



# Dateline

Monthly News Bulletin  
Volume 17, No. 9  
September 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.*

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## Executive Director's Reflection

By Marianne Duddy-Burke

As I write this, I've just had the opportunity to review a draft of the forthcoming *QV: Quarterly Voice* for 3rd Quarter 2008. I feel I could burst with pride in being a member of DignityUSA. I hope each of you will spend some real time with this publication when it arrives in your e-mail- or snail-mailbox. The issue is focused on Catholic perspectives on marriage equality—OUR Catholic perspectives. Through reflective pieces, a chronology of organizational statements, married members' stories and photos, and newly released publications, this *QV* edition exquisitely illustrates Dignity's uniqueness among LGBT organizations, Catholic groups, and justice movements. It reflects our blend of spirituality and advocacy, pastoral work and institutional challenge. It shows how we reach people in large cities with large Catholic populations and places where it is very unlikely there are enough LGBT Catholics to sustain even a small Dignity Chapter. It shows the maturity and vibrancy of DignityUSA as we approach our 40th anniversary. I am grateful to all who contributed to what is sure to be a hallmark publication for us.

During the week of August 20, 2008, DignityUSA and Call To Action (CTA) came together to launch a CTA Just Church Initiative on Marriage Equality, particularly in California and Florida. With guidance from leaders of the people of faith arm of Equality California, and Bart Coyle of Dignity/Sarasota Florida — who is also Co-Chair of the NoOn2Initiative of the Sarasota, Florida area — CTA Chapter leaders learned about how they could become involved in efforts to defeat constitutional amendments banning same-gender marriage in their states. The CTA leaders will be given tools (some developed by DignityUSA and adapted for each state's specific campaign) to enlist Catholics supportive of marriage equality in these efforts. As a result, we expect to see Catholics helping staff phone banks, signing onto statements against the amendments specifically from our faith perspective, challenging priests and bishops who make anti-marriage statements from the pulpit, funding our campaigns, and speaking to anyone who will listen about their support for equality. This is the first time that CTA has ever launched a Just Church campaign on the issue of marriage-equality, and it gives us another reason to rejoice in our long-standing partnership with this organization.

I am about to head to a meeting of Catholic Thought Leaders convened by a major LGBT foundation. The opportunity to meet with Catholics representing academia, pastoral ministries, outreach to parents of LGBT children, other social justice groups, and funders interested in how to improve the lives of LGBT Catholics and our families is unprecedented. It marks the continuing evolution of the LGBT movement, as it moves from overtly anti-religious to embracing the importance of people of faith in achieving respect, equality, and opportunity for all.

Finally, the month of September 2008 is the anticipated launch of DignityUSA's new website. I urge you to visit [www.DignityUSA.org](http://www.DignityUSA.org) to experience a more interactive and refreshed public face of DignityUSA. We appreciate your feedback on our new look, and once again extend appreciation to all who worked diligently to create it, especially Logan Bear, M.A. Ladd, and Chuck Provancher.

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**DignityUSA Present at SNAP Conference**

By Linda Pieczynski, DignityUSA Board Member

SNAP (Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests) held its annual conference the week of July 11, 2008, in Chicago, Illinois at the Hyatt McCormick Hotel. I attended as a representative of and for DignityUSA.



Linda Pieczynski

Approximately 300 survivors, supporters, friends and family gathered for presentations on advocacy and support for sexual abuse survivors. What kept striking me over the weekend were the many parallels between SNAP and DignityUSA. Both have evolved from being mostly support groups for their members into major advocacy organizations with national and international agendas for their issues. SNAP works and fights to uncover the truth about the abuse of children by clergy and the cover up of the crimes by the hierarchy in the Roman Catholic Church and other denominations. DignityUSA works for and advocates civil rights and justice for LGBT persons within the church and society. Both have done this by organizing at the grass roots level in states throughout the country. Both have been scorned by the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church, but have flourished outside the boundaries of the institution. Members of both organizations have dealt with shame in silence, harmed by the twisted clerical view of sexuality and the failure of the institution to deal with misinformation and cover-up by leaders and abuse by offenders. Survivors are now claiming their dignity and speaking truth to power.

SNAP's mission has grown and expanded to include survivors of sexual abuse within other religious denominations and countries. There now is a SNAP Baptist Church group and an international presence with SNAP Mexico.

Victor Vieth, the first director of the National Child Protection Training Center, delivered a passionate plenary session — "Unto a Third Generation" — in which he outlined a plan to rid this country of child abuse within three generations. Marci Hamilton, one of the United States' leading constitutional law scholars, discussed how crucial it is to abolish the statute of limitations in child sexual abuse cases in order to protect all children. SNAP's advocacy work in this area is already leading to changes in laws throughout the country that benefit not only victims of sexual abuse by priests, but other victims — no matter who the perpetrator was. Ironically, the leading lobbyist against these changes in the law is the Roman Catholic Church.

Unfortunately, little has changed in the institutional response by the bishops. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' review board still exists. However, no one knows if it does anything worthwhile. Bishops continue to withhold documents in defiance of court orders, and threaten bankruptcy. Victims keep coming forward. Groups like Voice of the Faithful and [BishopAccountability.org](http://BishopAccountability.org) were well represented at the SNAP conference gathering.

