



# Dateline

Monthly News Bulletin

Volume 16, No. 2

<http://www.dignityusa.org>

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February 2007

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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.*

## National Board of Directors Meets

The DignityUSA Board of Directors held its quarterly meeting via teleconference on Saturday, January 6, 2007. The meeting was called to order at 12:05 PM and began with a prayer led by Mark Matson. A report was given by Mario Torrigino, Tom Yates and Sam Sinnett on the progress for the move of the national office from Massachusetts Avenue to the Dignity Center. The final agreement has been worked out and signed by the president of Dignity/Washington and the DignityUSA president. Michael Seneco, office manager, has prepared the office for the move. A post office box has been secured. Tom and Mario will be in Washington, DC on Friday, January 12th, to help with the move. Members of Dignity/Washington will assist. Work needs to be done on changing the office address on all materials.

The board went over the reports presented by the various committees with committee chairs answering questions and explaining the work they have completed or are in process of completing.

Gary Preuss, Convention 2007 co-chair, joined the teleconference to update the board on the progress of plans for the convention in Austin in July. The convention registration form and brochure are being worked on and will be in the mail for delivery to members in March 2007. An online version will be available by the end of January. Many great speakers will be available for workshops. Liturgy and entertainment plans are in progress.

The directors had a long discussion on what type of leadership we want and need and what direction we want the staff to take. We looked at the questions:

- Do we want/need an executive director or a development director?
- What are the critical activities that need to be addressed, and who should be addressing them?
- What critical skills do we want in the person we hire?
- What do we want in a president/vice president?
- Who in the organization can lead us?
- Are there jobs and responsibilities that can be done by members?
- Where do we find a president and vice president?

In the end we decided that we need to focus on finding a person with the skill set of a development director. The nominations committee is working on finding candidates for president and vice-president. (Any member interested, or who has suggestions of candidates, please contact [secretary@dignityusa.org](mailto:secretary@dignityusa.org).)

## Dignity/Dayton OH to Host DignityUSA Membership Meeting Feb 4, 2007

Dignity/Dayton (Ohio) will host a DignityUSA national membership meeting on Sunday, February 4, 2007 at Christ Episcopal Church, 20 West First St., corner of First and Ludlow Streets, in Downtown Dayton, Ohio.

10:00 AM Mass, with Dignity/Dayton's Living Beatitudes Community, will be celebrated in the Undercroft Worship Space of the church

11:00 AM - 12:00 Noon Brunch provided for all participants

12:30 PM - 3:00 PM DignityUSA national membership meeting

Please RSVP to Bob Butts at [rbutts3@yahoo.com](mailto:rbutts3@yahoo.com) or by phone at 937-640-2468 so that planners for lunch and refreshments will have an accurate count of how many to plan for.

Further information [rbutts3@yahoo.com](mailto:rbutts3@yahoo.com)

### Travel Directions (from east or west)

I-70 to I-75 South

I-75 South to First St. Exit. Ramp goes one way -- east

Continue east on First St. To Ludlow St.

Church is located at corner of First and Ludlow Streets

Free parking on all downtown streets

Lost? Call Bob 937-603-6564

### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

DignityUSA's national office is now co-located with Dignity/Washington (DC) at Dignity Center, Washington, DC.

New mailing address:

DignityUSA

P.O. Box 15373

Washington, DC 20003-5373

New Fax number:

202-543-5511

Unchanged voice phone numbers:

202-861-0017

800-877-8797

Unchanged email address:

[Info@dignityusa.org](mailto:Info@dignityusa.org)

## REMINDER

With the release of Draft 1 of “DignityUSA Letter on Pastoral Care of LGBT People 2006,” dated November 12, 2006, DignityUSA announced the beginning of a process to solicit feedback and comments on the draft.

We encourage anyone interested in these guidelines to review and provide comments to [info@DignityUSA.org](mailto:info@DignityUSA.org) (with Pastoral Care as subject) or in writing to our national office at DignityUSA, PO Box 15373, Washington DC, 20003-5373, before May 15, 2007.

