



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.

Through Truth to Freedom, DignityUSA Convention 2005



Why this theme?

There are many truths that are absolute for us as GLBT Catholics.

As members of **DignityUSA**, "We believe that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Catholics in our diversity are members of Christ's mystical body, numbered

among the People of God. We have an inherent dignity because God created us, Christ died for us, and the Holy Spirit sanctified us in Baptism, making us temples of the Spirit, and channels through which God's love becomes visible. Because of this, it is our right, our privilege, and our duty to live the sacramental life of the Church, so that we might become more powerful instruments of God's love working among all people.

"We believe that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons can express their sexuality in a manner that is consonant with Christ's teaching. We believe that we can express our sexuality physically, in a unitive manner that is loving, life-giving, and life-affirming. We believe that all sexuality should be exercised in an ethically responsible and unselfish way."¹

(¹ Opening paragraphs of DignityUSA's Statement of Position & Purpose.)

We advocate justice in our church and society for all, including GLBT persons. We believe the time for our religious freedom is long overdue.

At the **17th DignityUSA Biennial Convention**, to be held in Philadelphia July 7th to 10th, 2005, we celebrate our Catholic traditions through education, social and liturgical programs. Rather than letting others define who we are, we will give voice to our lived truths and lay claim to our identity as equals in God's creation and providence. We hope these programs and events will help us all continue to grow and find the strength to proclaim our truths not only as GLBT Catholics, but also as GLBT people.

Presenters known for work in Church reform

Many of our presenters are well known for their work in Church reform:

- Dugan McGinley presenting gay Catholic Autobiographies.
- Sister Jeannine Gramick in a special conversation and showing her documentary "In Good Conscience: Sister Jeannine Gramick's Journey of Faith."

- Brendan Fay presenting a documentary on the life of long time Catholic activist John McNeill.

• Catholics parents Mary Ellen and Casey Lopata who co-wrote the book "*Fortunate Families; Catholic Parents with Lesbian Daughters and Gay Sons.*"

• Bob McClory one of the founders of **Call to Action (CTA)** discussing his book, "*Faithful Dissenters.*"

• Catholic activist Claire Noonan will discuss outreach to the GLBT Next Generation and lessons learned from the CTA Next Gen Program.

• Representatives of **Catholic Organizations for Renewal (COR)** will hold discussions on how to network with other liberal Catholic groups.

• Catholics activist Brendan Fay showing and discussing his video "*Irish Weddings.*"

DignityUSA member presenters

We are thrilled to have many of our very own **DignityUSA** members presenting workshops and sharing their talents with us to help us all grow as individuals and as GLBT Catholics.

• "When Civil Marriage Comes Calling: The Massachusetts Experience," presented by Boston Chapter members Becky Duddy-Burke, Alice Knowles, Jon Schum, & Michael Sullivan.

• Estate Planning by our very own Mario Torrigino from **Dignity/San Francisco**.

• Marianne and Becky Duddy-Burke of **Dignity/Boston** discussing how having a baby can change your life.

• **DignityUSA** Board member J. Montoya discussing outreach and ministry to GLBTQQ Catholic youth and college age young adults — gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning.

During the Equality Forum, April 25 to May 1, 2005, Philadelphian's and visitors remembered and celebrated the 40th anniversary of the first "gay equality" demonstrations in front of Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. These events, beginning in 1965 and continuing until 1969, helped propel our community to celebrate other historic events such as the Stonewall Riots, and to commemorate national events, such as Gay Pride Month every June.

Other faith denomination presenters and guests

In the spirit of the pioneers of such events, **DignityUSA** is thrilled to include other Christian GLBT people of faith who not only support GLBT Catholics, but through truth to freedom, have found their calling working on behalf of GLBT people on social issues and issues in their own denominations.

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• Bishop V. Gene Robinson, our special guest homilist for our main liturgy on Saturday.

• Jason and deMarco, Christian pop duo and life-partners, perform their hit songs at a special concert on Thursday night and lead a workshop, “Gay, Young, In Love and Spirit-Filled.”