SNAP has sparked a national movement for the rights of the survivors of sexual abuse that is gaining momentum. SNAP has forced reform upon the Roman Catholic Church in a way that other organizations have been unable to achieve. It is apparent that SNAP members have transformed their pain into something positive that will benefit future generations of children who may never know the agony of child sexual abuse because of the work done by SNAP and its supporters. DignityUSA members have done the same to protect and enrich the lives of LGBT persons for future generations.

## 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](mailto:Secretary@Dignityusa.org) indicating chapter affiliation and list you wish to participate in.

## Support for Dignity Chaplains

Are you a Chaplain for a Dignity Chapter who would appreciate the opportunity to be part of a secure online 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 interested or have questions, please contact [garinns@sbcglobal.net](mailto:garinns@sbcglobal.net).

### Happy Anniversary & Congratulations to:

**Tampa Bay, FL - 33 years**  
**\* Rochester, NY - 33 years**  
**\* A Dignity-Integrity Chapter**

## DignityUSA Board of Directors Meeting Summary

July 25-27, 2008 in Denver, Colorado

Submitted by Lewis Tanner, Secretary, DignityUSA

DignityUSA's Board of Directors met July 25-27, 2008, in Denver at the Hampton Inn & Suites Denver-Downtown.

The weekend started early for most of the board who traveled to Rocky Mountain National Park on Friday, July 25th. DignityUSA President Mark Matson wanted board members to see some of what makes his home state a natural wonder. Those who went into the mountains did see God's majesty — rock formations, varying weather, unique flora and brave bicyclists who made it up those peaks.



Board Members and hosts at Estes Park, CO, entrance to Rocky Mountain National Park

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. Friday the 25th. Mark Matson welcomed all to his hometown and introduced Kathy Trummer, Dignity/Denver President, who welcomed us. Those gathered celebrated achievements whether of national caliber like a major donation, a chapter milestone or a personal accomplishment. It was truly amazing to hear all the accomplishments throughout the country since we last met in Boston in April 2008! Mark thanked board members for coming together for the meeting using their own money and time away from work, partners and loved ones to do the work of DignityUSA.

With a quorum present, business began by approving the agenda and accepting the minutes as amended, including teleconference and electronic votes since the April 2008 meeting. Mario Torrigino's resignation from the board was accepted and became effective at the start of the meeting. The board accepted the Elections Committee report for new directors — Mark Clark, Leo Egashira, Honour Maddock and Terry Mischel — and thanks all who volunteered to serve.

The board moved to approve the audited financial statements and the audit report as presented. An update was given on the criminal investigation on 2006 – 2007 office discrepancies. Our insurance company has reimbursed us for our claim. Internal controls are now in place to prevent such discrepancies.

The board was pleased to hear that fundraising was up for the year. Many of our members have given generously to support an executive director and/or became a monthly donor. Many have responded by renewing with at least \$50 for membership.

*Continued on page 4*

## Chapter Leaders Conference Calls set for September 15 and December 10, 2008

The next conference call is scheduled for **Monday, September 15, 2008**, beginning at **9:00 p.m. EDT**. Information to access and participate in the conference call:

“Free Conference Call”  
(long-distance toll call)

Conference Dial-in number:  
269/320-8400.

Participant Access Code: 890836#.

If you have not done so, please notify Joe Gallagher of your desire to participate by sending an e-mail to [Joelore@aol.com](mailto:Joelore@aol.com).

Reminders for the December 10th call will be announced in future *Datelines*. Please set aside these dates and times on your calendars!

## Dignity/Dayton Ministry Celebration

The Living Beatitudes Community, a ministry of Dignity/Dayton, will celebrate its anniversary on **Sunday, September 21, 2008**.

There will be a special liturgy at 3:00 p.m. at Christ Episcopal Church, 20 West First Street, Dayton, followed by a dinner in the Church hall.

All Dignity members are welcome to attend. Please RSVP at 937-640-2468 or at [dignity@dignitydayton.org](mailto:dignity@dignitydayton.org)

## *DignityUSA Board of Directors Meeting Summary* *Continued from page 3*

New members are receiving a new member packet. Renewal letters are being sent to members, as well as letters to lapsed members to inviting them to rejoin. The Fundraising Committee is looking at other ways to increase the number of donors during our 40th anniversary year.

In his Communications Committee Report, Leo Egashira told the board that more people are needed to help with disseminating our message. Chapter reporters are needed for local stories, as well as writers for national stories. The theme of the 3rd Quarter *QV: Quarterly Voice* will be Marriage Equality. Bill Welch and Leo Egashira spend many hours gathering information; writing, editing and formatting articles. They are looking for more help in the process.

Marianne Duddy-Burke, our Executive Director, reported improved operational efficiencies since her return as Executive Director effective January 1, 2008. Peggy Burns, Operations Manager, will assume day-to-day responsibility of the member database.

Mark Matson updated the board on his DignityUSA travels since our April meeting. He reported on visits to Detroit, Chicago, Washington, DC, Northern Virginia, Seattle and New York chapters — either at a liturgy or a special gathering — to listen to DignityUSA members.

Saturday morning, the board expressed its confidence in Marianne’s six-months’ job performance including her work with the conference, “Many Stories, One Voice: The North American Convocation of Pro-LGBT Christians” (September 4–7, 2008); participating in the response to the interdiction of Sr. Louise Sears (St. Louis Diocese); involvement in Marriage Equality ballot issues, especially in California and Florida; and a continuing relationship with the Arcus Foundation through a national LGBT leadership meeting.

The board accepted a proposal by Marianne that would improve the membership database for leaders, directors and DignityUSA staff. The Fundraising Committee will strategize how to raise additional funds needed to implement the proposal.