Copy of the guidelines are in *QuarterlyVoice* 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr 2006, and at [www.dignityusa.org/pastoral/pastoral-1.html](http://www.dignityusa.org/pastoral/pastoral-1.html).

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## Fund Raiser and Membership Drive Indianapolis, IN, Feb 16, 2007

Rita and Marvin Wagner and Gary Kaylor will host a fund raiser and membership drive, to benefit DignityUSA, at the Southside Democratic Club, in historic Fountain Square, 1135 Shelby St., Indianapolis, IN, on Friday, February 16, 2007, from 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM. Enter the building through the “green door.”

There is a well lit parking lot across the street at no charge.

The event will be a wine tasting party with cheese and other refreshments.

A nominal fee of \$15 per person, \$25 per couple, is requested.

Members, friends and families are invited. Invitations are being extended to the Indianapolis Chapter of Call to Action (CTA).

National Call to Action and DignityUSA are allies. Both are members of Catholic Organizations for Renewal.

For reservations, please call 317-882-8222 or 317-695-8051.

Save the Dates

**DignityUSA's  
18th Biennial Convention  
Austin, Texas  
Thu-Sun, July 5-9, 2007**

**Happy Anniversary  
& Congratulations to:**  
**Austin (TX) - 28 years**  
**Dallas (TX) - 32 years**  
**San Francisco, (CA) - 34 years**

## Mite-y Returns at Dignity/Boston

Here's an example of how to raise money fast and easy for DignityUSA.

You seasoned members — Remember when we were kids with the Mite boxes during Lent?

For the uninitiated — Just before, or at the beginning of Lent, the kids in Catholic schools, and perhaps parishioners in some Catholic parishes, were given “mite boxes” for use in collecting coins, change and other monies during Lent, then turned in at Easter, or shortly thereafter, for distribution to some designated charity or missionary service. When you gave up candy, ice cream and sweets during Lent, you put what you would have paid for them into the “mite box” as a form of penance or prayer in preparation for Easter and being mindful of Christ's passion and death.

Fast forward to 2006 and Dignity/Boston.

Chapter members were offered small boxes to save their change for three weeks, all proceeds going to DignityUSA. Any spare change they had — nickels, dimes, quarters or pennies, was collected. Sure, dollars too.

About 40 boxes were given out and 25 were turned in. Amounts ranged from \$10 to \$75. The Mite-y collection totaled \$475. It turned out to be a good way for folks to give, whether their pockets are deep or not.

Want to try it? It's easy.

Pass out the boxes, give a time frame, collect the boxes and roll the money. Even rolling the money can be fun. Invite a few people over for dinner, clean up, and spread out the money. Rolling the money is done quickly.

A trip to the bank, write out a check payable to Dignity Inc. and mail to DignityUSA.

Anyone can do it.

If you want more information, please contact Peggy Burns by email at [vicepresident@dignityusa.org](mailto:vicepresident@dignityusa.org).

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## DignityUSA Convention 2007 in Austin, Texas

Join us for Dignity USA's 18<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention, to be held in Austin-tacious style July 5-8, 2007.

Dignity USA's 38 years will be celebrated with renewed growth at the Hyatt Regency Hotel along the banks of the Colorado River in the Texas Hill Country in Austin.

### Overview

Our theme, “*A Morning Star Awakens Us as Prophets,*” draws from scripture and the lived experience of our lives, encouraging us to grow and be a light for the world.

The list of speakers is thrilling and enticing, with a range of speakers and topics from the controversial and political to those aimed at deepening our spiritual connections on earth and afterwards.

- We are thrilled to have **Bishop John Shelby Spong** provide both a keynote speech and a breakout workshop.

