

DignityUSA works for respect and justice for people of all sexual orientations, genders and gender identities—especially gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons—in the Catholic Church and the world through education, advocacy, and support.

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Pride—Sin or Sustenance?

Marianne Duddy-Burke, Executive Director, DignityUSA

Pride—one of the deadly sins of Catholicism, but a virtue for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and our families. What a conundrum for those of us who stand at the intersection!

As we enter into the celebrations of Pride around the nation this month, we have a great opportunity to consider the dichotomy between the ways in which this powerful word is viewed in our communities.

During my formal religious/spiritual education, I developed a very strong awareness that a heightened sense of self-worth was seen as undermining faith in an all-powerful God. The Tower of Babel—humanity's attempt to reach the heavens—and the subsequent alienation among the human community served as a reminder of the dire consequences of challenging the supremacy of the Almighty.

As a lesbian, Pride dis-empowers the religious and cultural voices of shame and condemnation. In the LGBT world, it draws people together and creates communities that seek justice. It is a touchstone that can lead to personal and collective liberation.

This year, as I march in my city's Pride celebration, I know that I will be reflecting on the implications of the recent surveys that demonstrate unprecedented levels of support for LGBT people among my fellow Catholics. I will march with appreciation for the work of so many people, known and unknown, who made those statistics a reality. I will march grateful for the integrity of the tens of thousands of LGBT Catholics, parents, siblings, children, and other family members who told their stories to people, not knowing what the reaction would be, and risked many forms of important relationships for the sake of truth. I know each one of those conversations helped get us to this point. I will march knowing that there are still too many people not able to march for themselves, whose lives or livelihoods may well be at risk due to their identities, and I will pray with each step for the day they are able to be part of the jubilant crowd. I will walk knowing that Pride is a blessing, and a celebration of blessedness.

The ability to reclaim Pride's holiness is one of the gifts we bring to our Church. For LGBT Catholics who have achieved some measure of personal and spiritual integration, Pride is grounded in a sense of humility, of awe and gratitude to the Creator for the gift our lives are to ourselves and to others. It is based on our faith in the mystery of the Incarnation, and our belief that each of us is created in the image and likeness of God. Because of this, Pride is profoundly sacred, and a way of living more fully as the people of God.



Marianne Duddy-Burke

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Archived issues of *Dateline* are at
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**Pride—Sin or Sustainance?
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May each of you have a profound experience of Pride during this month!

A Great Place to Experience Pride

A great place to experience Pride will be at DignityUSA's 21st biennial convention, July 1-4, 2011, in Washington, DC. Registration is still open for this amazing gathering. Through enlivening liturgies, provocative presentations, an inspirational keynote address, exceptional entertainment, and being among wonderful people from across the country, you will find yourself renewed and energized.

Everything you need to know about Convention 2011 can be found at <http://conv2011.dignityusa.org/>.

**Meet Shane Courville: DignityUSA's new Program
 Manager!**

I was born in southern Louisiana to a wonderful Cajun family who raised me to be a loving and faithful Catholic boy. Growing up in the 80s and 90s in this part of the country, I experienced a lot of change surrounding conceptions of sexuality and its expression. Even though I grew up in an atmosphere of love and acceptance, that "Catholic" thing still lurked deep in my heart. Whether I am "evil" or "disordered" was a question that came up very often. I remember kneeling next to my bed in middle school praying that I wouldn't be gay. Flash forward twenty years and now I'm the program manager for the largest LGBTQ Catholic organization in the country. How did this happen?



Shane Courville

I experienced God at a very young age—what I call a very tangible experience of God. This singular event fuels me every day to continue following what I believe was placed in my mind and heart years ago, namely to work for justice in society and the church. My experience sparked something in me which made people in my life ask me to lead them spiritually, and in southern Louisiana this meant to become a priest. So, following this call from my community, I entered the seminary when I was 20 after having already started studying music in college. What happened during this time was the beginning of my faith life breaking down and building up in a new way. I started to accept my sexuality more as the church and its leaders started to show their disapproval, and I was becoming educated in church history and theology. All this could have made me very jaded and angry, but fortunately I came across books by Jeannine Gramick and John McNeill in the seminary library, and for the first time in my life felt there were other people in the church who were like me and who were called to walk down the same path. After two years of soul searching, I graduated from music school and left the seminary.

During two years of being a full-time musician, and still feeling called to some type of spiritual leadership, I discerned entering the Jesuits and was accepted into the novitiate in August 2003. Being more progressive, the Jesuits offered me the opportunity to become authentic. During novitiate I read extensively, reflected on my life, and developed spiritually and mentally. I also worked with an HIV/AIDS hospice, with a L'Arche community, and with a homeless shelter/soup kitchen in Tijuana, Mexico.

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Witness the Board in Action

DignityUSA's National Board of Directors will meet June 29–30, 2011, in the Renaissance Washington, DC Downtown Hotel (our Convention 2011 host hotel). Conventioneers can drop in.

Members can obtain a copy of the agenda by contacting Lewis Tanner (secretary@dignityusa.org) for more details.

Social Media Project

DignityUSA is embarking on a new social media venture—a new website called “Voices”—and is looking for volunteers. Roles to be filled are bloggers, content managers, and community managers.

Content managers will be editors of the website with total control over what can stay on the site. Community managers will promote content and groups to the website front page. They can also create new groups for the site.

If you are a member of DignityUSA, have some spare time, and would like to add your voice to this project, please send an email message to webminister@dignityusa.org.

**Happy Anniversary
& Congratulations to:**

Columbus (OH) - 16 years
Houston (TX) - 37 years

Meet Shane Courville: DignityUSA's new Program Manager!
Continued from page 2

After completing the novitiate, I was sent to Chicago to study philosophy and theology, and researched transgender issues and spirituality. I also worked with Call To Action (CTA) as part of their young adult leadership team, and at Su Casa Catholic Worker in South Chicago for three years. Towards the end of my time in Chicago, CTA asked me to join their Executive Board, and I am still a board member. Following my Chicago assignment, the Jesuits sent me to Tampa, Florida to teach music and theology at Jesuit High School. After two years and a tumultuous discernment process, I decided to leave the Jesuits in December 2009.

Since 2009, I have taught music in New Orleans, written music for a dance company, and managed a disability law firm that dealt with HIV/AIDS disability cases. Though I'm only 32, my life experience brings me to a point where I feel I have something extremely valuable to offer and I still feel a deep call to spiritual leadership. This position with DignityUSA offers me a chance to use all the gifts that have been developing within me all these years. I see myself helping DignityUSA move forward with others in the progressive church and social justice movement. I know firsthand, through my experience with the Jesuits and Call To Action, the challenges of working across generations, and have worked and reflected on this dilemma/gift. I know the ins and outs of social media, have a keen awareness of the church, and have intensely reflected on where DignityUSA and the LGBTQ community are moving within the church. I feel incredibly honored to be asked to work for DignityUSA as your program manager, and pray that my energy and insights can be used to further our work for justice and acceptance in the church and society. Please keep me in your prayers!

Editor's Note: The Program Manager is a part-time position, currently funded by the Arcus Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation. Shane will be helping with DignityUSA's work in the Equally Blessed Coalition, and enriching our social media presence. He will also assist with ongoing projects, such as Chapter support and convention planning.