Shari Miller, Dignity/Denver’s Vice President, gave a presentation on transgender issues which included a tape-recorded sermon and frank conversation. A resource Shari recommended about transgender issues can be found at [http://www.thetaskforce.org/reports\\_and\\_research/opening\\_the\\_door](http://www.thetaskforce.org/reports_and_research/opening_the_door). As a result of the conversation, the board moved that DignityUSA celebrate the gifts of our transgender brothers and sisters by acknowledging “Transgender Day of Remembrance” in November in partnership with Dignity/Denver throughout all of our DignityUSA chapters and families. The 2009 Convention is looking to include transgender issues in its planning.

Before our morning break, Mark’s brother, Ray, spoke to the group and remarked how lucky we are to have Mark as our leader!

Following the break, the board discussed many ideas and some budgetary concerns surrounding the 2009 San Francisco Convention with Convention Co-chair, Paul Riofski.

The board ratified a resolution honoring and thanking Mario Torrigino for his dedicated service to the board and his instrumental role in bringing the 2009 Convention to San Francisco.

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## Chapter-in-formation Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania

Congratulations to the new Dignity faith community that has formed in Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania!

If you live in the Allentown-Bethlehem area of East-Central Pennsylvania, or are visiting, please lend your support.

Liturgies by DignityUSA of the Lehigh Valley occur at **6:00 p.m.** on the **2nd and 4th Sundays** of every month at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 1900 E. Pennsylvania Ave., Allentown PA 18109.

Contact information:

[www.dignitylhv.blogspot.com](http://www.dignitylhv.blogspot.com)

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and

Dignity/Lehigh Valley

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### *DignityUSA Board of Directors Meeting Summary* *Continued from page 4*

After lunch, the board discussed the 2011 Convention (Washington, DC) and what it should look like based on the meeting Mark and Marianne had with the Washington, DC Convention Committee. The 2011 Committee will connect with the 2009 Committee for advice and ideas.

The board reviewed the progress on its strategic planning document and made desired changes. Ramon Rodriguez gave a Marketing Committee report on our next steps. He presented three marketing proposals which included several options in each.

After discussing marketing strategies of the organization, the board recessed its business for the day. Those gathered were transported to a favorite Dignity/Denver location for a cocktail hour and dinner with local Dignity members.

After a liturgy early Sunday morning, the board continued its business including thanking Joe Gallagher and Rita Wagner for their service as board members; expressing gratitude to Dignity/Denver and its members for their hospitality, donated time and transportation to the mountains and dinner, preparation of a feast, and wisdom contributed during the board meeting.

The board will meet in Chicago October 24-26, 2008, for its next in-person meeting. Before then, it will conduct two conference calls.

The board adjourned at 11:59 a.m. Sunday, July 27, 2008.

#### *Notes:*

*Copies of the minutes of the Board of Directors meetings are available to members who request them; please send an e-mail to [Secretary@DignityUSA.org](mailto:Secretary@DignityUSA.org).*

*The Board of Directors will be meeting in the Chicago area from Friday, October 24 through Sunday, October 26, 2008. Please contact Lewis Tanner, Secretary, for details and times, as the agenda is subject to change: [Secretary@DignityUSA.org](mailto:Secretary@DignityUSA.org).*

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

### Request for GLBT couples to take on-line survey for research

By Lisa Dillon, graduate student, University of Detroit Mercy

My graduate research team and I are studying relationship satisfaction, spirituality, religion and self-esteem. I am looking for couples to take part in a research study approved by the Institutional Review Board at University of Detroit Mercy, the largest Roman Catholic (Society of Jesus and Sisters of Mercy) university in Michigan <http://www.udmercy.edu/>. I am collecting this data for my thesis.

I am hoping to recruit Gay, Lesbian, and heterosexual couples to complete an anonymous, online survey. It takes approximately thirty minutes to an hour to complete.

Gay and Lesbian couples are often underrepresented in social science research. This is why I am reaching out to as many organizations as possible. My hope is that results from my research will generate valuable information regarding the experiences of cohabitating couples. Please contact me via e-mail [Lmdillon@gmail.com](mailto:Lmdillon@gmail.com). Thank you for your consideration.

## TRANSITIONS

## In MEMORIAM

## BIRTHS

## ADOPTIONS

## MARRIAGES

John McNeill and Charlie Chiarelli of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, partners for over 42 years, will be married September 9, 2008, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. John was instrumental in the founding of Dignity/New York. Dignity-USA extends hearty congratulations and blessings to John — one of its iconic legends — and Charlie..

## HOLY Unions

## WEDDING/UNION ANNIVERSARIES

Sarah Batt and Cathy Bickel of Dignity/Indianapolis celebrated 22 years of partnership this summer. They adopted three sisters from Guatemala in 2004. Their daughters are Rosemary Paola Gretchen, age 12 and twins, Fernanda Grace and Mercedes Alice age 10.

Please send DignityUSA member name(s) of the affected person(s) and event to Peggy Burns, Operations Manager, by email to [info@dignityusa.org](mailto: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.

## Jon and Cliff Garinn named co-pastors of Dignity/Dallas

Dallas Voice, August 8, 2008 (based on a Dignity/Dallas press release)

Dignity/Dallas announced this week that the organization has named its two longtime chaplains as co-pastors of the support organization for LGBT Catholics and their families. The appointment of the Rev. Jon Garinn and the Rev. Cliff Garinn, partners who have both been ordained as Catholic priests, marks the first time in Dignity/Dallas' 30-plus-year history that the organization has appointed ordained priests as pastors in charge of spiritual life, according to Dignity/Dallas President Victor Kralisz.



