



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.

DignityUSA Board Meets

DignityUSA's national board of directors gathered in Washington, DC, October 1-3, 2004, for their quarterly board meeting. The meeting began on Friday night with the introduction of our new directors and a report from our executive director, Matthew Gallagher.

On Saturday and Sunday, Ben Boerkoel led the board members in a series of activities to help us determine our goals for the coming year. We first made a list of our passions. These included being the proactive, countering, prophetic, spiritual Voice for GLBT persons; integrating sexuality and spirituality; being a witness to this integration, and building justice. We discerned that we were best at being the Voice for those who cannot speak.

We then looked at what economically drives our work. We concluded that having a mission, as well as membership belief in the mission, brings in the contributions to the organization to support the mission.

Continuing to work in both small groups and group as a whole, we decided on four goals for this year and the activities needed to attain these goals. They are:

1. Amplify the Voice of **DignityUSA** by increasing membership by 500 by September 2005.
2. Empower the Voice of **DignityUSA** by increasing income by \$15,000 by September 2005
3. Acquire the talent required to fulfill **DignityUSA's** mission and goals.
4. Identify and regularly review the programs required to fulfill **DignityUSA's** mission and goals.

The meeting ended by having each director take responsibility for one or more of the committees dedicated to working on these goals. Each committee is looking for volunteers to help accomplish the work of **DignityUSA**. Our committees are: Fundraising, Marketing, Nominations, Elections, Membership Growth, Membership Meetings, Advocacy, Theology, and Chapter and Membership Services. You will be hearing more about each committee in the future. For now, if you are interested in working with any of the committees, please contact Paula Lavallee at Secretary@dignityusa.org.

The Board of Directors thanks Ben Boerkoel for his great service and effort in organizing us and helping us focus on how to best serve **DignityUSA**. His talents and work are helping **DignityUSA** go from being a good organization to a great one. We are truly grateful for his gifts.

DignityUSA Moves News Group

DignityUSA is in the process of moving the News group from Yahoo onto our own DUSA-News@DignityUSA.org group to eliminate outside advertising and provide you with better communications. We are very excited about this more professional approach to being the Voice for GLBT Catholics and our supporters. All postings will go directly to your e-mail address. They will not be available to read on the web nor in digest form. Many postings are simultaneously posted to our website www.dignityusa.org.

DignityNews / DUSA-News will continue to send you just a few messages each month from the **DignityUSA** leadership. (There is no change to the Dignity Discussion lists which we also sponsor.)

People interested in signing up for the news list should send an email message to: majordomo@dignityusa.org with the words "subscribe dusa-news" in the message body.

For a short time, before we close this Yahoo group, you may receive **DignityNews** messages through both this old group and the new one. Please bear with us during the transition.

We do not anticipate any problems with this transition. Should you experience a problem, please communicate with us at owner-dusa-news@www.dignityusa.org and we will do our best to resolve it.

Thanks for your support!

**Happy Anniversary
& Congratulations to:**
Northeast Pennsylvania (PA) – 26 Years
Suffolk (NY) - 28 Years
Atlanta (GA) - 30 Years
St. Louis (MO) - 30 Years

The firm of Martin & Wall is providing CPA services for DignityUSA. For information about their services, visit www.martinwallcpa.com

NACDLGM Celebrates 10th Anniversary

The National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian and Gay Ministries (NACDLGM) celebrated its 10th Anniversary at its 11th Annual Conference, September 23-26, 2004, in Richmond, Virginia. Attendees numbered 120. Six were part of the fifteen gathered at a Chicago airport hotel in the Summer of 1994 to found the group.

As the original convenor in 1994, Rev. James Schexnayder — now 40 years with the Oakland (CA) Diocese — spoke in a plenary session of the milestones and challenges, the visions and the hopes of the Association over the years. Currently, there are members in 131 parishes and 66 dioceses in the USA and Canada.

Msgr. John Strykowski, of Brooklyn, NY, Executive Director of the Secretariat for Doctrine and Pastoral Practices for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), serves as liaison to NACDLGM. In the same plenary session, he spoke on the Catechism's affirmation that "friendship represents a great good for all. It leads to spiritual communions." (#2347)

Citing Jesus calling his disciples friends at the Last Supper, Strykowski went on to show how Paul cultivated friendships with individuals like Aquila and Priscilla, as well as with communities of faith. A vast literature shows friendship as bringing peace, providing a safe haven for the heart, becoming a guardian of souls, inviting a sharing of burdens, and leading to fruitful virtue. "Hearts Shared is Life Spared."