Dateline and *QV* Editor Bill Welch Retires

By Leo N. Egashira, DignityUSA Board of Directors, Publications Committee Chair

The June 2011 *Dateline* and the 2nd Quarter 2011 *QV: Quarterly Voice* mark the final issues produced under the professional editorship of William V. Welch III during eight-plus years of service. When he volunteered to become DignityUSA's *Dateline* editor in September 2002, the five-to-ten-hour commitment per week was quite manageable for the recent retiree.

In December 2005, when the Board of DignityUSA was looking for a new editor for the *QV: Quarterly Voice*, Bill was the obvious candidate to ask. DignityUSA Conventions 2007 and 2011 publications fell into Bill's lap as editor and co-production manager. The requisite hours more than tripled some weeks—for Bill, editing for DignityUSA became a third, unpaid career. As rewarding as it was with accolades coming in from many directions, it left him with no time to pursue personal interests or spend time with family.

Marianne Duddy-Burke, Dignity USA's Executive Director writes: “DignityUSA's leadership was aware of the quality of Bill Welch's work and his commitment to Dignity back when he edited the Dignity/San Jose newsletter. He consistently put out a high quality product that showed a deep understanding of Dignity's people and the connections needed between our organization and others.

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Dateline and QV Editor Bill Welch Retires
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“I often think of Bill as a current version of those amazing monks whose ministry was the documentation, preservation, and advancement of Christian thought and history. Bill has done all of that for the LGBT Catholic movement, and adds his own profound insights. He has brought passion, intelligence, great care, and profound dedication to this work.

“DignityUSA will benefit from Bill’s service for many, many years to come. I am very grateful for his generosity and friendship.”

Bill has served DignityUSA at the local, regional, and national level for over 35 years. He has served on the board of directors and as co-chairperson, president, and newsletter editor for two chapters in San Jose, California. He was also a delegate to the former Regional and National Houses of Delegates.

The current formats of both the monthly *Dateline* and *QV: Quarterly Voice* are a culmination of years of continuous improvements initiated by Bill. In doggedly securing publication or re-publication rights every month over eight years, he had established excellent working relationships with DignityUSA’s allies, leading progressive theologians, authors and lecturers, and publishers and editors of Catholic and other religious or spiritual and secular publications. Both publications are now regarded as the premier and authoritative voice of LGBT Catholics. They are read by other LGBT and religious organizations; leading LGBT Catholic theologians and commentators seek to be published in the *QV*; and, at least in one instance, the *QV* was distributed to one state’s legislators to garner support for passage of a transgender rights bill.

In recognition of over three decades of dedication and commitment in service to DignityUSA, our National Board of Directors unanimously awarded him with the Michael Bushek Award for Lifelong Service at the 2009 DignityUSA Convention in San Francisco.

Born and raised in Philadelphia, PA, he is the product of 16 years of formal Catholic Education with a BSBA from La Salle University in 1961. In 1950, Bill began his 23½-year military career in enlisted, NCO, and officer grades in the U.S. Army on active duty and in the active ready reserves in command, staff, and support activities, including a 10-month tour of duty at The Pentagon representing the U.S. Army Reserve in a Department of Army staff study. He is retired in the grade of Major.

Following his graduate studies and research assistantship at the Industrial Relations Center, University of Minnesota, he began his professional career in Industrial Relations and as a senior program management financial analyst in the aerospace industry in 1963. He is a retiree from Loral Aerospace Corp. since 2002.

Bill relocated to California in 1965. As a non-ordained lay minister, he has been in pastoral ministry to Catholics and others of the LGBT community in Santa Clara and surrounding counties for over 35 years. He served as a member of the Gay Ministry Committee of the Council of Churches of Santa Clara County for 10 years. Since 1986, he has been active in the Emmaus Community, a pastoral ministry to Catholic gay and lesbian persons in the Diocese of San Jose. He is a commissioned Minister of The Word and The Eucharist. By mutual adoption, he has been a Dad to two sons—one gay; one straight, for over 20 years. Stephan, a longtime HIV/AIDS survivor, died in 2006. Bill and his son Jacob reside in Santa Clara, CA within what is referred to as the Silicon Valley.

The entire readership of DignityUSA, our allies and friends—and especially the Publications Team—will sorely miss Bill’s larger-than-life presence. We wish him the best so that he can truly enjoy a long overdue retirement.

DignityUSA National Board Elections

By Tom McLoughlin, Election Committee Chairperson

DignityUSA 2011 elections by the general membership will be held between May 1, 2011, and June 15, 2011.

Lourdes Rodriguez-Nogues (Dignity/Boston) and Lewis Tanner (Dignity/New York) are running for the President/Vice-President gender-parity slate positions.

Nicholas Cimato (Dignity/New York), Jack Frielingsdorf (Dignity/Metro NJ), Alice Knowles (Dignity/Boston), and Patricia Russell (Dignity/New York) are candidates for three member-elected positions on the Board of Directors.

All Ballots must be returned to the national office by 11:59 p.m., June 15, 2011.

If any member does not receive a ballot, she or he may contact the national office via e-mail at info@dignityusa.org or by phone at 1-800-877-8797 or 202-861-0017.

Religious Liberty vs. Same-Sex Marriage: Is There Really a Conflict?

By Marianne Duddy-Burke, DignityUSA Executive Director, with permission by author and Huffington Post

As the campaign to legalize same-sex civil marriage gains momentum across the country, opponents are employing new tactics to defend the status quo. Chief among those is the claim that legalizing same-sex marriage will infringe on the religious freedom of those who oppose the practice on theological grounds.

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Religious Liberty vs. Same-Sex Marriage: Is There Really a Conflict?
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As both a devout Catholic and a supporter of marriage equality, I would like to believe that the rights of my more conservative co-religionists and my lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender friends can be reconciled through careful legislative draftsmanship. However, the bishops of my church and their allies have demonstrated no interest in reconciliation. Rather, they have taken an uncompromising stand based on principles that they readily ignore at other times, and blurred the distinction between freedom and entitlement in troubling ways.

To be taken seriously, appeals to religious freedom must be rooted in consistent teaching and practice. The arguments advanced by opponents of marriage equality do not meet this standard. The Catholic Church, for instance, recognizes only marriages conducted under its own auspices. It does not recognize marriage after divorce, unless the partner seeking to remarry has obtained an annulment. By Catholic standards, then, most of the marriages in this country are null and void.

Yet the bishops, bankrolled in large measure by the Knights of Columbus, have spent millions of dollars to keep gay and lesbian couples and their children from achieving equality under American law, while maintaining a discreet silence about the rights of heterosexuals whose marriages do not conform to church teaching. It is easy to grasp the political reality that informs this strategy: gays and lesbians are few, while what the church regards as unsanctioned marriages are legion. But in deploying arguments rooted in religious liberty only when they are politically advantageous, the bishops have diminished the currency in which they trade.

Religious conservatives also argue that they will no longer be able to help provide essential social services if they are forced to treat same-sex couples in the same way that they treat other clients. They cannot, in good conscience, offer adoption or housing to same-sex couples, they argue, and if compelled to do so, would have to cease providing such services entirely. Intentionally or otherwise, opponents of same-sex marriage present public officials with a choice between marginalized populations — the poor and the orphaned on one side, lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender people on the other.