L to R Jon Garrin & Cliff Garrin

"We really aren't changing anything but their titles," Kralisz said. "The title of pastor is seen as more important, both within the community and to the outside community as well. This does give them some added responsibilities, but primarily we are doing this to really recognize and solidify their relationship with the Dignity community," Kralisz said.

Jon Garinn was ordained a priest of the diocese of Belleville, Ill., on June 5, 1993, by the Most Rev. Daniel Ryan, bishop of Springfield, Ill. He worked as an assistant pastor at several Illinois parishes before serving a five-year pastorate at churches in Salem and Kinmundy, Ill.

Cliff Garinn was ordained a priest of the diocese of Dallas, Texas, on May 29, 1999, by the Most Rev. Charles V. Grahmann, bishop of Dallas. He worked as an assistant pastor of St. Pius X Catholic Church in Dallas.

Kralisz said the Garinns have been Dignity/Dallas' chaplains since 2002. "Their new roles as co-pastors will give them authority over non-financial matters relating to worship, faith formation, social justice, spiritual development and ecumenical relations," he said. In a written statement released this week, Kralisz said, "Fathers Cliff and Jon have provided consistent pastoral ministry to Dignity/Dallas and have helped the organization achieve a deeper spirituality and richer liturgical experience. We're confident that they will continue the work of the Spirit within this faithful group."

The Garinns will assume their pastoral roles at a Rite of Installation preceding the Mass at 6 p.m. on Sunday, August 10, 2008. A potluck supper will follow the Eucharistic celebration. Dignity/Dallas celebrates Catholic Mass every Sunday at 6 p.m. in the Congregational Life Center chapel at Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. Services are open to all.

*Editor's Note: Jon and Cliff Garinn have been a couple for about eight years. They are also the coordinators of the new Dignity Chaplains Support Group. See announcement on page 3.*



Parc 55 Hotel San Francisco

**Convention 2009—  
Celebrating 40 Years of  
Ministry to GLBT Catholics**  
DignityUSA Convention,  
July 2-5, 2009  
Parc 55 Hotel, Union  
Square, San Francisco



*Plan your 2009 summer vacation in San Francisco with DignityUSA!*

Join us in 2009 as we return to San Francisco for **DignityUSA’s 19th Biennial Convention** where we will celebrate 40 years of ministry to the LGBT Catholic community. Come early and join in the San Francisco Pride celebration happening the weekend before the convention. Show your Pride by joining Dignity’s 40th Anniversary Pride Parade Contingent.



San Francisco Pride Parade

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
San Francisco Pride Week DignityUSA Convention 2009 Planning Calendar			June 24 Special hotel rates begin	June 25	June 26	June 27 SF Gay Pride Weekend
June 28 SF Gay Pride Parade	June 29	June 30 National Board Meeting	July 1 National Board Meeting	July 2 Convention Opening (Evening)	July 3 Convention	July 4 Convention
July 5 Convention Ends (Noon)	July 6	July 7	July 8	July 9	July 10 Special hotel rates end	

## Low Convention Hotel Rates Available June 24 to July 10, 2009!

The Parc 55 Hotel, located in the city’s financial district and next to the Union Square shopping area and theater districts, will serve as the convention site. Handy public transportation is available. The Convention Committee has secured room rates of \$119 per night for single/double, plus \$20 each for the 3rd and 4th person (plus room tax). Kids under 12 are free.



F-Line at Fishermans Wharf

## Some DignityUSA Early History Highlights

- Dignity’s Fourth Biennial Convention is held in San Diego, August 31 to September 3, 1979, at the U.S. Grant Hotel
  - o Theme: Challenge of the Decade: Dignity’s 10th Anniversary
  - o Major Speakers: John Boswell, Ph.D.; Rev. Ellen Barrett; Margaret "Midge" Costanza; Father John McNeill, SJ
  - o Registrations: :580; Membership: 5,000, Chapters: 90
- On October 14, 1979, the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights includes a contingent of 350 Dignity members representing 27 chapters
- In February, 1980, Dignity opens a permanent national office at 1500 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite #11, Washington, DC.

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*Some DignityUSA Early History Highlights*  
Continued from page 7

- On April 28, 1980, President Carter invites representatives from 21 lesbian and gay religious groups to the White House to meet with his religious liaison, Rev. Robert L. Maddox, Jr. Representing Dignity are national officers Frank Scheuren, Elinor Crocker and Joseph Totten as well as *Insight Magazine* managing editor Gabriel Lanci.
- On July 28, 1980, Frank Scheuren, President, (accompanied by Region IX Director Chris Patterson and Co-Chairs of Dignity/ San Francisco Jim Ehrhart and Ken Kamman) meets with Archbishop John R. Quinn, Archbishop of San Francisco and President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), to discuss Dignity and NCCB dialogue.
- Dignity's Fifth Biennial Convention is held in Philadelphia, September 4-7, 1981, at the Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel
  - Theme: We Are All One in the Spirit
  - Major Speakers: Ginny Apuzzo, Gregory Baum, John McNeill, SJ
  - Registrations: 650; Membership: 3,900, Chapters: 88, Chapters-in-Formation 11

Further details on our website at  
<http://www.dignityusa.org/archives/history.html>

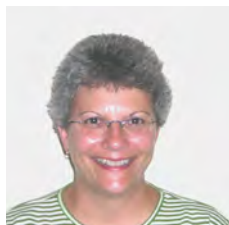
## Reflections of Past Leaders

Reflections of Past Leaders

### What Brought Me to Dignity

By Mary Louise Cervone, DignityUSA President, 1999-2002; Vice-President, 1997-99

In August 1989, I found a place where I would no longer struggle with my identity as a lesbian woman — a Roman Catholic lesbian woman. That place offered me sanctuary, renewed faith in a loving God, and hope for a better Church. It was all so exciting, back then, and those couple of hours on Sunday nights seemed so insulated from the rest of the world and so safe from the spirit of hate that the “BIG” church laid at our feet.



