



# Dateline

Monthly News Bulletin

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*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.*

## Racking Up the Miles

Matthew Gallagher, **DignityUSA** Executive Director, had some extensive travels in October and November 2004. One of his goals is to meet **DignityUSA** members and support them in their efforts to move our mission ahead. Cities visited and activities included:

- **Minneapolis, MN.** Visited **Dignity/Twin Cities** chapter to celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and met with the board of directors to discuss membership growth and issues of dues.
- **Honolulu, HI.** Matthew joined **Dignity/Honolulu** as they attended liturgy at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace and handed out Solidarity Sunday material. Matthew and members of the chapter had a good conversation with the Rector of the Cathedral, who welcomed **Dignity** to the liturgy. Later that evening, Matthew joined the chapter for their weekly liturgy and preached. He met with leaders of the chapter to discuss membership issues and spoke at the Honolulu **PFLAG** (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) monthly meeting.
- **Los Angeles, CA.** Visited **Dignity/Los Angeles** and attended the **DignityUSA** Regional Membership Meeting hosted by the chapter. About 30 members from various chapters were in attendance. Matthew joined **DignityUSA** Secretary Paula Lavalee and Past President Pat McAron in honoring the chapter at its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.
- **Houston, TX.** Matthew spoke at Rice University for the GLBT student group. He met with some students during a lunch time presentation and was the speaker for an evening event for about 30 students and faculty.
- **Salt Lake City, UT.** Matthew spoke at the **National PFLAG Conference**, as well as helped staff the **DignityUSA** information booth. **DignityUSA** President Sam Sinnett joined Matthew to distribute literature and recruit new members. Matthew, Sam and the **PFLAG** leadership all agreed that Salt Lake City was not the easiest place to be regarding GLBT people. Our cost for attending the conference was reduced by a generous gift from Daniel Bender of **Dignity/Chicago**.
- **Madison, WI.** Matthew met with members of **Dignity/Madison** and spoke at a very successful fund raising event. Our thanks to those who planned and attended this event.
- **Allentown, PA.** Matthew spoke at the local congregation of Metropolitan Community Church (**MCC**) on sexual ethics. Their educational committee found **DignityUSA**'s Sexual Ethics Document on our Internet web site. They asked Matthew to lead them in a discussion of what it means to be sexual and Christian. The two hour session was very fulfilling for both Matthew and his audience.

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- **Milwaukee, WI.** Matthew represented **DignityUSA** at the **Catholic Organizations for Renewal (COR)** meeting. During the meeting, the group discussed their concerns about the churches in the Archdiocese of Boston being closed and how some parishioners were 'camping out' to keep possession. Matthew and Sam Sinnett both reminded the group of **Dignity**'s struggle when we were thrown off church property and how we realized the true definition of Church is not the building, but the people of God. Matthew and Sam were told how impressed people are with **Dignity** and how we serve as a true witness of staying faithful in the face of such strong adversity. Following the **COR** meeting, Matthew participated in the National Call to Action (**CTA**) Conference where he participated on a panel discussion with **CORPUS** (the national association for an inclusive priesthood) on the topic of the diversity of the priesthood. (See article on the **CTA** Conference for more details.)

- **Washington, DC.** Matthew returned to **DignityUSA**'s national office and began the process of interviewing and hiring a new Office Administrator.

Matthew will continue his plan to visit chapters in 2005. Please send invitations to [ExecutiveDirector@dignityusa.org](mailto:ExecutiveDirector@dignityusa.org) so that he can get you on his calendar before it fills up.

### ATTENTION!

If you wish to receive a report of your contributions to **DignityUSA** for 2004, please contact the national office at [info@dignityusa.org](mailto:info@dignityusa.org).

**Happy Anniversary  
& Congratulations to:**  
**New Hampshire (NH) – 10 Years**  
**Mid-Hudson (NY)\*\* - 17 Years**  
**Tulsa (OK)\*\* - 21 Years**  
**Boston (MA) - 32 Years**  
**\*\*Dignity/Integrity Chapter**

The firm of Martin & Wall is providing CPA services for **DignityUSA**. For information about their services, visit [www.martinwallcpa.com](http://www.martinwallcpa.com)

## Call to Action 2004 National Conference

**Call to Action's (CTA)** 2004 National Conference was held Friday to Sunday, November 5 - 7, 2004, in Milwaukee, WI. The theme was, "*Sex, Science, and the Sacred: Embracing Divine Mystery.*" 3,000 persons gathered creating "the church they want to be." Presentations clustered around the themes of spirituality, church reform, and peace and justice. The conference liturgy and a variety of daily prayers were often highlights for many in attendance.

