment about the future. Each of our Board members intends to look for opportunities to touch base with our membership during their travels, as well. Since most or all costs of travel are borne by individual Board Members, local hospitality is always appreciated!

President's Chapter Leaders Conference Call, Tuesday June 10th

Mark Matson hosted the first in a series of President's Chapter Leaders Conference Calls on March 11, 2008. This is an initiative of the National Board of Directors in response to calls for improved communication between DignityUSA and chapters that we heard at the Austin Membership Meeting held in conjunction with the DignityUSA Convention 2007, in Austin, Texas. The purpose of the call is to facilitate an easy information exchange between national and local leadership.

The next conference call is scheduled for Tuesday, June 10, 2008, beginning at 9:00 p.m. EDT. Joe Gallagher will reconfirm the date and time and provide the conference call-in number. Chapter Presidents and leaders: If you have not done so, please notify him of your desire to participate by sending an e-mail to Joelore@aol.com.

Support for Dignity Chaplains

Are you a Chaplain for a Dignity Chapter who would appreciate the opportunity to be part of a secure on-line community that offers the chance to network with other Dignity Chaplains? Two folks have volunteered to coordinate such a group, in order to promote dialogue and nurture support for Dignity Chaplains who too often feel isolated in their ministries. This effort is supported by DignityUSA, and would feature shared stories, spiritual reflection, liturgical ideas, homily help, and prayers.

If you are interested, or have questions, please contact garinns@sbcglobal.net.



Gay Pride Celebrations
Continued from page 3

Seattle (WA), June 28th:

The 20th Annual Pride Week Breakfast will be held at Central Lutheran Church at 1710-11th Ave. on Capitol Hill from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon. The \$7.00 all-you-can-eat breakfast is one of Seattle's longest-lasting Gay Pride traditions and benefits two non-profit, GLBT community organizations, as well as Dignity/Seattle. For more information, contact plandtish@aol.com.

Upcoming DignityUSA Board of Directors Meeting

July 25-27, 2008, in Denver:

Meeting at Hampton Inn & Suites Denver-Downtown Friday evening through Sunday noon.

Please contact Lewis Tanner, Secretary, for details and times as the agenda is subject to change. Secretary@dignityusa.org.

DignityUSA Fundraising News

House Parties

Having fun and raising money for DignityUSA really can happen at the same time! All that needs to happen is to find a reason for people to gather (it's up to you to define "fun") and ask them to make a gift to support DignityUSA. The Fundraising Committee can provide DignityUSA's "How To Give A House Party" guide to make doing a fundraiser a breeze.

Please contact Board Member Tom Yates tyates02@verizon.net or Peggy Burns info@dignityusa.org to find out more about how you can have fun and support DignityUSA.

DignityUSA's Candidates for National Board of Directors

DignityUSA has six candidates to fill four positions on the National Board of Directors in the forthcoming elections by the national membership. The candidates are:

- **Mark Clark**, Dignity/Washington (DC)
- **Leo Egashira**, Dignity/Seattle (WA)
- **Jack Frielingsdorf**, Dignity/Metro NJ
- **Kathleen Kane**, Dignity/Suffolk (Long Island, NY)
- **Honour Maddock**, Dignity/Suffolk (Long Island, NY)
- **Terry Mischel**, Dignity/Denver (CO)

Thanks to Michael Flynn, Chair of the Nominations Committee and his team, Alice Knowles, Chair of the Elections Committee and her team, and to the candidates for volunteering to serve on the Board of Directors for two years beginning October 1, 2008.

All DignityUSA members should have received elections information and ballots, which were mailed out May 15, 2008. Completed ballots must be received by **4:00 p.m. EDT June 20, 2008** in order to be counted. Return ballots with **no more than four votes** by mail to: DignityUSA—Ballot, PO Box 376, Medford, MA 02155, or by fax at 781-397-0584.

In the event you did not receive your election packet, please contact Peggy Burns info@dignityusa.org or by phone 800-877-8797 or 202-861-0017.

Future QV Quarterly Voice of DignityUSA Themes

Request for submissions

Over the next several issues, we hope to present thematic stories from our many communities to our readership. The 1st Quarter 2008 "Families" issue was very well received and we will strive to uphold that standard with your input. Currently, we are soliciting stories about

- **Youth** (anyone in her/his 20s or 30s): Profiles of younger Board members or chapter leaders, chapters with youth ministries, perspectives on making DignityUSA a more effective advocate for GLBT Catholic youth, collaboration with campus ministries, etc.
- **Building Communities**: What has worked in your chapter in these challenging times? Share your success stories and innovation with other chapters!
- **Transgender**: Profiles of transgender persons, the unique spirituality of transgender people, a transgender perspective on Dignity—can we be more effective and welcoming?