But my bishops and their allies are not being forced to conform to laws they find morally repugnant. Rather, they are being asked to decide whether they will continue to accept significant government subsidies that come with certain strings attached. Religious organizations that do not accept such funding do not have to abandon their ministries to the poor and the needy. They can follow the lead of the Mormons—or our own Catholic history—and finance their ministries themselves. Nor will their refusal of government subsidies fray the social safety net, as other less ideologically rigid groups, which already compete for the same grants, will take up the slack.

In the literature on religious liberty and same-sex marriage cited by religious conservatives, several cases stand out. These tend to involve a small businessperson who has been sued for refusing to provide services at the wedding, or commitment celebration of a gay or lesbian couple. In reading these cases, one is struck first by the wish that everyone involved had used better judgment, and second by how the use of a high-flown term like religious liberty distracts from the wild asymmetry of what is at stake for the various parties. Perorations on the First Amendment notwithstanding, opponents of marriage equality are arguing that same-sex couples should be denied the emotional and legal benefits of marriage to spare theologically conservative bakers the ordeal of making them wedding cakes.

One would like to think that sufficient protections for pious cakesmiths and other interested parties could be written into law if religious conservatives were clear and candid about the ways in which their freedom might be infringed. But such clarity would open a path to the speedy legalization of same-sex marriage, and so my bishops and their allies play the victim card instead. In doing so, they demonstrate that they are not interested in protecting liberties, but in denying them.

Marianne Duddy-Burke is executive director of DignityUSA, a member of the Equally Blessed, a coalition of Catholic groups that work on behalf of LGBT people and their families.

This essay first appeared on HuffingtonPost www.huffingtonpost.com on 05/18/11.

Reflections

By Bill Welch, DignityUSA Editor

When I first took on the editorship of DignityUSA's monthly *Dateline* in September 2002 and the *QV: Quarterly Voice* in October 2006, it was my goal to develop and present timely, informative, attractive, and professional quality publications in a proficient and cost-effective manner. I was hopeful and anxious to stimulate dialogue and discussion, especially within our quarterly publication.

The *Dateline* began as a two-page, text-based publication, and the *QV: Quarterly Voice* as an eight-page, text-based publication, both produced with word processing software, and delivered to members via the U.S. Postal Service (USPS). With the development of computer technology and approval of DignityUSA's Board of Directors, we moved to electronic distribution of both publications across computer platforms and operating systems to members' e-mail addresses, while retaining hardcopy delivery of the *QV: Quarterly Voice* to members via USPS.

I invested in the purchase of a low-cost, full-featured, desktop publishing software, and later graphic file conversion and photo-editing software.

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Reflections**Continued from page 5**

With the assistance of M.A. Ladd and Chuck Provancher, information technology, Internet, and web-design gurus of Dignity/Boston, and later Logan Bear, our present webminister, I was able to produce file-compressed versions of the publications for upload to DignityUSA's web site, allowing readers to read them online and download them to personal computers.

With the new and updated software and advances in technology, I was able to develop several iterations of format and layout styles, incorporate more color graphics and photos, and expand the size of the publications. The 3rd Quarter 2007 *QV: Quarterly Voice* had 35 pages of content, and several Datelines in excess of 10 pages – this issue has 18 pages.

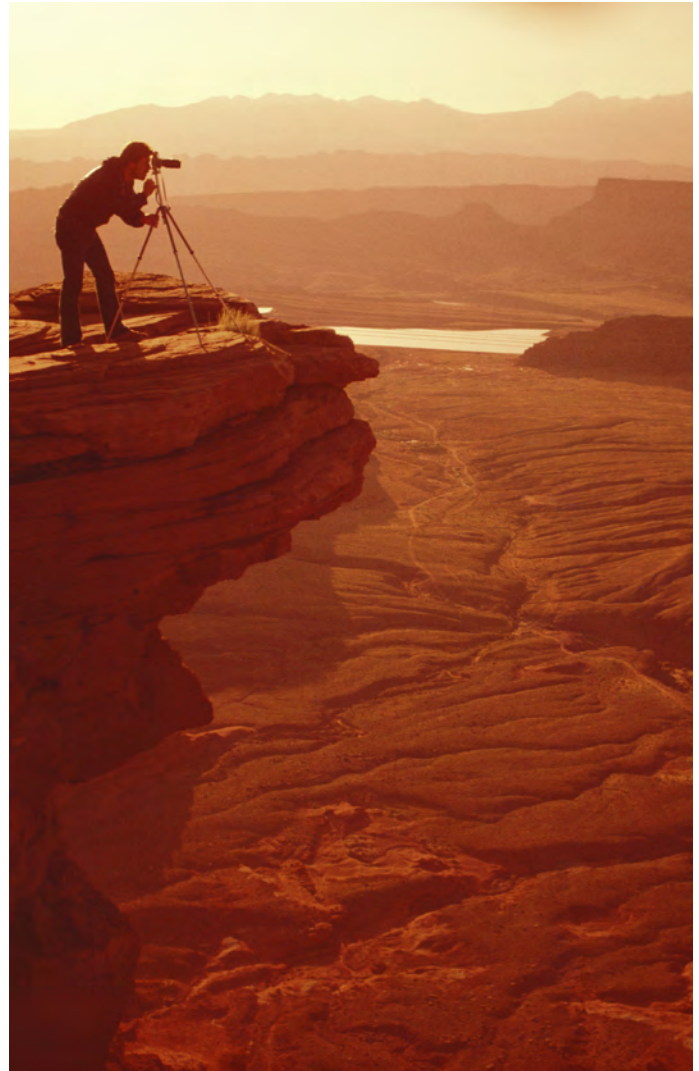
Throughout my tour as editor, I had the challenge, opportunity, and good fortune to work and interact with noted men and women theologians, authors, lecturers, and bloggers, as well as publishers and editors of Catholic and other religious or spiritual and secular publications, and to build friendly relationships with many. I was able to hone my skills and artistry in desktop publishing, and in graphics and photo manipulation and editing.

Many grateful thanks to –

- DignityUSA's leadership teams, directors, staff, and committee members for their respect, trust, support, and assistance
- The members of our Publications Committee for their attention to detail, assistance, and support
- Our contributors of content.

In retirement, I intend to rejuvenate and reengage in the art and craft of photography with more attention given to the pursuit of digital photography and processing flow, and spend more quality time with my son Jacob.

I may be contacted at DUSAEditor@comcast.net.



Transitions

In MEMORIAM

David A. Floss, DignityUSA, Ft. Wayne, Indiana died April 26, 2011

BIRTHS

ADOPTIONS

MARRIAGES

HOLY UNIONS

WEDDING/UNION ANNIVERSARIES

Please send DignityUSA member name(s) of the affected person(s) and event to Operations Manager Peggy Burns 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.



David Floss: In Memoriam

By Jeff Stone, DignityUSA's director of media relations

As I write, I have a thick stack of DignityUSA publications in front of me, running from Spring 1995 to Winter 2004. These nearly forty issues were all edited by David Floss, who died on April 26, 2011, at the age of 60 in Ft. Wayne, Indiana.



David A. Floss

I worked closely with David on our national quarterly, then called the *DignityUSA Journal*. I saw the extraordinary dedication he brought to it, and his deep love for what he always called his Dignity family. David spent countless hours working on the *Journal*, often taking a week of vacation time in order to get a big issue to press. As many of us can attest, he was cheerfully relentless in scouring the Dignity landscape for story ideas and keeping his writers on deadline.