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- **David Trissel** will share the otherworldly communication with the Divine allowing you to stretch your experiences made possible through serious meditation. He will include unusual experiences of his deeply meditative life.
- There will be discussion on the increasing handshakes between science and spirit in “*Hymn of the Cosmos*.”
- **George Lucien Gregoire**, author of *Murder in the Vatican* and friend of Albino Luciani (who became Pope John Paul I), will discuss the life and possibilities of why the short reign of Pope John Paul I.
- We welcome back **Daniel Helminiak**, **Sister Jeannine Gramick**, and **John McNeill**, each of whom has made their lives a gift.
- Interactive spiritual sessions include **Sister Stella DeVenuta’s** Mandalas in “*Epiphany in July*,” **Kathy Ann Gianino’s** Dance Workshop, and **Linda Pieczynski’s** passion for reform movements in the Catholic Church.
- **Mark Jordan** will touch on saints and rites, including same gender marriages.
- **Chris Connors** will share her music and story of rebirth in her spiritual journey as a Catholic lesbian.
- Keeping you on the edge, **Lynn Bauman** will discuss the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas and Wisdom Christianity.
- There will be a special workshop just for the Dignity children.
- We will have our engaging and uplifting convention worship, liturgies, development activities, and music.
- The **Austin Baptist Women** (yes that’s how they spell it), a gay group recognized with its own official day in Austin, will help get the ball rolling on Thursday night with comedy and parody.
- On Saturday, following the Dinner Banquet, Max-n-Kirk Productions will get you moving with “GLBT Anthems over the past 50 Years,” a revival of gay and lesbian favorites spanning DignityUSA’s history and beyond.

### Convention Hotel

The Hyatt Regency Austin is a 17-story tower located on the Texas Colorado River, right across the river from the gleaming skyscrapers of downtown Austin.

- It is centrally located in the city, fronted by a hike and bike trail and on major bus routes.
- It includes a fitness center and pool, a business center, concierge, and riverside patio.
- All rooms are in the Hyatt Regency tradition, with doors overlooking a central interior courtyard.
- Guest rooms, meeting areas, and public areas have high-speed wired and wireless Broadband Internet connections.
- For details on the hotel, please visit

<http://austin.hyatt.com>.

### Room Rates

DignityUSA has negotiated a special room rate for the convention at the Hyatt Regency Austin.

- Room rates are \$120 per night (plus state and local taxes).

- You may have up to **four** people in a room at this rate.
- Make reservations directly **by phone**, by calling 800-233-1234 or 512-477-1234.
- Mention our group name “DignityUSA 2007 Convention” to receive the discounted room rate.
- Please make your reservations early, as the cut-off date for reserving the convention rate is **June 11, 2007**.
- Reservation requests after the cut-off date will be based on availability at the hotel’s prevailing room rates.
- You will **not** receive the convention room rate via the hotel’s web site.

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## Fortunate Families Letter to U.S. Bishops

### Reprinted with Permission

On January 12, 2007, Fortunate Families sent a letter and copy of its November newsletter to each active U.S. Diocesan bishop and selected retired bishops.

The letter, cosigned by over 255 people from 33 states and the District of Columbia, urges the bishops to act on their own advice and to dialogue with Catholic gay and lesbian people, their family members, and the pastoral ministers who work with them.

Fortunate Families are Catholic Families fostering respect, friendship and justice for their lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender loved ones.

### Letter to U.S. Bishops

January 12, 2007

Dear [Bishop]

We are Catholic parents of a gay son. That fact has made us a fortunate family, and we’d like you to understand why.

When our son told us that he is gay, all we were certain of was that we and God loved him as he is. In the past 14 years, we have had the privilege to meet, listen to, and talk with many Catholic parents of lesbian daughters and gay sons who know that “God’s love is revealed” in their children, so profoundly declared in *Always our Children*.

We write to you on behalf of such Catholic parents, their gay and lesbian children, and the compassionate people who minister with us all. Your recent document, *Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care*, has caused much distress. In particular, it troubles us that there was no dialogue with people who are the subject of these guidelines—a peculiar omission for a pastoral document. Perhaps that is why parents do not recognize their gay sons and lesbian daughters in the document.

