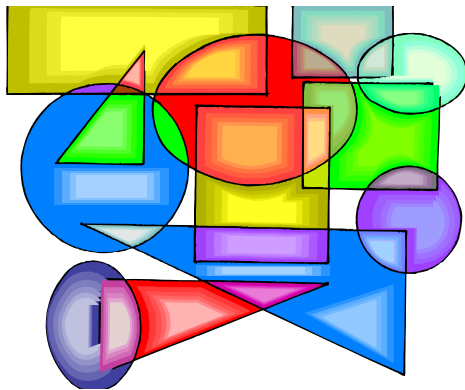




Dateline

Monthly News Bulletin
Volume 16, No. 8
August 2007

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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10% Discount with Pre-Registration for DignityUSA 40th Anniversary Convention

DignityUSA will hold its 40th Anniversary Convention in San Francisco, Thursday to Sunday, July 2-5, 2009.

Pre-Register before August 31, 2007 and receive a 10% discount off the regular registration price.

Your \$100 deposit will be applied toward the regular registration price (still in development) less 10%.

Go to our national website <http://www.dignityusa.org> and click on the link to [Download Convention Pre-Registration Form in MS Word Format](#) under the section DignityUSA 40th Anniversary Convention: July 2009. Please complete the form and remit, with \$100 deposit by check, money order, or with credit card information, to San Francisco 2009, DignityUSA, PO Box 15373, Washington, DC 20003-0373.

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. Convention rates are available June 24 to July 10, 2009.

San Francisco Gay Pride Celebration will be Saturday and Sunday, June 27-28, 2009. July 4th Celebrations will be at several locations. Convention and other events will be announced at a later date.

AIRLINES: Domestic and international flights serve San Francisco International (SFO) and Oakland International (OAK) Airports. Low-cost airlines such as JetBlue and Ted serve SFO; JetBlue and Southwest serve OAK.

BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) trains provide service from both airports to the Powell Street (San Francisco) Station, a block or less from the PARC 55 Convention Hotel.



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DignityUSA Labor Day Weekend Fundraisers

The DignityUSA Fundraising Team asks members of DignityUSA to open your homes during this Labor Day weekend — Saturday to Monday, September 1-3, 2007 — to host a fundraiser for DignityUSA. Make it a BBQ, cocktail party, brunch, picnic or potluck. Or, let the whole local chapter and friends get together at a park or lake.

We're looking for at least 50 hosts and/or hostesses to invite 10 or more people and ask them for a contribution to attend. If the average gift is \$20, we could raise more than \$10,000 to support the work of DignityUSA.

Numerous people, who attended the membership meeting at the recent DignityUSA Convention 2007 in Austin, enthusiastically endorsed this idea. We hope many of you will help to organize one of these parties in your local community.

If successful, we would like to turn this into an annual event, but we will need a name. Ideas are welcome. Send them our way to the contact email or phone numbers listed at the bottom of this article.

At the recent Convention, many of DignityUSA's major donors made pledges to support hiring the best talent for our office staff. We have identified and had preliminary discussions with an experienced and well-qualified candidate for the position of Executive Director. Peggy Burns will assume the role of Office Manager on October 1, 2007.

Now we return to the rest of our members - those who have already given generously this year and those who have not yet made their gift - to come out and play on Labor Day and help provide the support needed for the day-to-day operating expenses that keep our Voice talking.

We are thrilled that Mark Matson and Lourdes Rodriguez-Nogues have accepted the leadership positions of President and Vice-President respectively.

Let's work this Labor Day weekend, so they can rest easy knowing the membership is 100% behind them and their vision for the future of DignityUSA.

If you can host an event, please call or write Tom McLoughlin at 212-529-6322, Tommac@aol.com or Tom Yates at 301-622-3655, tyates02@comcast.net.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to hearing from you.



National Board of Directors Meeting July 3-4, 2007

The DignityUSA Board of Directors met in Austin, TX on July 3-4, 2007. The meeting began with prayer led by Peggy Burns, Vice-President, and welcoming newly elected directors Ramon Rodriguez and Gene Corpuz. (Although their terms do not begin until October 1, 2007, they participated in the meeting discussions.) Congratulations and thanks were also extended to Marty Grochala, re-elected to another term as director, and to Mark Matson and Lourdes Rodriguez-Nogues, President and Vice-President-elect.