David particularly loved our national conventions, and felt a great responsibility to document them in detail. He was everywhere with his camera, shooting dozens of rolls of film back in those pre-digital days. As I look back on the *Journal* issues David edited, I see with renewed appreciation what a remarkable job he did in capturing the spirit and scope of our activities over the course of an eventful decade. They will be a permanent and invaluable record of our history.

Before he took on national responsibilities as editor of the *Journal*, David edited the *Heartland*, a periodic publication of the Dignity/Midwest Region—during the years when the national organization included a regional structure and a National House of Delegates. He was a founding member and president of his local chapter in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He attended his first DignityUSA convention in 1977, and missed only one until recent years when health issues prevented him from traveling. In 1999, David was presented with one of DignityUSA's highest honors, the Michael Bushek Award for exceptional long-term service at the national level – an honor he truly treasured.

David was an unforgettable presence with his amazing energy, exuberant warmth, and infectious laugh. Born in New Jersey, he grew up in Ohio and graduated *magna cum laude* from Bethel College. He was a proud member of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters working in a distribution center for 32 years. He died just a few days before he was scheduled to retire. He was devoted and generous to his large extended family, and had a special love for cats—a love we shared—which often led to lengthy discussions on feline veterinary issues during our frequent editorial phone calls.

David's life was blessed by service, purpose, joy—especially the joy he took in all things related to our Dignity organization—and the profound faith which guided and sustained him through the difficult years of his illness.

Requiescat in pace, my friend.



Convention 2011 Online Registration Site Available

Although the early-bird registration discount ended April 1, 2011, registration is still available online at <http://conv2011.dignityusa.org>. Click on the REGISTER NOW button at top of page.

If you are unable to register online, please phone 1-800-877-8797, or send an email to info@dignityusa.org and request a paper registration form be mailed to you.

Hotel reservations at the convention hotel, the Renaissance Washington DC Downtown Hotel, can be made online or by phone. Visit <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/dignity>, or call 1-800-266-9432.

To get the special DignityUSA Convention hotel rate of \$125 per night (single or double), you must make your reservation by **June 7, 2011**. Be aware that a limited block of rooms has been reserved by the convention committee. Make your reservations as soon as possible.

A Request

The Convention 2011 committee solicits your assistance for an "In Memoriam..." convention video presentation.

Chapters and individuals are requested to send names and pictures or photos (if possible) of Dignity members who have died in the last two years.

Please contact Tom Yates and send information, pictures, or photos to tyates02@verizon.net.

Thanks for your assistance.

DignityUSA Convention 2011



It's here, It's here!!!!

By Jack Frielingsdorf, DignityUSA
Fundraising Committee

Wake the cat, tell the neighbors, start limbering up those bidding fingers; DignityUSA's next auction starts June 17, 2011. Don't miss out on a minute's worth of fun and excitement. You won't believe all the interesting items we have up for auction. There is a Disney collection of spice jars, a beautiful afghan, a soda maker, lots of places for vacationing, several great works of art, and even a hot air balloon ride. And more items are being added daily. Most chapters of DignityUSA around the country have set up special packages of regional delights.

By now you should have received the on-line announcement for the auction. In just a few days look for the "bidding is open" e-mail. If you aren't receiving our e-mails, contact Peggy at info@dignityusa.org or Jack at Frielys@gmail.com and we will get you set up. This will be too much fun not to be involved.

Over \$20,000 has been raised in past auctions for DignityUSA to support our many important causes. The on-line auction will be followed by the silent auction at our Convention 2011 in Washington DC. If you are not able to attend the convention we will miss you, but you don't have to worry about being outbid as the silent auction progresses. You can add a maximum bid as part of your on-line bid and that will only be exercised if someone places a higher bid on your special item, up to your specified amount. You really can't lose with a deal like that.

You can view the auction goodies, donate an item for the auction, or become a sponsor just by visiting the DignityUSA page at Bidding for Good www.biddingforgood.com/dignityusa.

PRE-CONVENTION WOMEN'S GATHERING FRIDAY, JULY 1, 2011, 2:00 - 4:00 P.M.

Let's Get Together – We Need to Talk!

Mary Hunt, co-founder and co-director of
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER)
will start the conversation

Renaissance Hotel Meeting Room #6
Refreshments will be served

Ride Amtrak to DignityUSA Convention and Get 10% Off the Fare



Amtrak is offering a 10% discount to travelers to and from the DignityUSA Convention in Washington, DC, July 1-4, 2011.

The discount is available for travel to and from Washington, DC, any time between June 28 and July 7, 2011, so those attending the convention who want to tack on some sightseeing time in and around the nation's capital before or after the convention can do so and still enjoy the full discount.

The special convention period hotel rate of \$125 per night is also available to convention goers for the three days before and three days after the convention dates.

To receive the rail travel discount, call Amtrak at 1-800-872-7245 or contact your travel agent. Use the fare discount code X04G-923. The discount is not available for online bookings.

According to Amtrak, "...meeting attendees who mention this code when making reservations will receive a 10% savings off the lowest available rail fare. (No other discounts will apply)."



Capitol Building in Reflecting Pool

Not Sure About Attending Convention 2011?

Are you still undecided about coming to the DignityUSA Convention 2011? If you don't come, aside from missing the fun of a 300-plus member family reunion on your nation's birthday in your nation's capital at bargain prices, you will miss answers and discussions around the following questions by prominent figures inside and outside our DignityUSA and LGBT communities:

- What attracted you to the Dignity movement and what keeps you coming back?
- When did you realize you could no longer be silent in the face of injustice and what keeps you looking to the future?
- In view of the fact that more than half of Catholics in the pews are LGBT-friendly, how can we activate those individuals to influence the hierarchy?
- From participating in parades to direct conversations with clergy or other parishioners, what have been your experiences in being out and Catholic?
- What goals would you like to see for all levels of DignityUSA in the next five years, and what can we do to increase this momentum?
- Which is the bigger challenge to LGBT-favorable legislation, the Catholic Church or other elements of the conservative movement?
- How can we live our public lives to increase acceptance of LGBT issues?
- What has been the Church's view of the marriage sacrament over time and how has it changed?

If you aren't there for Convention 2011, you will miss hearing the following topics discussed by these speakers:

One House, Many Mansions

There are many clusters of communities within the Dignity family, and with our newly defined mission statement, we will be extending our hospitality as an organization to even more. Rather than have each speaking just to their own members, we will take this time to hear the wealth of experiences and grace they bring to all in DignityUSA. Those on the panel by no means represent all the diversity in our community, but only a sampling: female, male, gay, lesbian, straight, transgender, married, single, Catholic, Mormon, African-American, Caucasian, Latina, feminist, leather man, big city, small town, and a range of ages.

Fred Bowers, president, Defenders/Washington DC

Denise Brunner, transgender activist

Nicole Sotelo, communications director, Call To Action

Marie Sweeney, lay leader and homilist, Dignity/Columbus

Moderated by **Lourdes Rodriguez-Nogues**, vice-president, DignityUSA

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Not Sure About Attending Convention 2011?
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Our Place as Change Agents: The Role of Conscience and the Search for Positive Spirituality Based on Catholic Social Justice Principles

As a community that has had to create our own response to the Vatican's teachings about the LGBT life as a lived experience, we have been called to inform our conscience by the grace God gave us. Moreover, religion and spiritual life in America are often and increasingly identified with negative, even hateful, elements of society. Our speakers will examine how today's Christians can reshape that perception and how we as LGBT Catholics can be change agents by incorporating the fundamentals of our faith.