We find much hope, however, in the document’s concluding call for dialogue:

*[I]t is important that Church ministers listen to the experiences, needs, and hopes of the persons with a homosexual inclination to whom and with whom they minister. Dialogue provides an exchange of information, and also communicates a respect for the innate dignity of other persons and a respect for their consciences.*

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The undersigned wholeheartedly concur and welcome this invitation and, in response, we respectfully ask that you consider the following opportunities.

First, take a few minutes to read at least part of the enclosed *Fortunate Families*\* newsletter. It contains excerpts of letters written to various bishops expressing concerns about the document before it was voted on. Other letters and comments were sent to *Fortunate Families* in reaction to the approved document. The feelings expressed by these concerned voices help explain why this document was not seen to be "positive, pastoral, and welcoming," its intent according to Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli.

(\* *Fortunate Families* is a lay ministry with Catholic parents of lesbian daughters and gay sons. We have enclosed a brochure for your information.)

More importantly, please act on your own call for dialogue with people directly affected by this document. We know the depth of faith that nurtures their lives and their dedication to the Church will touch your heart (despite their grief about the way the Church treats lesbian and gay persons.) Through our affiliations and contacts throughout the United States (the undersigned are a small sample), we would be happy to help you find dialogue partners in your diocese—a dialogue that, in your words, "facilitates an ongoing, interior conversion for all parties truly engaged in the exchange." Please call or email us if you would like our assistance.

Whether you accept our offer or not, we pray that you will seek out and engage in honest and open dialogue with lesbian and gay Catholics, their families, and those who minister with them. We know you will be impressed and encouraged by their commitment to the Lumen Gentium goal that "all Christians in whatever state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity, and this holiness is conducive to a more human way of living."

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen and Casey Lopata,  
Co-Founders, *Fortunate Families*

On behalf of the undersigned and others who continue to sign on through the *Fortunate Families* website.

Encl: *Fortunate Families* brochure and November 2006 newsletter

*Editor's Notes:*

Referenced November 2006 Newsletter is available at  
<http://www.fortunatefamilies.com/Newsletters/Nov2006Newsletter.pdf>

Also see:

<http://www.fortunatefamilies.com/Bishopsletter/bishopsletter.htm>

*Fortunate Families* website:

<http://www.fortunatefamilies.com>

## Priest Quits in Gay Protest

By 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff  
Reprinted with Permission

Posted: January 17, 2007 - 5:00 pm ET

(Phoenix, Arizona) A Roman Catholic priest who frequently clashed with Phoenix Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted over the role of gays in the church has left the priesthood.

The Rev. Chris Carpenter, a leader in the Phoenix Diocese's ministry to gay and lesbian Catholics, had been on a yearlong leave of absence.

His disagreements with Olmsted date back to 2004 when he and eight other priests signed a letter called the Phoenix Declaration, which affirmed the right of LGBT people to fully participate in the Catholic Church.

Olmsted ordered the priests to remove their signatures. Carpenter becomes the seventh signatory to the document to leave the priesthood.

"The enforcement of church doctrine and liturgical practice are taking a step backward to the pre-Vatican II era," Carpenter said in a statement.

Carpenter, as well as being a priest was also known as "Father Flick," for his regular film reviews in *The Catholic Sun*, the diocese newspaper.

He said that "From now on, I won't formally identify myself as a priest or as 'Father' or dress as one."

His statement said that he [took] a job as a non-denominational interfaith chaplain with a hospice in Long Beach, California where he has resided for the past year.

Olmsted is one of a number of American bishops who take a strict interpretation of a June 2004 statement from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops titled "Catholics in Political Life."

It condemns people who don't follow Catholic teaching but leaves decisions about speeches and receipt of communion to individual bishops.