Perhaps it was seeing the picture of Kevin Calegari (past-President of DignityUSA) nailing “Return To Sender” to the door of the CDF (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) in Vatican City, Rome. Perhaps it was having a national leader in our chapter. Perhaps it was a burning in my soul. Perhaps it was all this, and so much more, that brought me to a place where I came to realize that Dignity/Philadelphia was an integral supporting player in a much larger act of faithful witness. So too, were each of us.

Of the many memories and symbols of witness to deep and abiding faith in a God whose love is not limited by an incomplete understanding of theology and Gospel, one of my most memorable is of the journey Dignity members embraced to “Re-Imagine Dignity.” A process that endeavored to include all, it was an enormous undertaking for members, chapters and national leaders. And we did it! DignityUSA today is so much stronger for the courageous steps taken during that two year process.

We marched in Washington, witnessed in Denver, and protested in Rome. There were conferences, chapter anniversaries, meetings, banners, conventions, and more. We spoke with a voice of faithful dissent across this country.

Thinking about what Dignity offers now, I think it offers what it has always offered. That is, a place where the whisper in one heart joins the whisper in all hearts until the glorious shout of ALL ARE WELCOME thunders from our smallest chapter and throughout our national organization all the way to Rome!

#### Editor's Notes:

- On June 25, 1992, the General Secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) sends to all U.S. Bishops a document from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) entitled “*Some Considerations Concerning the Catholic Response to Legislative Proposals on the Non-Discrimination of Homosexual Persons.*” The document urges bishops to oppose gay/lesbian civil rights laws in certain instances such as placement of children for adoption or foster care, employment of teachers or athletic coaches, or military recruitment.

- On July 25, 1992, DignityUSA President, Kevin Calegari travels to Rome for a private meeting with Msgr. Michael Swalina, American assistant to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the CDF. During this meeting, he presents Msgr. Swalina with a five-page letter addressed to Cardinal Ratzinger detailing DignityUSA's objections to the CDF document.

- On July 29, 1992, Kevin Calegari holds a press conference at St. Peter's in Rome during which he places the CDF document in an envelope marked “Return to Sender” and pins it to the door of the Palazzo del Sant' Uffizio, headquarters of the CDF.



## Musings and Ruminations of a Bystander

By Ann Marie Szpakowska, Dignity/Buffalo NY  
Winner of DignityUSA's scholarship to Inclusive Ministries Conference.

**Decide in my favor, God,  
Plead my case against the hateful,  
Defend me from liars and thugs.  
Why have you forgotten me?  
Why am I bent double**

**Under the weight of enemies? Psalm 43:1-2**

Synchronicity is the only explanation I can submit in viewing several seemingly unrelated events that led me to the 2008 Joint Conference entitled “**Inclusive Ministry and Renewal in a Complex Age**,” July 18-20, 2008, in Boston. Foremost was the scholarship Dignity/USA offered and my decision to apply while believing I had only “a snowball chance...”. Then was my parish’s Bible Study group’s decision to delve into “The Letter to the Hebrews”—an early Christian Sermon on Christ, the High Priest, combining theological reflection on the Old Testament with an exhortation to preserve Hope and Faith. In the meantime, I was reading *Circles of Dignity: Community Wisdom and Theological Reflection* by James R. Cochrane. The book shows how marginalized people (South African indigenous groups) read the Bible and how “local wisdom” or “incipient theologies” offer new perspectives on power, tradition, and God, as well as notions of ministry, church and religion’s role in the public sphere. And last but not least was the invitation to attend the Ordination of Roman Catholic Women to the Diaconate and Priesthood.

I found the conference participants amazing. Full of openness and light, they engaged each other in unguarded conversations from the get go. Whatever their disputes with the Catholic Church hierarchy — celibacy, married priests, women priests, etc. — no energy was given to anger or despondency. It was also heartening to meet Christians from other denominations as well as Asian- and African-American Catholics, although given the surnames of the 280+ attendees, Irish-American Catholics won.

Matthew Fox’s keynote address was the highlight for me. For one to whom *Original Blessing, A Spirituality named Compassion, Sins of the Spirit, Blessings of the Flesh, One River, Many Wells* — all books by Matthew Fox — and other writings and lectures are signposts on my spiritual journey and my theological self-education. I now look forward to his soon to be published *The Hidden Spirituality of Men: Ten Metaphors to Awaken the Sacred Masculine*. But more than his reflection on current religious, spiritual, and ministerial concerns in the Age of Chaos, it was his meeting with Thich Nhat Hanh soon after the Vatican’s critique of Eastern Religious Thoughts and Practices that touched me deeply. His recounting of this world renowned Buddhist Monk’s wounding by a church hierarchy that claims to be followers and friends of the lowly Jesus was heartbreaking. Yet it allowed for the opportunity for them to recognize each other as companions and reminded me of Thich

Nhat Hanh’s words, “With kind spiritual friends, I am on the path to goodness.”