William Braun, Psy.D, psychoanalyst

Jeannine Gramick, SL, co-founder of New Ways Ministry

Joseph Palacios, co-founder of Catholics for Equality

Thomas Roberts, editor at large, National Catholic

Reporter

Moderated by **Phil Donahue**, talk show host and civil rights activist

Quo Vadis?

The question posed to Jesus, "Where are You going?" needs to be confronted by 21st-century LGBT Catholics. Where are we going and how do we get there? What do the paths look like that will allow us to be true to our real identities and also to our faith? The leading national group of LGBT Catholics, the Dignity movement, including DignityUSA, our chapters, and other local expressions, should also confront the question.

Francis DeBernardo, executive director, New Ways Ministry

Daniel Helminiak, author of *Spirituality for Our Global Community, The Transcended Christian, What the Bible Really Says about Homosexuality*

Mary Hunt, theologian, co-founder and co-director of Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER)

Moderated by **Maureen Fiedler**, host of *Interfaith Voices*

Are You Listening?

The DignityUSA Young Adults Caucus will present an inter-generational dialog about post-Vatican II Catholicism. One member from each of the generations born before 1940, 1960, 1980, and after 1980 will discuss what they see as the present and future of the LGBT movement in the Catholic Church.

William D'Antonio, Catholic University of America

Jamie Manson, Dignity/New York

John McNeill, theologian, pioneering advocate of Catholic ministry to LGBT persons

Anthony Steen, Dignity/San Diego

Moderated by **Katie Jones**, coordinator for the Loretto Volunteer Program of the Loretto Community

Catholic LGBT Civic Affairs

Meeting in Washington, DC, it's appropriate to focus on effective political action. Civil marriage is legal in the District of Columbia. There are or shortly will be federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination and allowing LGBT persons to serve in the military. These speakers will give us insights into how these events occurred and how we can achieve further needed changes at the federal, state, and local levels and how we can forge effective alliances with other progressive Catholic and LGBT organizations.

Luke H. Clippinger, delegate, Maryland State Assembly

Heather Mizeur, delegate, Maryland State Assembly

Diego Sanchez, legislative assistant to Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA)

Patrick Wojahn, councilmember, College Park, Maryland, City Council

Moderated by **Lou Chibbaro, Jr.**, senior news reporter, Washington Blade

Celebrating Marriage with Dignity

Bit by bit, LGBT relationships are achieving governmental legitimacy and couples are seeking liturgical celebrations to give support to those commitments. Here will be discussed some of the processes for the community to consider. Legal and liturgical specialists will focus on practical aspects of tying the knot, with the goal of de-mystifying the process.

Mickey Martinez, canon and corporate lawyer

Phil Mendelson, councilmember, District of Columbia

Morgan Meneses-Sheets, recent executive director, Equality Maryland

Moderated by **Jake Hudson**, vice president, Dignity/Washington

Ready to Register?

You do not want to miss any of this: the discussions just described, the keynote address by Edwina Gateley (poet, theologian, artist, writer, lay minister, modern-day mystic, prophet, and a single mom), a Mass, the DignityUSA membership meeting, a grand party on closing night, and meeting new and old-timer conventioners. Go to the DignityUSA website at www.dignityusa.org and click on the Convention 2011 logo in the upper section of the left column to be taken to the convention registration site.



DignityUSA Convention 2011: Workshops, Caucuses Still Around but Fewer

Workshops, once the mainstay of DignityUSA convention programs, assume a less prominent role at the 20th National Convention, but they haven't disappeared.

Those attending DignityUSA Convention 2011 at the Renaissance Washington DC Downtown Hotel July 1-4, will spend most of their time in seven plenary sessions featuring a keynote speech and six panels where speakers will engage their topics in talk-show style interaction, rather than at smaller workshops. During an extended lunch period on Saturday, a wide range of more targeted discussions will take place in four workshops and four caucus meetings.

During these sessions you will be able to explore:

- practical ways you can play a critical role in securing LGBT political victories
- the unique aspects of spiritual self-discovery for LGBT persons
- how elements of creation spirituality can enrich our spiritual dimension
- what makes a saint and who would be a LGBT saint
- what it is like to live "on both sides of the fence" as told by a transgender woman
- what are the latest developments among Dignity young adults, Defender members and others in the leather community, women and Latino/Latina and Hispanic people

The four workshops and four caucuses take place 12:30-2:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 2, on the meeting room floor of the hotel located between the lobby level and the ballroom level. Prior to the workshops and caucuses convention goers will be able to obtain the pre-paid lunch they reserved when registering for the convention. If you did not reserve a lunch, there will be a few extras for on-the-spot purchase. Descriptions of the workshops and caucuses follow:

WORKSHOPS

Putting Our Faith into Political Action

Presented by **Phil Attey**, a founding member and executive director of Catholics for Equality

Recent polls confirm what many Dignity members have known for years – that Catholics, who make up 34% of the U.S. population, overwhelmingly support LGBT equality now more than any other Christian faith group in America. State and national equality groups understanding this reality are asking our help in mobilizing pro-equality Catholic support. This session, conducted by our friends at Catholics for Equality, will lay out practical ways you can play a critical role in securing LGBT political victories in your home community and at the national level. Whether you're a veteran activist or feeling called to put your faith into political action for the first time,

this session will leave you enthused and empowered with a toolkit to maximize your time, talent, and energy.

LGBT Spirituality and Creation Spirituality: What they mean and how they fit together

Presented by **Jim R. Marion**, founder and director of the Institute for Spiritual Awareness

Jesus told us that "The Kingdom of Heaven is within," and spiritual teachers have told us that the path to God is the path of knowing oneself, discovering one's true spiritual identity.

For those of us who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered, knowing and accepting oneself presents special problems, especially if we are members of a larger non-accepting community, as the Catholic Church often is. But the realization of the Kingdom demands such self-acceptance and such self-realization. How do we deal with this?

Creation Spirituality honors what is. What was created by God is sacred. Spirit lies in understanding the deepest workings of nature. Beneath these simple phrases lies the mysticism of Earth's major religions. Dreams, rituals, life cycles, sexuality, nature worship, and even science fit nicely under the Creation Spirituality umbrella.

The workshop will explore both the unique aspects of spiritual self-discovery for LGBT persons and how elements of creation spirituality can enrich our spiritual dimension. We will look at Christian mysticism—a mysticism augmented by, and understood in the context of developments in human psychology and consciousness development. We will explore the levels of human spiritual development and the spiritual necessity of the "inner marriage" of the male and female parts of ourselves. The workshop will use meditation, lecture, and exercises to explore this LGBT path to union with God.

Saints of Our Family

Presented by **Tony Gryzmala**, member of Dignity/Washington's Spiritual Development Ministry

Let's talk saints. Remember the old hymn "For All the Saints Who from Their Labors Rest"? You probably sang it last year on the feast of All Saints while thinking about your favorite one. But when was the last time you asked yourself just who is a saint or what does it take to become one? Do you know any saints? Are there LGBT saints?

Join us for story-sharing about what makes a saint and who would be a LGBT saint. Please bring a story to share about your favorite saint and another one about someone who might be a LGBT saint.