The directors then shared events over the past three months to be celebrated. Some of these are:

- Peter Edwards and Tom Yates have done a great job working in the national office, discovering inconsistencies and straightening procedures.
- Chris Lawrence was thanked for his diligence and hard work addressing some financial issues and establishing new procedures for processing monthly financial statements.
- Pride Appeal letters were mailed and \$3,100 was collected in the first week of returns.
- Sam Sinnett, President, shared a letter from a member thanking DignityUSA for its work and praising the Pride Appeal letter.
- Convention 2009 to be held in San Francisco. Plans are underway.
- Convention 2007 plans and liturgies completed and ready to begin.
- Convention Committee received a letter of welcome from the Bishop of Austin which is published in the convention program book.
- Convention 2007 has received some good press coverage and some press will be attending. Leo Egashira and Jeff Stone working to establish guidelines for the press.
- HTML format for emails from DignityUSA now in 60-day trial.

The directors made the decision prior to this meeting to hire Peggy Burns as the new Office Manager effective October 1, 2007. Although the corporate office will remain in Washington, DC, the operations will move to Boston where Peggy resides. Peggy's organizational skills, as well as her knowledge of and passion for DignityUSA, make this an excellent decision. The board was praised for thinking outside the box and moving operations to the location where the talent resides.

The board spent most of the two days finishing plans and work for the convention and hearing committee reports. Two major decisions resulted from these discussions.

1. The Board decided that the no minimum dues policy was not effective and voted to re-establish national membership dues of \$50 per person annually effective October 1, 2007.

*National Board of Directors Meeting July 3-4, 2007
Continued from page 2*

Editor's Note: Further details will be developed by the national finance committee. It is envisioned that chapter support of \$10 per member paying \$50 or more will be retained.

2. The Board supports the recommendation of Mark Matson and Lourdes Rodriguez-Nogues to hire an experienced and well-qualified candidate for the position of Executive Director. However, to be fiscally responsible, the board asks that we receive pledged commitment from the membership totaling \$100,000 a year for three years to cover wage, benefits and required travel.

The board voted that Chris Lawrence continue as Treasurer and Lewis Tanner to be Secretary for a two-year period as of October 1, 2007.

Rita Wagner was elected to finish out the last year of Lourdes' term as she moves into the Vice-President's role.

Tom Streeper was elected as a director by the board.

A full copy of the minutes of the meeting can be obtained by contacting secretary@dignityusa.org.

DignityUSA National Election Results

DignityUSA is pleased to announce the results of the recent national election.

Mark Matson (Columbus, OH) was elected President and Lourdes Rodriguez-Nogues (Boston, MA) as Vice-President.

The directors elected to the national board are: Gene Corpuz (Honolulu, HI), Marty Grochala (Chicago, IL), and Ramon Rodriguez (Chicago, IL). All five will begin their two-year terms on October 1, 2007.

Also beginning two-year terms on October 1, 2007, are board-elected directors Lewis Tanner (New York, NY) as Secretary, Chris Lawrence (Boston, MA) as Treasurer, and Tom Streeper (Philadelphia, PA).

Sam Sinnett (St. Louis, MO) was board-elected to remain on the board as Past President.

Rita Wagner (Indianapolis, IN) was board-elected to complete the final year of Lourdes' term as a member-elected director.

DignityUSA thanks all the nominees for volunteering and welcomes the new directors to national leadership.

DignityUSA would like to thank the Nominations Committee (Marianne Duddy-Burke, chair, Gregg Haboush, Peggy Hayes, Janet O'Day, Dick Young, and board liaison, Mario Torrigino) and the Election Committee (Tom Yates, chair and board liaison, Tom Bower, Russell Nevin, and Carl Spier) for their time and work for our organization.

A Mother's Experience

By Rita Wagner

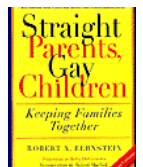
Twelve years ago my daughter Gretchen invited me to come to Purdue University for dinner to celebrate my birthday. She was taking summer classes and working at Whirlpool so she remained on campus. The next semester she would begin her senior year.

