



# 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.*

## Message from DignityUSA Executive Director

This is a good opportunity to say hello via the *DATELINE* to all DignityUSA members. Perhaps it is my first opportunity to communicate directly with many of you, especially if you were unable to make it to our recent wonderful convention in Philadelphia. Let me say I am delighted to be your Executive Director and look forward to working both with and for you. I sincerely and genuinely say that I work for you and your DignityUSA Board of Directors, whom you elected. So please be sure to stay in touch with me and your national office.

If you belong to one of DignityUSA's local chapters, how are things going for you and your chapter? Do you like the things DignityUSA stands for? Do you like the positions we take? What thoughts do you have on what else we should be doing for you, for your chapter, for our non-chapter members? Please write to me directly at [executivedirector@dignityusa.org](mailto:executivedirector@dignityusa.org) or call me at the office at 202-861-0017 or 1-800-877-8797. I do want to hear from you.

DignityUSA is a membership and volunteer organization. We have 3,848 plus members and just three staff, one of whom is part-time. DignityUSA would be far more effective if you volunteered a couple hours of your time every month to help. We also need your financial support. Please consider giving what you can. We sincerely appreciate whatever support you can give. Our ultimate success relies on the combined effort and support of our members, national board of directors and staff.

Our national board and staff closely monitored the Vatican for the release of the document on admission of gay men to Catholic seminaries and priesthood. After several "leaks and trial balloons," the official release date, of what is now referred to as the Instruction, was 29 November 2005. Publication of the document in a Roman newspaper was about a week earlier.

On November 23, 2005, DignityUSA issued a news release entitled, "DignityUSA Condemns New Vatican Seminary Admissions Instructions: Calls on Seminaries to Welcome Gay Students." A copy of the news release, as well as a copy of the document by the Congregation for Catholic Education entitled, "INSTRUCTION Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with Regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in View of Their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders," will be found at our website [www.dignityusa.org](http://www.dignityusa.org).

*Continues next column*

DignityUSA had already condemned the Vatican directed visitation of Catholic seminaries to check for the incidence of homosexuality, which began this fall. To our knowledge, no U.S. seminaries have yet received evaluation reports following the visitations.

We understand the importance of DignityUSA's voice in working for reform in the Church, clearly one of the most important missions of DignityUSA. We have increased our presence in the media significantly. Many of you have commented that you have seen our statements and quotes by DignityUSA representatives. We know church leaders have seen them too. We are responding directly to Church officials as well. We take advantage of opportunities to be the Voice for LGBT Catholics.

In addition, we are working collaboratively, in many ways. We continue to issue joint chapter and national press releases, including one with our many Dignity California chapters, two press releases with Dignity Canada Dignité and the most recent historic release with Soulforce and UFMCC (United Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches).

We have a real opportunity at DignityUSA to come together to build a dynamic, powerful organization with a strong voice, a growing membership, and dynamic chapters around the country. Our membership is close to doubling in just 14 months. We are developing new, exciting collaborative efforts and strategic plans. DignityUSA is bold, decisive and moving forward!

DignityUSA is also your home, your family, your sisters and brothers in faith, your Church, where God is present in the Eucharist for you, Christ's children. You can find your parish family at your nearest DignityUSA chapter. If one is not nearby, call 202-861-0017 and we will help you start a new chapter.

Hoping you had a blessed Christmas knowing Christ was born for you!

May God Bless You Now and Always,

Debbie Weill  
Your Executive Director  
DignityUSA

### 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.

## American Catholics: Time for a Stonewall Moment

In an Advocate.com ([www.advocate.com](http://www.advocate.com)) online commentary by Dr. Mary E. Hunt, dated December 6, 2005, under the title, "Time for a Catholic Stonewall," Dr. Hunt cites the Vatican's latest assault on its gay congregants and priests which associates being gay with pedophilia and insults the values of American Catholics, and says, "It's time for a Stonewall-sized rebellion in favor of fairness."