The afternoon keynote address “Tomb to Womb: Birthing New Communities of Faith,” was presented by Jane Via and Jean Marchant, Roman Catholic Womanpriests. They invited us to re-vision ministries. They called us to human wholeness in authenticity, mutuality, and empathy. They encouraged us to be aware of the entrapments of patriarchy, empire, and clericalism. They suggested we read and reread feminist “and womanist” theologians to facilitate awareness.

We had the obligatory choosing of workshops (4 from 30). I attended “*Ministries in the Margins: Prospects and Possibilities*” by sociologist Kathleen Kautzer, “*Addressing Racism within an Inclusive Church*” by Myra Brown of Spiritus Christi Church, Rochester N.Y., Dignity’s panel “*All are Welcome ...Really?*” and “*Archetypes of Our Lives: Christian, Shaman, Prophet, Priest*” by Madam Priest Mary-Lynne Monroe. Dignity’s contribution was reported in an article “*Reflections on Inclusive Ministries Conference*” by Lourdes Rodriguez-Nogues, found in DignityUSA’s newsletter *Dateline* for August 2008. If interested in archetypes, check out Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estes’ NCR (*National Catholic Reporter*) blog entitled *The Power of the Exiled Woman: The handless maiden*. Her preface reads, “Week after week, month after month, we see women and the men who support them, chastised and silenced, threatened and spiritually menaced. I have a story for your goodness of soul.”

The Conference ended with a Spirit-filled Liturgical Celebration. No, not your average Catholic Parish Liturgy to be sure. It was resplendent with music, movement and dance, poetry and an overabundance of bread. Peter Hickman, Presiding Bishop of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, broke open the Word taken from Matthew 13:24-30 — the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds (darnels). Yes, God’s Spirit has a “wicked” sense of humor. With a hierarchy that believes it can distinguish weeds from wheat (gay seminarians), blessed are the Faithful who are willing to await the harvest.

**I will approach the altar of God,  
God, my highest joy,  
And praise you with the harp,  
God, my God. Psalm 43:4**

Blessed and dismissed, many of us met again at the Church of the Covenant to witness the ordinations of women. Advised by Boston’s Cardinal Sean O’Malley that we were “self-excommunicated,” I couldn’t imagine what to expect and was pleasantly surprised when we walked in on the fellowship of a huge Korean Christian congregation. Since we were unable to set-up for the reception, we scouted two pews and settled in the sweltering heat. Some of us guarded those pews while others made themselves useful passing out the still warm programs.

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*Musings and Ruminations of a Bystander*  
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With the church filled to capacity, the Procession of Candidates, Priests, Ministers and Bishops covered the aisle from front to back. The four candidates were presented to the Bishops — either by a spouse, child, friend or their community — then escorted down the aisle, and laid prostrate on the cold stone floor, while the assembly chanted the Litany of Saints. We named them all — Old Testament figures, New Testament Leaders, Canonized Saints, and Contemporary Martyrs and Prophets. Now hands were laid and the Deacon received her stole and the Book of the Gospels, then presented to the community gathered. Next the Bishops, families, and communities laid hands on the candidates for priesthood, who received their vestments and had their hands anointed. They were presented to us amidst thunderous applause. The Liturgy of the Eucharist was followed by the reception.

What was different? No bishop miters and croziers and all the attending pomp and circumstance. Family, friends and communities were an integral part of the ceremony. The newly ordained Priests were presented with wine glasses — not chalices purchased by families who took out mortgages on their homes. No one was scrambling for “Father’s” first blessing. How could I not reflect that these ordinations mirrored more closely the experience of the house churches around the Mediterranean in the formative early centuries of Christian faith communities.

**Why are you sad, my heart?  
 Why do you grieve?  
 Wait for the Lord,  
 I will yet praise God, my Savior. Psalm 43:5**

As expected, the Ordinations made news. Before I could get home, Sister Louise Lears was excommunicated by her Bishop and fired from her job for attending. A friend of mine, at a retreat of Sisters of Mercy and Associates, helped formulate a letter to Sister Louise’s Superiors expressing their support and prayers. Knowing I was in Boston, another friend called to ask if I had been ordained. But nothing prepared me for my pastor’s reaction. Telling him to let me know if our Bishop made any inquiries about me, he asked if I had “outed” myself. I said, “No, but I had attended a Women’s Ordination,” at which point he rushed out of the room covering his ears and saying, “I didn’t hear that! I don’t want to hear that! Don’t tell me that!” As we now know, further repercussions are still unfolding. I once believed I would never see the ordinations of Roman Catholic women in my lifetime. I was wrong.