Following dinner she gave me my gift, a book titled, "Straight Parents; Gay Children." I couldn't believe my eyes. After an uncomfortable period of silence, I asked her if she were trying to tell me something. As she nodded, I asked her if she were sure to which she responded, "Mom, are you sure you're heterosexual?" Since I had never questioned my sexuality, I was certain she had and now understood what had been puzzling her for some time.

I hugged her, told her that I loved her and it didn't change my feelings for her. The only thing different was I had more information about her now. She asked me to prepare her dad because she wanted to talk to him soon. She wanted to talk to her brothers individually.

When our children "come out of the closet," we as parents go in. For several years I remained silent on the subject but did read a number of books to try to understand and accept. I was dealing with the death of a dream I had of my daughter marrying some day.

Late in October seven years ago, my husband and I traveled to Boulder Creek, California to have an early Christmas visit with our daughter, since she would not have enough vacation days at her place of employment to be able to come home. I selected a simple cross with Chanel set diamonds on a gold chain for Gretchen's gift. She said she really appreciated the thought and the gift but that she could not accept the cross because it was not about who she was any more. My eyes filled with tears; I could hardly speak. I could see the disappointment in my husband's eyes. Feeling rejected by our church, Gretchen felt her only recourse was to leave the church.



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A Mother's Experience
Continued from page 3

This was the beginning of a journey by my husband and me to learn as much as we could about homosexuality. My husband saw an announcement in the newspaper of a meeting being held where clergy from local churches were invited to speak on their particular denomination's vision of gays in their church. During the Q & A period of the meeting, my husband asked, "When you don't use the pulpit to preach against homophobia, aren't you contributing to it?"

Those attending immediately applauded bringing my husband to tears. The panel of clergy agreed that they were remiss and, yes maybe they were part of the problem! Once the meeting adjourned, a number of people gathered around my husband and invited us to join PFLAG (Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays). On the Sunday we attended the meeting, we met a gay couple who invited us to join them that same evening in the celebration of Mass hosted by a local chapter of DignityUSA.

Over the next seven years, we joined Dignity/Indianapolis, Call to Action, Fortunate Families, New Ways Ministry, Catholic Parents' Network By Grace, and Indiana Equality. My husband and I were co-presidents of our local chapter of PFLAG for one term and I am currently serving on the National Board of Directors of DignityUSA.

Like many other conscientious and concerned Catholics, we feel called to be voices that question and challenge.

When members of faith communities gather and sing the song, "All Are Welcome," do we really mean that? Does the church not understand the need to have a ministry that includes all people regardless of their sexual orientation? My husband and I pray and work towards the day when all are welcomed as full and equal members in the sacramental, spiritual and social life of our Church and local communities.

Dignity-Integrity/Rochester (NY) Pride Events and Press Release

By Michael J. Nicosia, Chaplain

Worship was a featured part of Rochester's 2007 Summer of Pride. Episcopal Bishop Jack McKelvey preached and former Integrity president Rev. Michael Hopkins presided at a pre-parade Eucharist, then we took to the streets of pride.

R News television coverage of the parade used only footage of the faith communities and organizations that marched, and led with a shot of the Interfaith Advocates' banner carried by the members of Dignity-Integrity/Rochester. Interfaith Advocates, co-chaired by Dignity-Integrity Chaplain Michael Nicosia, also planned and sponsored an ecumenical Communion Service before the picnic which drew over 100 worshippers. That afternoon's Interfaith Service of Awareness/Healing/Empowerment of Victims of Hate Crimes and Abuse ministered to 30 persons in the service and many more by our visible witness. Praise God that the work is getting done in spite of some church leaders.

That same weekend (July 14-15, 2007), the diocesan newspaper, the *Catholic Courier*, was inserted into every parish bulletin in the diocese. The newspaper's cover story told about the New York State Catholic bishops calling on all Roman Catholics to contact our state Assembly chastising those who voted in support of Equal Marriage legislation and thanking those who voted against it. Dignity-Integrity/Rochester released an official press release, which reads in part:

"...This is yet another example of our religious leaders failing to listen to the lived faith experiences of the people. Purporting to preserve some objective moral order, they close their ears to the stories that would challenge their comfortable certitude and would deepen their understanding of the human person fully considered. Desiring to advance the common good, they close their eyes to the moral obligation to uphold the rights of a marginalized minority — the very ones whom Jesus always included, even when it created scandal and brought condemnation from the establishment.