In 2005 he instructed pastors in the state not to invite to their parishes any public figure who disagrees with basic church teachings on abortion, gay marriage or other issues.

Last year Olmsted was one of the leaders in a bid to amend the state constitution to ban same-sex marriage, civil unions and domestic partner benefits. The measure failed at the polls in November.

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[www.365gay.com](http://www.365gay.com)

*Editor's Note: In case you missed it while reading the article, Chris Carpenter is the seventh to leave the priesthood of the eight priests who signed a letter in 2004 referred to as the Phoenix Declaration.*

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### NEW WAYS MINISTRY SYMPOSIUM

New Ways Ministry will sponsor a symposium entitled "Outward Signs: Lesbian/Gay Catholics in a Sacramental Church," March 16-18, 2007, in Minneapolis, MN. The symposium will highlight the essential role the sacraments play in the lives of lesbian/gay Catholics and how we understand ourselves as an inclusive Church.

Presenters in five plenary sessions will examine major sacramental themes. Brian McNaught, a prominent gay activist, will address Baptism and the Experience of Coming Out. Sister Margaret Farley, RSM, will speak about Matrimony and Same-Sex Relationships. Fr. Richard McBrien, an ecclesiologist and well-known columnist, will analyze Ordination to the Priesthood and Gay Men while Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ, will address Reconciliation, Liberation, and Lesbian/Gay People. There will also be a panel of bishops, including Archbishop Francis Hurley, Bishop Leroy Matthisen, and Bishop Joseph Sullivan, to speak about Healing our Wounds and Building a Eucharistic Community.

A variety of individual focus sessions will occur twice during the weekend. Among the focus session speakers are Michael Bayly and Julie Madden on gay/lesbian parish ministry; Sharon Casey, OP, on lesbian nuns; Fran Ferder, FSPA, on psychology; Christine Gudorf on intersex and transgendered persons; Diana Hayes on homophobia; Luke Timothy Johnson on Scripture; Anthony Kall, OFM Conv, on gay men in priesthood and religious life; Brenda Kirby on US Catholic attitudes toward homosexuality; Daniel Maguire on conscience; and Gregory Maguire on gay parenting.

Preceding the opening of the symposium, a special conference day will be held March 16, 9 am - 4 pm, for campus personnel, GLBT young adults, and parents of lesbian daughters or gay sons. James Alison, a theologian from Great Britain, will address the theme "Faith and Coming Out" at the Friday conference day.

Following is a pdf link to the six-page symposium brochure and registration form.  
<http://mysite.verizon.net/~vze43yrc/2007SympBroWEB.pdf>

For more information, contact  
New Ways Ministry,  
4012 29th Street,  
Mt. Rainier, MD 20712,  
[NewWaysM@verizon.net](mailto:NewWaysM@verizon.net),  
301-277-5674,  
[www.NewWaysMinistry.org](http://www.NewWaysMinistry.org).

## HAPPY VALENTINES DAY

*As We Celebrate  
Loving Relationships,  
Let Us Remember  
God's Love  
Is Unconditional  
Everyday*

### Newsworthy Advice

"Annie's Mailbox" (formerly "Ann Landers") is a national syndicated column appearing in numerous publications.

In a column appearing on Saturday, January 20, 2007, a reader complimented "Annie" in the response provided to the mother of a daughter coming back from college saying she was a lesbian.

The writer suggested the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches as a resource for parents in a religious dilemma about homosexuality.

In response "Annie" wrote: "Thank you for the useful resource. We also recommend Dignity ([dignityusa.org](http://dignityusa.org)), 1-800-877-8797, an organization for Catholics with questions about homosexuality."

DignityUSA President, Sam Sinnett, comments, "...this says something very important about DignityUSA's integrity, visibility and long history of advocacy. Out of the dozens of great religiously-based GLBT organizations, Metropolitan Community Church and DignityUSA were the only two chosen for mention in this 'Annie's Mailbox' column."