Like Jeremiah, I once cried out:  
**“How long, O Lord, how long?”**  
 And I heard the reply:  
**“Not long!”**  
**“For I have called Servant-Leaders  
 from among my People,  
 Women and Men, Old and Young,  
 Married and Single,  
 Gay, Straight, Bisexual, Transgendered,  
 From every nation, hue, and tongue,  
 to serve in Word and Sacrament.”**

Again, I cried out:  
**“How long, O Lord, how long?”**  
 And I heard God say:  
**“Not long!”**  
**“For I’ll raise Prophets  
 (Passion-Bearers)  
 To speak Truth to Power  
 About Justice with Peace.”**

A third time I cried out:  
**“How long, O lord, how long?”**  
 And I heard the Spirit say:  
**“For I’ve revealed to Mystics my spark  
 In planets, moons and stars.  
 In polar bear and pansy.  
 Even in Humankind.”**

Lastly, I cried out:  
**“How long, O Lord, how long?”**  
 and I heard Jesus say:  
**“Not long!”**  
**“For as long as you did it to the least,  
 You did it to me.  
 This is my Body.  
 This is my Blood.  
 Do this in remembrance of me.”**

At its 1999 Los Angeles Convention, Dignity grappled with ordaining our own. Wisely we decided to let each chapter determine who would preside at the liturgies thus allowing each small faith community to discern what is possible and best in its own unique circumstances. With the ordination of women, we have another resource. What impact it will have remains to be seen. It may be a task of our upcoming convention to unpack it. Until then, as Vatican pronouncements get to you, remind yourselves —

**“Blind ones see that things are wrong.  
 Deaf ones hear symphonic changes.  
 Boss Man hears the Peoples' song,  
 coats his lies and rearranges.  
 Am I clear...?”**  
*(Adapted from Roberta Flack’s “Go Up Moses”)*





**Call to Action  
National Conference**

**“Our Earth, Our Church,  
Ourselves: Embrace the  
Beloved Community”**

**November 7-9, 2008  
Midwest Airlines Center  
Milwaukee, WI**

## DignityUSA offers Group Discount to Call To Action Conference

Once again, DignityUSA will be offering a Group Registration for members who will attend the national Call To Action conference in Milwaukee, WI November 7-9, 2008. Through this program, members are able to register at a rate of \$160 per person, instead of at the regular rate of \$205.

This always nourishing and enlivening conference will provide:

- keynote speeches by Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Robert Bullard, and Bishop Remi De Roo,
- three different sessions offered by Dignity members,
- a workshop presented by lesbian parents who have chosen to remain in their parish,
- a pre-conference session by New Ways Ministry,
- social support and caucuses for LGBT Catholics and allies.

To download a conference registration form and schedule, visit <http://www.cta-usa.org/conference2008/intro.html>.

Complete the form and send it with your payment made payable to Call to Action with a note on the check or money order “CTA Conference 2008” to:

CTA Group Discount  
DignityUSA  
P.O. Box 376  
Medford, MA 02155

Registrations must be received at the national office by September 27, 2008

## HRC SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT



The much anticipated *For the Bible Tells Me So: A Study Guide and Advocacy Training Curriculum* by Rev. Chris Glaser is now available through HRC’s Religion and Faith Program **online and free of charge** [www.hrc.org/issues/religion/10750.htm](http://www.hrc.org/issues/religion/10750.htm)

Created to accompany the award-winning, life changing film *For the Bible Tells Me So*, this user-friendly guide will enable anyone to facilitate a moving conversation about the Bible, our congregations and LGBT people. It will empower you and participants to take these conversations to the next level to create communities that move beyond acceptance to advocacy.

The guide is divided into three parts: (1) a discussion of the feelings the film evokes about our families and our faith; (2) a conversation about the Bible—both how it is often used to discriminate against LGBT people and how it is a source of empowerment and liberation; (3) a step-by-step training to move people of faith and congregations from acceptance to public advocacy.

Normally, the cost to show videos in public settings (including congregations) is quite high. However, through HRC you can now purchase the DVD and an accompanying educational license for only \$50.00 **as long as you agree to use the study guide**. This bargain rate is only available through HRC Store.\*

<http://hrccornerstore.myimagefirst.com/store/product.asp?sku=11798L>

\*Please note: It is illegal to show this film in any public setting (including a congregation) without an educational license.

Further details <http://www.hrc.org/issues/religion/10750.htm>

# Marriage Equality: Ongoing Public Debate

## From the Editor

By Bill Welch

Just as I was about to release this publication, I received word of actions taken by the Arizona Catholic Conference on September 4, 2008, regarding this issue.

In November 2008, Arizona, California, and Florida face constitutional amendments prohibiting marriage equality for same-sex couples. The Arizona, California and Florida Catholic Conferences, their bishops and dioceses, endorse, advocate and support the ballot propositions.

Both Arizona and Florida already have statutes that forbid same-sex marriage. On May 15, 2008, the California Supreme Court ruled that the denial of marriage to same-sex partners was unconstitutional and instructed that California law and the Family Code be changed to allow marriage for all Californians — opposite-gender and same-gender couples — with the same and equal rights and obligations.

### November 2008 Ballot Measures

**Arizona Prop. 102:** as of August 30, 2008. “Only a union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized in this state.”

**California Prop. 8:** ELIMINATES RIGHT OF SAME-SEX COUPLES TO MARRY.

Changes California Constitution to eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry. Provides that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California. Fiscal Impact: Over next few years, potential revenue loss, mainly sales taxes, totaling in the several tens of millions of dollars, to state and local governments. In the long run, likely little fiscal impact on state and local governments.

**Florida Amendment 2:** The expected Florida ballot language — “Inasmuch as a marriage is the legal union of only one man and one woman as husband and wife, no other legal union that is treated as marriage or the substantial equivalent thereof shall be valid or recognized.” (Note: Would also ban domestic partner benefits for unmarried couples.)