"We, the Community Council of Dignity-Integrity/Rochester, agree that 'as citizens, Catholics should always make their voices heard to their elected representatives,' and we call upon all those who are faithful to the social gospel to counter this organized effort to negate the source of our pride: our dignity as human persons and the integrity of our loving commitments and our families."

For the complete text, visit <http://www.dignityusa.org/news/2007/070717rochester.html>.

Dignity-Integrity/Rochester (NY) is a small faith community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexed persons, our families and friends, worshipping in the Roman Catholic and Episcopal traditions since 1975, who boldly proclaim our truth: that without our participation the Good News rings hollow. Info-line 585-234-5092; on the Internet at www.di-rochester.org.

Happy Anniversary & Congratulations to:

Nassau, NY - 28 years
San Antonio, TX - 31 years
Denver, CO - 33 years
Metro New Jersey - 33 years

Brian McNeill, President, Dignity/Twin Cities (MN) Receives Award

Reprinted with permission from "The Wild Reed – Thoughts and reflections from a gay, Catholic perspective."
<http://thewildreed.blogspot.com/>

On Friday, July 13, 2007, Brian McNeill, President, Dignity/Twin Cities (MN) and Rainbow Sash Alliance USA Coordinator, was presented the Bishop Gumbleton Peace and Justice Award by the 27-year-old grassroots, independent Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities (CPCSM) of Minneapolis, MN.

Brian's award reads as follows:

"Through your tireless commitment to the marginalized and your willingness to serve so fully and faithfully as a called and committed theologian, prophet, minister, and friend, you have enriched the local church in powerful and liberating ways that strengthen all of our efforts in working for the full civil and ecclesial rights of all GLBT persons and for greater justice and peace in our world. In particular, we honor your leadership within Dignity Twin Cities and the Rainbow Sash Alliance USA.

"With our deepest respect, friendship, and gratitude for outstanding religious and spiritual leadership on behalf of GLBT persons, families, and faith communities - presented by the Board of Directors of the Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities at their Annual Meeting, June 28, 2007."

FINANCIAL MATTERS

DignityUSA Needs Your Support

As we approach the final two months of DignityUSA's fiscal year (which ends September 30, 2007), we find ourselves \$40,000 away from our fundraising goal for general operating support. There are still some 700 members who have not renewed their annual gift. If each of those members made a gift of \$50, we would be within reach of our goal.

DignityUSA operates on a very tight budget and cannot grow or supply programs, service chapters or make its voice heard without your support. Please visit www.dignityusa.org and make your gift today!



Bob Lohrentz's Bequest

DignityUSA is honored to have been the recipient of a substantial estate gift from long-time member Bob Lohrentz who passed away in January 2007. This gift will have a substantial impact on DignityUSA's ability to develop education and advocacy programs that promote our mission. Bob worked many years to bring about equality and justice for GLBT people in the Catholic Church and society. Through his generous estate gift, he will help that work to continue.

Please keep Bob, his family members and his dear friends at Dignity/Denver in your prayers.

For information about naming DignityUSA in your will, contact Board Member Mario Torrigino, MarioDignity@aol.com.

David A. Goldsmith's Bequest

DignityUSA was recently informed that it was named a significant beneficiary in the will of David Goldsmith of Bucyrus, Ohio. David was a long-time member of Dignity/Columbus (OH), traveling an hour and fifteen minutes each way to join the community for liturgy and social gatherings. David died after a lengthy bout with pancreatic cancer. He was alienated from his former wife and children after coming out and Dignity had become his "family," assisting him during his illness. David faithfully served his parish church in multiple roles, as well as Pax Christi and the Sisters of St. Joseph in nearby Tiffin, Ohio. His parish priest noted that David challenged the Church to live up to its better virtues of kindness and welcome for all. Representatives of the Sisters of St. Joseph and Dignity/Columbus helped to eulogize David at his funeral Mass, which was attended largely by people from the three communities that David had served.