We are more than willing to provide writing and editorial assistance, pairing people who have ideas, expertise, or comments with people who are good writers. The writer could conduct interviews, draft a piece, run it by the interviewee to be sure it's accurate, and then publish it as an "As told to..." piece.

Please send your stories or ideas to Legashira@yahoo.com. Depending upon how many related stories are submitted, it may be several months before there are enough to appear in a themed issue. Also, we are soliciting writers who would be willing to assist us in writing and/or editing stories from our members and chapters.

New DignityUSA brochures now available

DignityUSA will gladly send Chapter Leaders the brochures free of charge at standard domestic delivery postal rates. Older brochures should be tossed out — they have the outdated membership fee and the old address. Let us know how many brochures you want and the address where we should send them. Please send requests to DignityUSA, P.O. Box 376, Medford, MA 02155 or email info@dignityusa.org.

The new brochures have the correct membership fee of \$50 and the current mailing address. The date on the back of the brochure is 1/08. There is space available on the back of the brochure for chapter information.

April 2008 Board Meeting Minutes

Most of the substantive April Board Meeting news (Papal visit actions, Arcus Foundation grant, approval of scholarships to the Inclusive Ministries Conference and Next Generation Retreat) were covered in the May 2008 Dateline.

DignityUSA members who wish to view a copy of Board Meeting Minutes are encouraged to request one from Lewis Tanner, Secretary, Secretary@DignityUSA.org.

Two New Dignity Discussion Groups Formed

One is for chapter leaders to discuss issues and concerns relating to chapters. The other is for chapters-in-information. Send an email to Secretary@Dignityusa.org indicating chapter affiliation and list you wish to participate in.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nexus Mysteriorum: God/Church/Bible & Homosexuality

July 7-17, 2008, Seminar by renowned gay Catholic theologian, James Alison

James Alison (b. 1959) is a Catholic theologian, priest and author. He has studied, lived and worked in Mexico, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile and the United States as well as his native England. He earned his doctorate in theology from the Jesuit Faculty in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. He is the author of *Knowing Jesus*, *Raising Abel*, *The Joy of Being Wrong*, *Faith beyond resentment*, *On being liked*, and *Undergoing God*. James lived with the Dominican Order between 1981 and 1995, and currently works as an itinerant preacher, lecturer and retreat giver.

Making abundant use of the thought of René Girard, Dr Alison will be leading participants through a unified way of making sense of some of the central teachings of Christian Faith and then learning how to apply these within a controversial modern sphere. The course—which will make heavy use of Scripture, and will seek overall to increase participants' ability to handle the Sacred texts with sophistication—will devote three sessions to each of the following:

- I. Looking at what is meant by the word “God,” the difference which monotheism makes to us, and what is meant by the Trinity. **July 7-9th.**
- II. Examining how Jesus brought the Church into being—what it is for, and how we live within it (and “survive” it!). **July 10th-14th.**
- III. Exploring the different areas in which emerging truth about matters gay has come to affect the life of the Church. **July 15th-17th.**

Each session meets from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

The seminar will be held at Edgewood College in Madison, WI. Housing and meal plans are available on-site. Cost for participants depend upon the number of sessions attended (three, six or nine). Application deadline: **June 30, 2008**. For more information, please visit:

<http://religst.edgewood.edu/Alison%20Summer%20Course/AlisonSummerCourse.htm>

Opening the Door to the Inclusion of Transgender People

Download a free 80-page resource

The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in late April 2008 released a joint publication titled *Opening the Door to the Inclusion of Transgender People: The Nine Keys to Making Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Organizations Fully Transgender-Inclusive*, geared toward LGBT organizations.

“Transgender inclusion has been an important issue in the LGBT community, particularly in the past year. Yet, many organizations struggle with how exactly to become fully transgender-inclusive. We are excited to offer this free new resource,” said Mara Keisling, executive director of the NCTE.