James Keenan, SJ, of Weston Jesuit School of Theology, summarized the recent reflections of contemporary theologians on relationships within the framework of **Human Nature** (needing love for fullness), **Natural Virtues** (Justice, Fidelity, Integrity, Prudence), **A Cross That Frees** (for empathy and reconciliation), and **Unconditional Love** (that goes beyond resentment by resting in the assurance of God's favor).

Sr. Bernadette Kinniry, RSM, co-founder of SILOAM Ministries, explained how the response of Jesus to the man born blind in John's Gospel ("neither his sin nor his parent's — rather, that the glory of God can be revealed through him") affirms the potential of "objective disorders" becoming channels of God's power via unforeseen virtue.

Fr. Robert Friday, of Catholic University, contrasted the classical biophysical view of Natural Law (all is knowable and nothing changes) with more contemporary theories of Natural Law based on a historically conscious and psychosocial approach (nature is becoming known and everything is dynamic and developmental).

Fr. Kevin O'Neil, CSSR, of Washington Theological Union, explained how to examine and evaluate the range of Church documents on moral behavior. Each document has a level of teaching with a consequent level of assent. How teachings are received depends on the framework within which they are perceived to fall: juridical (magisterial) or communitarian (the sense of the faithful). Dissent, based on real conflicts of conscience ("living by the norm taught will do me more harm than good!"), has been expressed in some instances by bishops' conferences themselves (eg. Belgian bishops critical of Humanae Vitae in 1968).

Richmond (VA) Bishop Emeritus Walter Sullivan presided and preached at the weekend Mass. He received a standing ovation for founding the American Church's first Commission on Sexual Minorities twenty-six years ago.

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The 12th Annual Conference of NACDLGM will be held September 22-25, 2005, in San Jose, California. Information can be found at the website www.nacdlgm.org, by email inquiry to office@nacdlgm.org, or by calling 925-680-8139.

The above summary was prepared by Leo Tibesar, recently chosen and now serving on the **DignityUSA** National Board of Directors, and a conference attendee.

Another Director's Profile

Martin Grochala, of **Dignity/Chicago**, has served on the chapter's board of directors in various capacities for over ten years, including board President, and most recently as Director of Leadership and Advocacy. In this capacity, Marty organized and oversaw the chapter's advocacy efforts and managed its publicity and public relations. He co-chaired the chapter's 25th and 30th anniversary celebrations; serves as a lay minister and lay homilist, and has represented **Dignity/Chicago** in various community activities, including Freedom to Marry Day.

Marty has planned and organized meetings with both Cardinal Francis George and the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin. He has represented **DignityUSA** on local television programs and regularly gives interviews to local and national press on the **DignityUSA** position. He served on the planning committee for the **DignityUSA 2003 Convention in Chicago**.

"**DignityUSA** has been an extraordinary spiritual home for me. It has been a place of healing and of growth. The organization has a vital mission both at the local chapter and national levels. Helping people understand that they can bask in God's love, if they choose, is a wonderful and rewarding gift."

Originally from Des Moines, Iowa, Marty lived in Minneapolis, where he was active in community theater for several years after college. He moved to Chicago in 1988 and joined **Dignity/Chicago** shortly thereafter. He has a B.A. in Theater Arts from St. John's University/College of St. Benedict (1983) and has finished the coursework for a Masters in Arts, Entertainment and Media Management from Columbia College Chicago.

Marty has been a professional fundraiser since 1993, when he joined the development staff at the Goodman Theatre, Chicago's oldest and largest not-for-profit regional theater. In 1997, he took a position as Development Associate with Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund's Midwest Regional Office; returned to the Goodman in late 1999, and this November will take a position as Director of Development for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago.

Marty and his partner of fourteen years, Fred Reuland, recently celebrated their union with a ceremony and reception in Chicago. They were the 15th couple to register their domestic partnership in Cook County.

*God's Peace & Blessings to You and Yours.
May You Enjoy A Blessed, Safe and Joyous
Thanksgiving As We Give Thanks.*

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.