DignityUSA Bequest Policy Adopted

During its July 2007 Meeting in Austin, Texas, the DignityUSA Board of Directors approved a motion to place all bequests above \$25,000 into an endowment fund, unless differently specified by the donor.

Financial Matters
Continued from page 5

Pension Protection Act of 2006

By Teri Myers, DignityUSA Board Member

DignityUSA, the most prominent voice of GLBT Catholics and supporters, has become more visible in promoting dialogue for change. Partly, it's due to more effective cost control and budgeting for projects. But mostly, it's due to many generous donors nationwide, who see the progress and want to invest in it.

Keeping this trend going is a priority. DignityUSA will consider seeking grants from foundations to fund new, special projects, in addition to traditional appeals. On this, a new opportunity has come up for retirees age 70½ and older, who wish to contribute to our work, and remain comfortable financially.

This option, available for fiscal year 2007, allows retirees to transfer up to \$100,000, tax-free, from their IRAs to an eligible charity. This can be done even if deductions aren't itemized. As a certain amount is required to be taken out each year, giving it to DignityUSA can make it tax-free. The money must be transferred directly from the IRA to be eligible, and acknowledgement of the gift would be needed. Anything transferred/donated in the fiscal year, to a qualifying organization like DignityUSA, is eligible for this tax break. Funds so transferred would also count in determining if the IRA owner meets the minimum withdrawal/distribution rule.

This special tax break was an addendum to the Pension Protection Act, made in December 2006. For more information, please check this link: <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=164997,00.html>.

This opportunity can give retirees more chance to actively see the fruits of their investments, in an organization committed to vision of equality. Let's all join in, and do our part to carry this vision.

DignityUSA Publications Get New Look

By Bill Welch, Editor

Effective with this issue of *Dateline* and the forthcoming edition of *QV: Quarterly Voice of DignityUSA*, these monthly and quarterly publications will sport a new look.

In addition to some additional graphics, the most noticeable change will be the text layout in single-column rather than the prior double-column format. This change will be more reader-friendly for on-screen viewing and help eliminate the additional screen scrolling in the two-column format and still provide a clean, reader-friendly viewing of hard copy output.

Longtime readers of our publications will no doubt have noticed that the amount of content per issue is greater than the past which flows to more pages.

The new look will retain the recent modifications for a continuous text flow of each article rather than the skipping and jumping to different pages for the continuation of articles and stories found in most printed newspapers and magazines.

I have recently discovered file compression utilities in my desktop publishing and Adobe Acrobat software which allow me to provide you smaller *pdf* (portable document format) output files. To take full advantage of these files, which are uploaded to our DignityUSA website, you will need either a recent version of Adobe Acrobat or Adobe Reader installed on your computer. Either will allow you to open the file and read the publication on-screen and/or output it to your printer. FREE downloads of Adobe Reader are available for your computer at www.adobe.com and via our website www.dignityusa.org.

As DignityUSA joins so many other organizations using the Internet and electronic publishing for distributing their news and publications, I trust you will find the new format more user- and reader-friendly and get more enjoyment out of reading the content on-screen or in printed hard copy output.

We continue our mission and goal to Amplify the Voice of DignityUSA and its members.

Please address your comments and communications to me at DUSAEditor@comcast.net. Thanks.



WE GET LETTERS

What a great newsletter! I find the *Breath of the Spirit* very helpful to my daily readings. Also all the news! God willing the church will move more but it will be after my time I feel. My old Novice Master used to say "the mills of God grind exceedingly small" and obviously slow, slow and slower, just as the Vatican moves. So what was pushed for two or three generations ago is now just being looked at. Most of us won't last that long so we are the forerunners of a better future for all.

Warmest regards,

Pat Adamson

Ascent (GLBT Catholics), Dunedin, New Zealand

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We Get Letters

Continued from page 6

July 11, 2007

Dear Editor:

Thank you for the July Dateline. I wanted to give you information, which you might want to include in the next Dateline. At DignityUSA's recent convention in Austin, several speakers mentioned that Dignity sometimes does not publicize its successes.