TRANSITIONS

In MEMORIAM

Jim Wilger, Dignity/Dayton (OH)

BIRTHS

ADOPTIONS

MARRIAGES

HOLY UNIONS

Please send DignityUSA member name(s) of the affected person(s) and event to Peggy Burns, Operations Manager, by email to info@dignityusa.org or by phone 800- 877-8797.

For example, in events such as births and adoptions, the name(s) of parent(s) and child or children, or number of girls or boys, and chapter affiliation or city and state. In events such as marriage or holy union, the names of the couple and chapter affiliation or city and state.

Opening the Door to the Inclusion of Transgender People
Continued from page 5

Opening the Door..., which is based on years of personal and professional experience within LGBT organizations, makes the case for full inclusion at every level of an organization. It examines the need for genuine, consistent advocacy for inclusion of gender identity and expression in policies, programs, legislative stances and public positions, and explores critical issues such as understanding the transgender experience and the role of an ally, how to address staffing issues, dealing with prejudice and ways to further outreach. The voices of LGBT leaders discussing real-life experiences with transgender inclusion are found throughout the guide.

Download the free, 80-page publication from the Internet: www.nctequality.org/.

DignityUSA Convention 2009 — Celebrating 40 years: 1969 – 2009

Together We Will Reach the Promised Land: Celebrating 40 Years of DignityUSA

San Francisco, California July 2-5, 2009



Some early history highlights

- Early in 1969, Father Patrick X. Nidorf, O.S.A., an Augustinian priest and psychologist, starts a ministry for gay and lesbian Catholics as an extension of his professional work. Father Pat would later describe the beginnings of Dignity in his own words as follows:

“The Catholic gay people whom I had met were frequently bothered by ethical problems and identity with the Church. It seemed obvious that the Church wasn’t meeting the needs of the gay community. In counseling gay Catholics, there always seemed to be an excessive and unreal problem of guilt that was sometimes reinforced in the confessional instead of being resolved. With these ideas rattling around in my brain, I wrote a paper on a proposed group for Catholic gays and presented it to our members at a Provincial meeting. Most of the priests seemed to favor the idea of forming such a group and I did.” Father Pat later notes that “the name Dignity just came to me as appropriate since one of our basic goals was to bring dignity into the spiritual and social lives of some very special people.”

- Throughout 1970, three articles on homosexuality by Father John McNeill, S.J., New York City, appear in *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review*.

- In February 1971, Father Nidorf and the Provincial of his Augustinian Order meet with Los Angeles Co-Adjutor Archbishop Timothy Manning, who is offended that Father Nidorf is working in the Los Angeles diocese without his permission and thinks that the principles of Dignity are “untenable.” The Archbishop forbids Father Pat to have anything further to do with the group, and Father decides to respect the Archbishop’s wishes. He announces his resignation to some ninety members of Dignity at the group’s monthly potluck/meeting. However, gloom turns to determination after an inspiring talk by Bob Fournier, and the group strongly agrees to continue Dignity as a lay led ministry.

- On February 19, 1972, the First Annual Meeting of Dignity is held in Los Angeles. Seventy-four members attend the Potluck Dinner/Election including 22 priests. The membership committee reports that “Dignity has 198 members, including 25 priests, four brothers and two seminarians. 108 members are from the Los Angeles area. The others are from twenty states and the District of Columbia as well as seven countries (Philippines, Australia, Canada, West Indies, England, Holland, Switzerland).”

Continued on page 7

**Happy Anniversary
& Congratulations to:**

**Greater Columbus (OH) - 12 years
Southern Colorado - 15 years
Houston (TX) - 33 years**

*DignityUSA Convention 2009 — Celebrating 40 years: 1969 – 2009
Continued from page 6*

- In September 1972, Joe Gilgamesh tours various cities around the country including Chicago, Washington DC, Louisville, Boston and New York City to talk with individuals interested in the Dignity movement. (Prior to going to New York, Gilgamesh corresponds with Father John McNeill. He tells him about Dignity and asks permission to reprint the articles from the Homiletic and Pastoral Review, which are the basis for the original Statement of Position and Purpose for Dignity members. Father McNeill grants permission and also, at Joe Gilgamesh's request, works to convene the first meeting of Dignity/New York. In response to an ad in the *Village Voice*, over 200 attend this meeting which is held in October.)

Editor's Note: More details at <http://www.dignityusa.org/archives/history.html>.