**DignityUSA** played an active role by hosting a reception on Friday evening for 200 **DignityUSA** family and friends; a GLBT caucus on Saturday evening with 40 in attendance — where many ideas were presented on how progressive religious people can become more visible, and staffing an information booth in the exhibit hall all days of the convention.

**DignityUSA** volunteers signed up over 130 new **DignityUSA** members, as well as providing general information and details for **DignityUSA Convention 2005** to be held July 7 — 10, 2005 in Philadelphia, PA.

A special note of thanks to all those wonderful volunteers who staffed the information booth and to **Dignity/Chicago** for underwriting half the booth's cost.

**DignityUSA** members and friends played other significant roles during the convention.

- CTA's co-presidents (one of whom is Paul Scarbrough, current member of **DignityUSA** and former president of **Dignity/New Haven**) gave a welcoming address.

- Brendan Fey presented his story "*Whom God Has Called Together: Same Sex Marriage.*"

- Daniel Helminiak presented "*Sex, Science and the Sacred: Sexual=Personal=Spiritual Integration*"

- Patricia Beattie Jung presented "*A Call to Wed.*"

On Saturday evening there was a screening of the documentary: "*In Good Conscience: Sr. Jeannine Gramick's Journey of Faith.*"

For the last plenary address, "*The Church Beneath the Church,*" Clarissa Pinkola Estes provided a moving testimony of her life's journey with Mary of Magdala.

Next to the convention vendor area was *Eyes Wide Open: An Exhibition on the Human Cost of the Iraq War*, sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee, a major focus of the event space.

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## More New Members for DignityUSA

In addition to the 130 persons signed up to become members of **DignityUSA** at the **Call to Action (CTA) 2004 Conference** the first weekend of November 2004, another 131 joined the following weekend during the **Creating Change Conference**, an annual event sponsored by the **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF)**.

**DignityUSA** president, Sam Sinnett, worked with just one other current **DignityUSA** member to promote our organization at this event. Among the "talking points," that truly impressed many of the conference participants, included the fact that we are one of the oldest gay & lesbian national organizations — even older than **NGLTF**.

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Sam noted that we started as a group of local chapters for LGBT Catholics. Now, in addition to our local chapters, we are a national membership and national advocacy organization open to all, regardless of religious background or sexual orientation. We do education and support and provide healing for those coming out as GLBT and Catholic. Sam remarked that as the foremost GLBT Catholic organization in our country, the biggest media providers call on **DignityUSA** to be the counterbalance to inaccurate or pastorally insensitive statements about our GLBT community from the Pope, offices of the Vatican, members of the Catholic Church hierarchy, and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Our sincere thanks to Sam and so many others who tell people about the importance of strengthening the Voice of **DignityUSA**. It's so easy to invite others to join us. All you have to do is ask. Our ministry is vital. The more we have to support us in this good work, the better.

DignityUSA and the  
DignityUSA Convention 2005 Committee  
are proud to announce the  
scheduled appearance of

**Bishop Gene Robinson**

First Openly Gay Consecrated Episcopal Bishop

**Chrissy Gephardt**

Political Activist

**Jason and deMarco**

Openly gay Christian "Spirit Pop" duo and life partners

**DignityUSA Convention 2005**

**July 7<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> 2005**

**Loews Hotel**

**Downtown Philadelphia, PA**

Visit [www.dignityusa.org/convention05](http://www.dignityusa.org/convention05) for more  
announcements on additional speakers and  
workshop leaders.

Registration packets will be available January 2005.  
For further information contact [Conv2005@dignityusa.org](mailto:Conv2005@dignityusa.org).

*Wishing You and Yours  
A Holy and Joyous Christmastide.  
May Your Days Be Filled With Blessings,  
Love and Hope.*

### **DignityUSA Vision Statement**

DignityUSA envisions and works for a time when  
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Catholics are affirmed  
and experience dignity through the integration of their spirituality  
with their sexuality and, as beloved persons of God, participate  
fully in all aspects of life within the Church and Society.