I would like to mention one success in particular. The award-winning documentary on the life of Fr. Mychal Judge, "Saint of 9/11," would not have been possible without Dignity. Among other honors, this film won two awards for best documentary at the 2006 GLBT Film Festival in Philadelphia, the largest such festival east of the Mississippi. Shortly thereafter, Fr. James Martin in the Jesuit magazine, *America*, reviewed the film, describing it as the best film on the priesthood in years. Finally, earlier this year, the film was shown in Ft. Lauderdale, at two sold-out performances.

The origin of this film was the remarkable video which Brendan Fay, a longtime member of Dignity/New York (NY), made about Father Judge, a gay priest, chaplain of the New York City Fire Department, and the one of the first victims of the terrorist attack in 2001. Brendan's film was shown at DignityUSA's Las Vegas convention in 2003. After seeing it at the convention, I happened to tell a friend about how impressed I was about it. My friend, Malcolm Lazin, the founder and director of Equality Forum, based in Philadelphia, then contacted Brendan Fay about the possibility of raising money to make a good documentary even better. Thanks to all involved — Brendan, Dignity, and Malcolm — the film, "Saint of 9/11," was made and is now readily available for all to see.

I want to thank Dignity for helping to make this outstanding film possible.

Dick O'Malley

Dignity/Philadelphia

215-880-1459

Editor's Note: "Saint of 9/11," the true story of Father Mychal Judge, narrated by Sir Ian McKellen, is available on DVD at TLA Video www.tlavidео.com, Amazon.com www.amazon.com and other locations.

ACTIONS BY DIGNITYUSA-ALLIED PROGRESSIVE CATHOLIC ORGANIZATIONS

Call to Action's Press Release on the Vatican and Ecumenical Relations

Call to Action (CTA) has asked individuals to write letters to the editor making the point that the Vatican does not speak for all Catholics. See <http://www.cta-usa.org/pdf/OneChurchStatement.pdf>

Catholics for An End to the War in Iraq

Three Catholic social justice organizations, **Pax Christi, Network** and **Catholics United** have cosponsored Catholics for an End to the War in Iraq. To sign-on to this petition, which will be delivered to our elected officials in Washington, please visit: <http://www.catholicsforanend.org/>.

Catholic Organizations for Renewal Release Statement "Sowing Division in a Divided World"

On July 20, 2007, Catholic Organizations for Renewal (COR) released a statement "Sowing Division in a Divided World" criticizing Pope Benedict XVI's announcements regarding the use of the Latin Mass of 1962 and his approval of a document reasserting the primacy of the Roman Catholic Church.

DignityUSA is one of the thirteen **COR** coalition organizations which signed the released statement.

The full statement will be found at <http://www.dignityusa.org/news/2007/070720cor.html>.

Announcements

Retreat for Lesbian, Bisexual, and Questioning (LBQ) Women of Faith

The Sisters of Loretto Community will host "Called to Become: Reflections on Sexuality and Faith," a retreat for lesbian, bisexual, and questioning (LBQ) women of faith. Retreatants will reflect and pray on "becoming" as a lesbian/bisexual/questioning person of faith and connect with people with similar interests.

The event will be held at the Sisters of Loretto Motherhouse, in Nerinx, KY, outside of Louisville, Saturday, September 15, 2007, 9:00 a.m. through Sunday, September 16, 2007, 1:00 p.m. The cost is \$40/night per person (negotiable based on ability to pay).

Facilitators: Amy Stenson, Anna Koop, Molly Menster, and Tina Sio.
For more information please contact Molly Menster (563) 564-9944.

Sister Jeannine Gramick to Lead GLBT-Friendly Pilgrimage

Sr. Jeannine Gramick, SL, will be leading a GLBT-friendly pilgrimage to Sicily, Naples and Rome, March 4-14, 2008.

Further information is available on the New Ways Ministry web site at www.newwaysministry.org/2007PilgrimageBrochure.pdf or phone Sister Jeannine at (301) 864-3604, or e-mail gramick@juno.com.

USPS Zip+4 Address Code

Earlier this year we announced an address change for DignityUSA's National Office upon the acquisition of a post office box.

One of the last four digits of the Zip+4 code information we received was incorrect.

The official USPS Zip+4 address code is shown in the mailing address below.

**DignityUSA
PO Box 15373
Washington, DC 20003-0373**

Please make a note of it and make any necessary corrections in your address book.

Thank you for your cooperation.