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DignityUSA Convention 2011: Workshops, Caucuses Still Around but Fewer
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Living the Transgender Life

Presented by Denise Brunner, a male to female transsexual, lecturer, and workshop leader

DignityUSA's Transgender Committee has been organized to enhance our involvement in transgender issues and build our capacity to address the concerns of our transgendered brothers and sisters.

The workshop will include Ms. Brunner's personal experiences of living "on both sides of the fence," her life story, and how her family has stayed together. The discussion will also include the differences between sexual orientation and sexual identity, what being transgendered is, the processes that various transgendered persons have followed to live their lives authentically, and what the medical establishment has to say about the transgender life.

CAUCUSES

- The Committee for Women's Concerns
- The Younger Generation and Dignity (Young Adult Caucus)
- Defenders and Others in the Leather Community
- Latino/Latina and Hispanic People



Capitol Building, Washington, DC



Honor St. Mary of Magdala

End the Silencing of Catholic Women!
*Put Women Back in the Lectionary
 ...and the Diaconate*

JOIN our worldwide effort to reclaim St. Mary of Magdala's TRUE role as the first witness to the Resurrection and to advocate for women's roles in the Church today.

- **ORGANIZE** a special celebration of her feast day, July 22nd, to honor this great woman witness of faith known in the early Church as the "Apostle to the Apostles".
- **DOWNLOAD** our free organizing kit with a sample prayer service.
- **ADVOCATE** for a restoration of women deacons through our electronic and paper postcard campaign.
- **DISCOVER** strategies for the ending of unjust silencing of Catholic women and lay people through FutureChurch resources.

FOR INFORMATION on St. Mary of Magdala and how you can organize a special celebration or a postcard campaign go to:

- www.futurechurch.org
 - 216-228-0869 (x3) or email magdala@futurechurch.org
- Project developed by FutureChurch

Chapter News

Dignity/New York Chapter News

Dignity/New York Supports Talk by Bishop Fresen

Dignity/New York members turned out to hear Bishop Patricia Fresen, of Roman Catholic Womenpriests, speak on compassion at the LGBT Center in Manhattan on April 30, 2011. Bishop Fresen was brought to New York by a group led by Rev. Gabriella Velardi-Ward, a Roman Catholic Woman-priest based in Staten Island, NY. As part of its outreach to other progressive Catholic communities, Dignity/New York was pleased to cover the cost of the room at the LGBT Center and to provide refreshments.



Members of Dignity/New York with Bishop Patricia Fresen
(Bishop Fresen in center in black attire)
Photo courtesy Patricia Russell

Dignity/New York in *New York Times* Article

Dignity/New York was mentioned in a *New York Times* article "For Catholics, Open Attitudes on Gay Issues" which appeared on April 22, 2011, and can be found at www.dignityusa.org/content/catholics-open-attitudes-gay-issues. The story highlighted the findings of the Public Religion Research Institute survey showing that 74% of U.S. Catholics support the right of same-sex couples either to marry or to form civil unions. The survey, commissioned by Equally Blessed with the support of the Arcus Foundation, was discussed in the first-ever U.S. congressional briefing on Catholic support for LGBT issues on March 30, 2011. Present and past leaders of Dignity-USA participated in the briefing. The *Times* story came about as a result of a local press release based on a template announcing the survey's findings and supplied by DignityUSA to all chapter leaders. The same process resulted in major stories in geographical local media featuring Dignity chapters in Phoenix, AZ and Dallas, TX. DignityUSA's director of media relations, Jeff Stone, also secretary of Dignity/New York, briefed the *Times* reporter.

Dignity/Washington (DC) News

On April 28 and 29, 2011, Equally Blessed had strong support from Dignity/Washington members when they visited the Congressional offices of nearly 400 U.S. representatives and senators to hand-deliver copies of a report analyzing Catholic attitudes on gay and lesbian issues by the Public Religion Research Institute. The full report may be accessed at http://www.publicreligion.org/objects/uploads/51/Catholics_and_LGBT_issues_2011_FINAL.pdf.



Members of Equally Blessed
(L to R) Mark Clark, Francis DeBernardo, Jeannine Gramick, Bob Mialovich, Kelly Stewart, Jerry O'Leary, Tom McMahon, Larry Ranly, and Claire Pluecker

Dignity/Washington at DC Capital Pride

On Saturday, June 11, 2011, Dignity/Washington will once again be well represented in the annual DC Capital Pride Parade. In 2010 it was voted the "Best Parade in DC" by the *Washington City Paper* for the fourth consecutive year.

Dignity/Washington Board member Larry Ranly will lead his 2011 parade team in charge of a unique mobile display that will draw attention to Dignity/Washington's diversity and inclusiveness. Members of the District of Columbia Defenders Club will augment the chapter's marching group.

Dignity/Washington will be listed in the 2011 Capital Pride Guide as a Capital Pride Community Partner, part of a small group of non-profit, DC area organizations dedicated to support and assist in the advancement of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community.

The Capital Pride Festival on June 12, 2011, will once again be held on Pennsylvania Avenue halfway between the White House and Capitol Hill. Dignity/Washington's popular booth promises to attract both the curious and the well-informed in the crowd estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands.



Dignity/Honolulu Chapter News

Dignity/Honolulu's 35th Anniversary Celebration

By Leo N. Egashira, DignityUSA Board Member and member of Dignity/Seattle

On Saturday evening, May 14, 2011, I represented DignityUSA's Board of Directors and participated in Dignity/Honolulu's 35th Anniversary celebration. The beautiful event could not have occurred at any other Dignity chapter except Honolulu's. Hawai'i's unique cultural milieu was exemplified in many ways: An opening invocation spoken in the Hawaiian language by a man in native dress; incredibly fragrant and colorful leis draping the necks of speakers and honorees; men wearing tastefully casual Aloha shirts (I did not see a single necktie or black tie); two mesmerizing hula dances; speeches and conversations punctuated with "Aloha" and "Mahalo"; and a rainbow of ethnic groups, especially those of the Asia-Pacific region.

That Dignity/Honolulu celebrates 35 years as the oldest surviving LGBT religious organization in Hawai'i is a testament to the dedication and hard work of its leadership and members. The milestone is even more impressive when one considers the chapter's daunting physical isolation—the nearest sister chapters on the mainland's West Coast are 2,500 miles away (5-6 hours' flying time), and teleconferences based on East Coast Time mean a six-hour time differential.

One of the themes in my congratulatory address was how electronic communications can partially bridge geographic distances, and that DignityUSA and our chapters are well aware of Dignity/Honolulu's activities and proud to have such a vibrant chapter in the Hawaiian Islands. While Dignity/Honolulu may be small, it has had incredible success networking with allies, and a regular monthly schedule full of varied social and religious activities resulting in widespread publicity and influence that would be the envy of much, much larger chapters. I also presented an abbreviated version of DignityUSA's 2008–2013 strategic plan as an example of the professionalism that now characterizes the organization's operations and National Board meetings.

One of the event speakers, Carolyn Golojuch, president of the local P-FLAG chapter, was slated to announce the "big news" of Dignity/Honolulu being selected as one of the two grand marshals for Honolulu's LGBT Pride Parade on June 4, 2011. Jim Slatkavitz, one of the chapter's original founders 35 years ago, will be riding in a convertible at the head of the Parade. (My suggestion that he ride on a float with gown and tiara was rejected.) To the utter surprise and glee of the 60 or so celebration attendees, Carolyn read a heretofore-kept-secret proclamation from Governor Neil Abercrombie and Lieutenant Governor Brian Schatz that designated May 2011 as "Dignity/Honolulu Awareness Month!"