• Phil Hart will tell his story of being defrocked for coming out as a Methodist Minister.

• In “Let’s Watch TV,” Steve Capsuto reviews the history of queer images in American television in this video presentation and discussion.

We are also excited about our other guest presenters who support **DignityUSA** and GLBT Catholics.

• Julie Phillips holds an interactive discussion on addictions.

• Martha Juillerat, co-founder and current director of the **Shower of Stoles Project**, displays stoles of people who were ejected from ministry for being GLBT.

• Rev Truman Brooks presents a workshop on genograms and their effect on our relationships.

• Ric Ben-Sefad and his partner Bill speak on their thoughts regarding interfaith relations.

• Karen Loran speaks about issues to the “T” part of being GLBT.

As we plan this 17th **DignityUSA** family reunion, and celebrate our rights as Catholics, we advocate and pray for the time “when gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender 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.”² This will be our **FREEDOM** and **TRUTH!**

⁽²⁾ From *DignityUSA’s Vision Statement*

For registration and other details, including a downloadable complete program, see www.dignityusa.org/convention05

This year, for the first time, you can register online at the same web page.

Regular registration has been extended to **May 15th**.

Scholarship assistance has been extended to **May 15th**.

For further details, contact us at Conv2005@dignityusa.org.

**Happy Anniversary
& Congratulations to:**
San Fernando Valley (CA) - 9 Years
Northern Virginia (VA) - 13 Years
Madison (WI) - 28 Years *
Dayton (OH) - 30 Years
Detroit (MI) - 31 Years
Philadelphia (PA) - 32 Years
Chicago (IL) - 33 Years
San Diego (CA) 33 Years

* A Dignity/Integrity Chapter

National Board of Directors Meet

The **DignityUSA** National Board of Directors met the weekend of April 1-3, 2005 in Philadelphia. The board members lodged at the convention hotel, the Loews Hotel, and were pleased with the accommodations and service.

The meeting began with welcoming new directors Chris Lawrence (treasurer) and Leo Egashira. The directors then celebrated the work and accomplishments of **DignityUSA** over the past three months including:

• Good press releases and communications true to our mission. Several joint press releases with local chapters.

• Breath of the Spirit Project has received positive feedback. Many new voices are stepping up to share their reflections on the week’s readings.

• Marketing committee has created new postcards advertising **DignityUSA** and the convention. These have been passed out at functions. (Contact the national office 1-800-877-8797 or info@dignityusa.org, if you would like some for distribution.)³

⁽³⁾ Membership and Helminiak “Catholicism, Homosexuality and Dignity” brochures are also available.)

• **Dignity/New York (NY)** had a table at the GLBT Business convention and signed up 39 new members.

• **Dignity/Dayton (OH)** celebrated their 30th anniversary and held their first Triduum.

• First edition of the *Quarterly Voice* was distributed.

• Fundraising committee’s efforts converted 91 non-donors to donors.

• **Dignity/San Diego (CA)** and Pat McArron (immediate past president of **DignityUSA**) did a great job responding to San Diego Bishop Brom’s actions. An article in the *National Catholic Reporter (NCR)* devotes quite a bit of the article to **DignityUSA** and the San Diego chapter, quoting Pat.

• Sam Sinnett appeared on Sirius Radio. **DignityUSA**’s website was mentioned and referenced several times.

• Michael Seneco, our national office administrator is doing an outstanding job.

• We now have an electronic form of our media list, enabling press releases to be broadly distributed.

• Convention 2005 plans are looking good. New record in pre-registrations — (180).

• Hotel contract for Convention 2007 has been signed.

• The executive director search committee reported they received many applications and several strong candidates have emerged. Phone interviews are now being conducted with the in person interviews to be held in mid May. If all goes well, a new executive director will be hired by June 1st.

The next Board of Directors’ meeting will be held July 5-6, 2005, at the convention site in Philadelphia. Any member desiring a copy of the minutes from the meeting can contact the national secretary at secretary@dignityusa.org.

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