"The Stonewall was a gay bar in New York City where, in 1969, patrons resisted arrest during one of the police's regular gay-bashing raids. Rather than acquiesce to the harassment that kept up a neurotic minuet between police and bar patrons, courageous lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people stood up, spoke out, and resisted. They probably surprised even themselves at the power of their own righteous indignation.

"Catholics should respond to the latest Vatican bullying the same way. After decades of the Vatican implementing a system that takes authority away from local communities and presumes to impose its will on Catholics who can think for themselves, it is time for Catholics to stand up, speak out, and resist.

"... ultimately, as Catholics face their Stonewall moment, where the choice to submit means a choice to violate one's conscience, this is what it comes down to: the meaning of the word *catholic*. *Catholic* means all-encompassing, universal, comprehensive. *Catholic* does not mean exclusion from the community on the basis of misinformed or capricious reasoning. This message of universal inclusion was the lesson of the first Stonewall. It is still being learned by society as a whole. The Gospel message of love and justice is reason to hope Catholics will be quicker on the uptake."

*Mary E. Hunt is codirector of the Women's Alliance for Theology Ethics and Ritual (WATER) and a member of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force National Religious Leadership Roundtable.*

NOTE: A complete copy of Mary's article may be found at [www.dignityusa.org/stonewallmoment.html](http://www.dignityusa.org/stonewallmoment.html).

## DignityUSA Website on New Server

The **DignityUSA** website was recently transferred to a new server. With that move, the DignityUSA News email list now has more features. The Dignity discussion lists for Women's Concerns, Bisexual issues and Transgender/Transsexual issues also moved. All list members received an email welcoming them to the new service.

Members can set message format preferences, change email addresses and subscribe/unsubscribe to the lists. You will be able to receive list emails in digest format, or access message archives on the website (Note: the archive feature is subject to the amount of server available disk space, and only available to subscribers).

All existing subscribers have been automatically moved to the new list.

To subscribe to the DignityUSA news list, simply send an empty email message to [dusa-news-request@dignityusa.org](mailto:dusa-news-request@dignityusa.org). Information on all our discussion lists is available at <http://www.dignityusa.org/listserv.html>.

## Happy Anniversary & Congratulations to:

Brooklyn (NY) - 29 years

\* Phoenix (AZ) - 29 years

Palm Springs (CA) - 1 year

\*Dignity/Integrity Chapter

## Recruiting for DignityUSA Finance Committee

**DignityUSA** is reestablishing a Finance Committee to assist the national Board of Directors and office staff. Here is a great opportunity to share your financial knowledge and help **DignityUSA** at the same time.

Some of the tasks performed by the Finance Committee include:

- Review monthly financial report,
- Develop and approve fiscal procedures,
- Assist in preparing the annual budget.

If you are interested in serving, or would like more information about the Finance Committee, please contact the Treasurer, Chris Lawrence, at [treasurer@dignityusa.org](mailto:treasurer@dignityusa.org)

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Each year, the Tiffany Club of New England presents a premier event for the transgender and transsexual community. — First Event. The theme for this year's event is "Many Communities, One Community." The event will be held January 18 - 22, 2006, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Woburn, MA. Participants may select from a variety of workshops, attend a fashion show, or catch up with friends, old and new, in the trans community.

Some workshops this year include a Youth Panel Discussion, a Voice Feminization Workshop, Transitioning at Work, and a Spiritual Workshop.

For the eighth year, **Dignity/Boston** will have an information table at the event.

The Tiffany Club of New England brings together the trans community and their friends. It's intended as a place to learn, celebrate, and get to know other like-minded individuals. The Tiffany Club is located in Waltham, MA, as is the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE).

For more information, or to learn of other events sponsored by either group, visit their websites at <http://www.tcne.org/> and <http://www.ifge.org/>.

*Wishing You and Yours  
God's Bountiful Blessings  
In 2006*