In addition to Carolyn, other prominent event speakers were Dignity/Honolulu President Tim Earhart—who spoke about local activities and milestones, and Gene Corpuz, chapter

secretary and fellow DignityUSA Board Member—who tied together the connection between the local chapter and the national organization.

On a personal note, I felt humbled and honored to represent the Board of DignityUSA on this momentous occasion. With my Japanese ethnicity and Aloha shirt – purchased on my behalf by Gene Corpuz – draped with several leis, I can very easily pass as a local...until I start to speak in my fast-cadenced, standard Mainland accent. However, I felt I connected well with the multi-ethnic event audience—although that perception could simply be due to the innate openness and Aloha spirit that pervades the Islands.

Mahalo, Dignity/Honolulu, for welcoming me and embracing my presence. The Board of DignityUSA wishes you another 35 years of prophetic ministry in the Aloha State!



(L to R) Leo Egashira, DignityUSA Board Member, and Francis Duran, Dignity/Honolulu Treasurer, hold Gov. Neil Abercrombie and Lt. Gov. Brian Schatz's proclamation announcing May 2011 as "Dignity/Honolulu Awareness Month."

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Dignity/Honolulu's 35th Anniversary Celebration
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"Hula Awana" Performers



(L to R) Deacon Jim Cummings and concelebrants
Revs. Jim Maier, Todd Scull, Kevin Steen

Dignity/San Fernando Valley (CA) Chapter News

Dignity/San Fernando Valley (CA) celebrated the chapter's 15th anniversary with a special liturgy at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in North Hollywood on Saturday evening, May 7, 2011, followed by a gala banquet at the Pickwick Center in Burbank, CA. The anniversary Mass was concelebrated by Revs. Todd Scull, Jim Maier, and Kevin Steen, with Deacon Jim Cummings serving. The chapter was honored to have guests from Dignity/Los Angeles and Dignity/Palm Springs, as well as DignityUSA President Mark Matson, who flew in from Columbus, Ohio to help mark the occasion. During the banquet, Mark delivered a stirring keynote address offering a frank and inspiring appraisal of the continued need for the work of DignityUSA at all levels. Fr. Todd Scull was honored with the chapter's La Campana Misionera Award of Merit for his dedicated service to the community. Following the meal and official program, which included a 20-minute slide show of chapter history, guests took to the dance floor and danced the night away as the DJ delighted all with a classic disco playlist. Dignity/San Fernando Valley member Javier Lopez chaired the memorable anniversary event.



DignityUSA President Mark Matson (front row right)
and members of Dignity/San Fernando Valley

Dignity/Chicago Chapter News

Dignity/Chicago Celebrates 39 Years of Ministry to GLBT Catholics

Dignity/Chicago celebrated the 39th anniversary of its founding in 1972 – the fourth chapter in the nation – and its ongoing ministry to the LGBT communities, family and friends with an anniversary Mass on Sunday, May 22, 2011, at the Broadway Methodist Church in Chicago. Dignity/Chicago's annual John Michie Award for community service was presented to newly elected Alderman James Cappleman and his partner Richard Thale in recognition of their service in the Chicago Uptown neighborhood. Dignity/Chicago past president Steve Forst was presented the Spirit of Dignity Award.

The 39th Anniversary Mass, with Rev. Barbara Zeman presiding and attended by over 50 members and friends, was followed by a reception in the church social hall. Chris Pett, Dignity/Chicago Board President, said: "Dignity/Chicago is one of the city's oldest LGBT organizations and the city's only LGBT Catholic organization to publically affirm our sexuality as loving, life-giving and life-affirming. We have continuously held Mass every Sunday for 39 years, and helped thousands navigate the integration of their sexuality and their spirituality."

Pett announced, "We are pleased to recognize Steve Forst with the Spirit of Dignity Award. Steve has been a tireless volunteer for the chapter and DignityUSA for over 20 years, including serving as Dignity/Chicago President."

Pett continued, "Selecting James and Richard as recipients of this year's Michie Award complements our history. Both have not only shown a long-term commitment as members of Dignity/Chicago, but also a dedication to the larger Chicago community through their work to improve life for residents in the Uptown neighborhood."

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Dignity/Chicago Celebrates 39 Years of Ministry to GLBT Catholics
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John Michie, a deceased member of Dignity/Chicago, was well-known for his hospitality and welcome to new comers. The John Michie Award, created to honor his memory after his death in the 1980s, has been awarded to individuals and organizations that have helped make Chicago a more welcoming city for LGBT people. Richard and James meet and exceed the criteria for the Award.

Both Cappleman and Thale served on the Dignity/Chicago Board of Directors in the 1990s—James as President and Richard as Treasurer. They have been active in Uptown community organizing since the late 1990s. James has been on the board of directors for the Uptown Chicago Commission (UCC), a not-for-profit neighborhood organization that seeks to improve the quality of life for all Uptown residents. He just finished serving his second term as the board president. James has helped form block clubs, organize service projects, and create open access to necessary information for residents throughout the 46th Ward. It was this service to the community that led to his position as Alderman of the 46th Ward.

James formerly worked in quality improvement research at ACCESS Community Health Network and has published a book for individuals with chronic illness entitled, *Asking the Right Questions to Get the Health Care You Need*. James's fiancé and partner of 19 years, Richard Thale, is chair of the 23rd Police District's Court Advocacy Committee and a Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) facilitator for Beat 2312. James and Richard are planning a civil union in the fall of 2011 in conjunction with their 20th anniversary as life-partners.



(L to R) Chicago Board members Danielle Walsh, Mike Cook and Marty Grochala, Michie Award winners Richard Thale and Alderman James Cappleman, Spirit of Dignity Award Winner Steve Forst, DUSA Board Member Linda Pieczynski, Steve's partner Eloin Rodriguez, and Chicago Chapter President Chris Pett.

Some Dignity/Chicago History Highlights

- Dignity/Chicago was formed in January 1972
- Sunday evening Masses at St. Sebastian's Catholic Church continued until 1988
- In 1970s, the chapter was a charter member of Call To Action—an umbrella organization for progressive Catholic groups; and co-sponsored the Orange Ball—a Chicago benefit to raise funds to combat Anita Bryant-backed anti-gay referendums around the country.
- Chapter hosted DignityUSA Biennial Conventions in 1977 and 2001
- May 1988, chapter membership voted to remove its ministry from St. Sebastian Church and all Catholic Church property rather than submit to a demand from Cardinal Joseph Bernardin to withdraw DignityUSA's public statement affirming homosexuality
- In 1992, Dignity/Chicago took its call for justice to the home of Cardinal Bernardin in a prayerful protest
- In 1992, chapter moved to Broadway United Methodist Church where it continues to meet
- In 1999, chapter was reorganized to focus on the three core ministries that underlie its mission: Worship, Spiritual Growth, and Leadership and Advocacy. Dignity/Chicago continues to provide the Mass and other liturgical services, while remaining involved in many social and social justice events in the community.
- In response to a 2003 letter from the Vatican denouncing civil recognition of same-sex unions, Dignity/Chicago organized the 'Always Your Families, Always Our Church' coalition to affirm and support same-sex unions. A full-page ad in the *Chicago Tribune* as an open letter addressed to the U.S. Catholic Bishops urged them to seek dialogue with LGBT people on the issue of same-sex unions.