Convention Fun & Entertainment

The Sundance Association for Country Western dancing has agreed to teach basic Country Western partner and line dancing after the main Saturday night dinner at Dignity's 40th Anniversary Convention. Sundance will then provide DJs for dancing throughout the evening on a 30' by 30' dance floor provide by the Parc 55 Hotel. Everyone will be able to join in the fun. Even those with two left feet should find this an easy introduction taught by experts with lots of experience with newcomers!

The SF'09 committee plans to also welcome the larger CW dance community in the Bay Area. We hope that with some added promotion of the dance we will not only make money for the convention effort, but will also attract some folks for the convention workshops!



**Wishing You
and Yours
A Safe and
Joyful
Month of
GLBT Pride**





**Next Generation
Retreat
July 24-27, 2008
New Orleans, LA**

**Call to Action
Seeks New
Executive
Director**

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Scholarship Available for Call To Action
Next Generation Retreat**

DignityUSA members in their 20s and 30s are invited to apply for a scholarship of up to \$250 to facilitate attending the 2008 Call To Action Next Generation Retreat, July 24-27 in New Orleans, LA. Up to two scholarships, sponsored by the DignityUSA Board of Directors, will be awarded. Join other young adult Catholics for spiritual renewal, justice activities and fellowship at this retreat, titled "FINDING HOME IN A BROKEN WORLD: A Retreat on Environmental Racism for Seekers of Spirituality and Justice." Additional information on the retreat can be found at <http://www.cta-usa.org/nextgen/retreat2008.html>

To apply for the scholarship, please send a brief (2-4 paragraph) statement outlining your interest, your length of involvement with Dignity, and how you feel attending this retreat will enhance your spirituality to info@dignityusa.org by **June 10, 2008**. Make sure to include your contact information and Chapter affiliation, if any. Scholarship awards will be announced by **June 20, 2008**.

Retreat Activities Will Include:

- Reflection on the devastation of Katrina and the continued struggles of rebuilding; stories of the unfailing spirits of all who weathered the storm and are now working to rebirth the communities of New Orleans
- Connecting with other people who are working for justice and peace and supporting one another in being agents of change in our own communities
- Tour of the city and urban renewal
- Hands on rebuilding work
- Time for personal and group reflection and prayer
- Celebrating mass with St. Augustine's Catholic Church (Parish associated with Call To Action — www.staugustinecatholicchurch-neworleans.org)

Call to Action Seeks New Executive Director

Call to Action's Co-Executive Directors, the husband-and-wife team of Dan and Sheila Daley, announced their intention to retire from the positions effective September 2008. CTA has started the search for a new Executive Director, and DignityUSA members who are so inclined are encouraged to apply for the position. Initial reviews commenced June 1st. To find out more about CTA, the position responsibilities, qualifications and application procedures, please visit: <http://www.cta-usa.org/transition>.

DignityUSA
Corrected Operating Statement of Revenue and Expense
For the Period 1 October 2007 – 31 March 2008

	Fiscal Year to Date Actual	Fiscal Year to Date Budget	Fiscal Year to Date Variance	% Variance of YTD Budget
<u>Revenues</u>				
Contributions	\$162,018.13	\$135,466.00	\$26,552.13	20%
Membership Dues	\$23,559.67	\$18,000.00	\$5,559.67	31%
Interest Income	\$1,953.52	\$700.00	\$1,253.52	179%
Total Revenue	\$187,531.32	\$154,166.00	\$33,365.32	22%
<u>Expenses</u>				
Salaries & related expenses	\$48,644.20	\$52,651.54	-\$4,007.34	8%
Office Expense	\$30,304.57	\$24,004.70	\$6,299.87	-26%
Marketing/Promotions	\$1,400.62	\$4,000.00	-\$2,599.38	65%
QV Publications	\$7,680.63	\$7,500.00	\$180.63	-2%
Bank Fees/Merchant Fees	\$1,557.34	\$2,350.00	-\$792.66	34%
Chapter Support	\$4,127.50	\$2,400.00	\$1,727.50	-72%
Total Operating Expenses	\$93,714.86	\$92,906.24	\$808.62	-1%
Income (Loss) From Operations	\$93,816.46	\$61,259.76	\$32,556.70	53%
Unrealized gain (loss)	\$180.96	\$0.00	\$180.96	
Income from Donated Estates	\$37,967.87	\$0.00	\$37,967.87	
Total Other Income	\$38,148.83	\$0.00	\$38,148.83	
Excess Revenue over Expenses	\$131,965.29	\$61,259.76	\$70,705.53	115%