### Arizona, California and Florida Catholic Conference Actions

In addition to advocating and promoting the passage of Proposition 102, Proposition 8, or Amendment 2 in their respective states via diverse media and content on their respective Internet websites:

The **Arizona Catholic Conference (ACC)** issued a news release and pastoral statement encouraging a YES Vote in support of Proposition 102. In defense of their position **ACC** says, “We believe Proposition 102 is in alignment with our deeply held moral beliefs regarding marriage. We believe that without constitutional protection, Arizona’s present law on marriage could be changed — to the detriment of society — either by court action or by legislative action. In effect, without constitutional protection, the legal definition of marriage as we understand it today in Arizona is subject to redefinition.”

The **California Catholic Conference (CCC)** has prepared at least two brochures intended for inclusion in local parish bulletins. They have been endorsed by all California Catholic bishops and their diocesan offices. One particular reference claims, “A YES vote on Proposition 8 DOES NOT: Take away any rights or benefits from gay or lesbian domestic partners. *Under California’s domestic partners law (Family Code 297.5) they have the rights and benefits identical to those of spouses.*”

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- This is misleading and untrue. Contrary to CCC documents or information on their website, Proposition 8 distinctly says **ELIMINATES RIGHT OF SAME-SEX COUPLES TO MARRY**.

- Since June 15, 2008, California Marriage does not distinguish between opposite-sex or same-sex couples. All have the same rights and obligations under California Law and the Family Code.

- California domestic partnerships do not provide equality to marriage, for example, California registered domestic partners do not receive any of the more than 1,100 rights and benefits married couples receive under federal law. Domestic partners also continue to have less security than married couples when they travel or move outside of California because their relationship is not recognized equally in other states. Nor do they have transportable rights in issues such as out-of-state employment, travel, relocation, emergency treatment and/or hospitalization and life-dependent decision-making by the spousal partner.

With respect to the **Florida Catholic Conference (FCC)**, Bart Coyle, of Dignity/Sarasota (FL), tells us that the Conference and its bishops contributed \$150,000 in support of Amendment 2.

On their websites, and as resource material to defend their support of Prop. 8 in California and Amendment 2 in Florida, the CCC and FCC make reference to "*Gay Marriage — Locating the Question*," by H. Richard McCord, executive director of the Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Mr. McCord states: "The Catholic position begins not with sacramental theology, moral teachings and biblical passages. It begins with what can be observed in human nature and behavior and what we can conclude using our reason. This is the natural law position.

"You don't need religious faith to see that marriage is a unique relationship between a man and a woman.

"What defines this relationship is the fact that it is a partnership based on sexual complementarity. That makes possible the fulfillment of the two co-equal purposes of marriage: mutual love between the spouses and the procreation of children. No other human relationship, no matter how loving or caring or generative it might be, can make this claim or deliver on it."

I do not intend to get into any dissertation on Natural Law or Code of Canon Law. I offer the following rebuttal:

- Neither California civil law or Family Code, nor Arizona or Florida civil law, require procreation of children as either a condition or proof of civil marriage.

- In the animal kingdom, therefore Nature and part of natural law, homosexual behavior has been observed among 1,500 species and in 500 of those it is well documented.

## Saving and Protecting Marriage

Saving and protecting marriage and the family is a valid concern. Denying access to marriage to same-gender couples is not the solution.

The failure rate of first-time marriages in the United States is quite high. It is true of civil marriages and those entered into in religious settings. It is not a new phenomenon.

In recent years, there has been a significant drop in marriages per year with more couples opting for co-habitation to see how things go over time before committing to any formal vows or civil marriage. Some forego formal vows or civil marriage altogether after assessing the high failure rate of marriage.

I am not going into any dissertation on the matter of marriage failure, nor even set forth a list of pros and cons.

Perhaps the time is long overdue for political, religious and civic leaders, as well as allied organizations, to address the failure rate and take action to educate the masses on those things which make for a solid, functional, productive and growth-oriented marital relationship and family environment, and those things which contribute to failure. Such actions would be exponentially more productive than proposing measures to limit marriage to same-gender couples.

Perhaps partner equality and mutuality in same-gender life-partnerships lend to more stability and productive relationships which would be a boon to marriage.

## What You Can Do

- On Arizona, California and Florida Election Day in November 2008, Vote Against Proposition 102, Proposition 8 or Amendment 2 as it applies in your state. Get your family, loved ones, friends and associates in those states to do the same.

- In California, write your local bishop expressing your displeasure of his and all other California bishops' support of Proposition 8, especially since passage would remove civil rights of same-gender couples to marry. Further, make him aware that equating domestic partnerships to marriage is both misleading and not true.

- Advise your pastor, parishioners, neighbors, family, friends, co-workers and associates of the same information.

- You might point up the fact that we are talking about civil marriage, not sacramental or religious marriage.

- Do your best to dispel fears that marriage equality devalues or harms marriage of heterosexual couples and their children. We are talking about equal rights and responsibilities for all married couples and their families — NOT special rights.

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- Same-gender marriage does not invalidate or threaten heterosexual marriage, nor the families built upon or stemming from such marriages.

- Same-gender marriage does not bestow special rights to the couple.

- As it now stands, California Marriage does not distinguish between opposite-gender or same-gender couples. All have the same rights and obligations under California Law and the Family Code.

- Get involved in person and financially to help educate the populace, especially the electorate.

- In Arizona, contact

- <http://www.votenoprop102.com/web/index.php>

- In California, contact California Equality

- <http://www.eqca.org>.

- In Florida, contact <http://www.voteno2.com> or

- <http://www.fairnessforallfamilies.org>