(L to R) Chris Pett Presents John Michie Award to Richard Thale and James Cappleman



Announcements

More Than A Monologue: Sexual Diversity and the Catholic Church



Yale Divinity School

UNION

Roman Catholic Universities and Non-Denominational Divinity Schools Collaborate to Change the Conversation About Sexual Diversity and the Catholic Church

“The conversation on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues in the Roman Catholic Church has for too long been only a monologue coming from the institutional Church.... It’s time for a 21st century conversation on sexual diversity, with new and different voices heard from.”

— Paul Lakeland, Director
Center for Catholic Studies, Fairfield University

(March 15, 2011) In an unprecedented collaboration, Roman Catholic universities and non-denominational divinity schools are collaborating to change the conversation about sexual diversity and the Catholic Church. Fordham University, Union Theological Seminary, Yale Divinity School, and Fairfield University announced today that they are jointly producing a series of events entitled *More Than a Monologue: Sexual Diversity and the Catholic Church*.

The series, taking place in Fall 2011, will explore the diversity of viewpoints among Catholics on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) equality. Each event has a unique focus and the series as a whole will lift up new voices that are rarely heard and raise awareness about the impact of church teachings and public stances on the lives of LGBT people. Participants and audiences will include clergy and laypeople, scholars and activists, faculty and students, Catholic, post-Catholic, and non-Catholic thought leaders. The long-term goal of this unusual initiative is to encourage a vigorous, honest, and open debate about sexual diversity within and outside the Catholic Church.

“The conversation on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues in the Roman Catholic Church has for too long been only a monologue — the sole voice being heard is that of the institutional Catholic Church,” said Paul Lakeland, Aloysius P. Kelley, S.J., Professor of Catholic Studies, Director of the Center for Catholic Studies at Fairfield University, and an organizer of the series. “That’s why many Americans believe, incorrectly, that all Catholics are opposed to equal rights for LGBT

people. It’s time for a 21st century conversation on sexual diversity, with new and different voices heard from.”

The dates, titles, and locations of the four events are:

- *Learning to Listen: Voices of Sexual Diversity and the Catholic Church*, Fordham University, Lincoln Center Campus, New York, NY — Friday, September 16, 2011
- *Pro-Queer Life: Youth Suicide Crisis, Catholic Education, and the Souls of LGBTQ People*, Union Theological Seminary, New York, NY — Saturday, October 1, 2011
- *Same-Sex Marriage and the Catholic Church: Voices from Law, Religion, and the Pews* Yale Divinity School, New Haven, CT — Saturday, October 22, 2011
- *The Care of Souls: Sexual Diversity, Celibacy, and Ministry*, Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT — Saturday, October 29, 2011

Each event will feature major speakers on the specific topics as well as panels and participant discussion. For more information, visit <http://www.morethanamonologue.org>.

Why More Than A Monologue?

Roman Catholic leaders have increasingly taken more public stances and hardened their language in support of the church’s position against LGBT equality. This exemplifies the high-profile, one-dimensional discourse of institutional Roman Catholicism when it comes to issues of diverse sexual orientation and gender expression and LGBT equality. At the same time, however, U.S. Catholics show increasing support for LGBT equality:

- By a margin of 2 to 1, Catholics say that homosexuality should be accepted by society.
- Almost 50% of U.S. Catholics support full marriage equality
- Six-in-10 Catholics support adoption by gay and lesbian couples who meet all legal qualifications.
- 68% of Catholics favor allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military, compared to 23% who oppose it — a 3:1 margin.

Voices from More Than a Monologue:

Christine Firer Hinze, Professor of Theology and Director of the Francis & Ann Curran Center for American Catholic Studies at **Fordham University**: *“At **Learning to Listen: Voices of Sexual Diversity and the Catholic Church**, we hope to move beyond the usual back and forth of official church statements and gay Catholic activists’ responses by exploring how the issue of sexual diversity affects all Catholics — active or former, gay or straight, female or male, of every culture, race and ethnicity. The time has come for us to learn to listen*

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More Than a Monologue: Sexual Diversity and the Catholic Church
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to all the voices and engage in a more enlightened, compassionate and honest conversation.”

Kelby Harrison, Post-Doctoral Fellow in Social Ethics, (Sexual and LGBTQ Ethics) at **Union Theological Seminary**: *“The Catholic Church is the number one provider of private education in the U.S. The cultural and personal influence that it maintains over its students — intellectually, spiritually, and morally — is profound. The recent wave of teenage and young adult suicides by those who are, or who are perceived to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer is only new in its large-scale media coverage. Educational institutions must take responsibility for protecting against the culture and attitudes that contribute to LGBTQ suicide. The **Pro-Queer Life: Youth Suicide Crisis, Catholic Education, and the Souls of LGBTQ People** event will focus attention on where Catholic educational institutions are getting it right, where they need to be better, and where their complicity in the wounding of young LGBTQ persons is unacceptable.”*

Dianna M. Swancutt, Associate Professor of New Testament at **Yale Divinity School**: *“When the Connecticut Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage in the fall of 2008, the Connecticut Bishops responded first with a public statement offered on behalf of all the Catholic faithful in the state (without their deliberation or consent) condemning the decision and arguing that marriage was not a civil right to be exercised by gay and lesbian people. Other Catholic points of view — from expertise in ethics, theology, law and the special tasks of the laity in the world — can and must be heard for a more robust discussion. **Same-Sex Marriage and the Catholic Church: Voices from Law, Religion, and the Pews** aims to provide that forum.”*

Paul Lakeland, Aloysius P. Kelley, S.J., Professor of Catholic Studies and Director of the Center for Catholic Studies at **Fairfield University**: *“The Catholic Church has large numbers of LGBT laity engaged in pastoral work in the Church and many gay clergy. But the official standpoint of the teaching Church makes their status as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender problematic for individuals, their communities, and the Church. This creates conflicts and tensions for many, while hiding the fact that all Christians contribute to Church life because of, not despite, who they are. So at the **Care of Souls: Sexual Diversity, Celibacy, and Ministry** event, we will be examining the challenges of the baptismal call to ministry in the lives of LGBT Catholics and looking at how a more positive and fruitful situation can be created.”*

The *More Than A Monologue* series of events is made possible through the support of the four organizing institutions and the Arcus Foundation.

To arrange interviews with *More Than A Monologue* spokespeople or for more information, contact:

For the series of events: Geoffrey Knox: 212-229-0540 or gknox@geoffreyknox.com and Roberta Sklar: 917-704-6358 or rsklar@geoffreyknox.com.

For events at each institution:

- Fordham University: Sydney Steinhardt: 212-636-6534 or steinhardt@fordham.edu
- Union Theological Seminary: Kelby Harrison: 212-280-1544 or kharrison@uts.columbia.edu
- Yale Divinity School: Gustav Spohn: 203-432-3466 or gus.spohn@yale.edu
- Fairfield University: Meg McCaffrey: 203-254-4000, ext. 2726 or mmccaffrey@fairfield.edu

Retreat for Priests and Male Religious

Rev. Donald Goergen, OP, author of *The Sexual Celibate*, will facilitate a retreat for priests and male religious, August 1-6, 2011, in the mid-Atlantic region.

For information or registration, contact New Ways Ministry at director@NewWaysMinistry.org or 301-277-5674, or see www.NewWaysMinistry.org.

