



# 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.*

## Survey Says!

“Survey says!” — a familiar saying from a TV game show, *The Family Feud*. Well, **DignityUSA** is not feuding, but we are saying, “Survey says!”

**DignityUSA** members told the National Board what they thought in 164 online survey forms via the internet and 129 forms at our **DignityUSA Convention 2005** in Philadelphia.

This article will be the first of a series to appear in the *DATeline* for the next couple of months. The board will share what you, the members, asked of the board, as well as how we hope to fulfill your wishes through our long range plans.

This first article deals with the current state of **DignityUSA** — its accomplishments, strengths and gaps.

Noteworthy accomplishments include:

- Re-visioning **DignityUSA** as a nationally focused organization,
- Membership does not require dues — which has facilitated the increased growth of the national organization,
- Increased fundraising,
- Raising the level of professional management by board and staff, including our strategic planning process,
- Increased advocacy role, for example, joining the amicus brief, *Lawrence vs. Texas*, used in the same-sex marriage ruling in Massachusetts,
- Increased media visibility and communication, especially the “Dignity Calls This Love” campaign and our web site ([www.dignityusa.org](http://www.dignityusa.org)), as evidenced during the period of the death and funeral of Pope John Paul II and selection of Pope Benedict XVI,
- Promulgation of theology statements, such as Patricia Beattie Jung’s, “The Call to Wed: Why Catholics Should Celebrate Same Sex Marriage,”
- Beginning of *Breath of the Spirit* project: Pastoral, Liturgical, Teaching and Social Justice Moments — weekly and special occasion homilies,
- More effective alliances/partnerships with other progressive groups.

We realize the need for further progress to fill some gaps, such as:

- Repeated difficulties with membership/financial management systems,
- Spreading ourselves too thin — we need to prioritize our issues and not spend time on others,
- “Amplifying the Voice” and increasing visibility,
- Meeting challenges regarding mutually beneficial relationship to our national office, membership and local chapters.

*Continues next column*

Reviewing our accomplishments, we realize we have much to be proud of. *A big round of applause for us!* However, the gaps must be filled.

While reviewing **DignityUSA**’s long range plans from a meeting in Chicago, the national board of directors has chosen to incorporate feedback from you, our members, gleaned from the survey results. The following will be added to our strategic plans, hoping to attain these goals between now and 2010. These additional preliminary goals will be further refined and clarified, and then given to the **DignityUSA** Board of Directors to consider for adoption at their October 2005 meeting.

- The national office staff would review the office management systems software in use and come up with improvements or other options. This investigation has begun and will continue until we are pleased with either improvements to the old system or the options available with another company.
- Using information from the “Cultivation of Leadership” survey form, the national board members have a list of people they will call to join committees. Over 300 people responded and are willing to volunteer to assist the board’s work and activities. Committee chair board members are contacting volunteers to apprise them on what is needed in their committee.
- Communication is always an issue. We want to insure everyone knows what is happening, with due consideration given that we don’t repeat ourselves or miss an opportunity to speak out. This area is a priority still undergoing discussion.
- Because we are no longer an organization built upon membership in local chapters, but rather one of members in a national organization, we sometimes forgot our long time members out there in chapters. We began a “No Minimum Dues” policy and realize now that perhaps we didn’t communicate it correctly. A task force has been created to deal with this issue and will report back to the membership. We are also looking into different forms of Membership Meetings, so that they will be life giving and energizing, and easy for folks to attend.

Sound exciting? This is just the beginning. We will continue to ask your help in letting us know what we need to do for you and how we can do it.

Our next article will deal with some of the questions you asked in the comment section of the questionnaire. While we cannot address all the individual comments, we have common themes that can be addressed.

So, “*Survey Says!*” we are moving and building and creating. We are a part of a great organization, working together to continue to “Amplify the Voice and Empower the Voice.”

We need you to help us. Please continue the good work you do for all of us in **DignityUSA**.

## A Great Time to Make a Gift

**DignityUSA's** fiscal year ends September 30, 2005.

If you have not yet made a gift to **DignityUSA** this fiscal year, we invite you to do so today.

We are close to reaching this fiscal year's fundraising goal of \$212,000. We need every penny of that amount as we continue seeking justice and equality for GLBT people in church and society in the coming fiscal year.

Internet online donations may be made at our website [www.dignityusa.org](http://www.dignityusa.org) and clicking on the JOIN, RENEW OR DONATE button at the upper right of the homepage. Currently we accept VISA, MasterCard and American Express credit or debit cards.

You may send checks or money orders, made payable to Dignity, Inc., to DignityUSA, 1500 Massachusetts Ave., NW #8, Washington, DC 20005-1805.

We are an IRS recognized non-profit organization.

Thanks for your generosity.

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## DignityUSA at Call To Action Conference Nov. 4 – 6, 2005

**DignityUSA** will again host a reception for our family and friends on Friday, Nov. 4, 2005, at the **Call To Action (CTA)** National Conference in Milwaukee, WI.

Each year several hundred supporters stop by the reception, which follows the opening ceremonies, to say hello to **DignityUSA** family and friends.

**DignityUSA** will have an information booth, in the exhibition hall, where we will seek to sign up more members.

If you plan to be at the **CTA** national conference, and can help out at the reception or at the booth, please contact the national office at 1-800-877-8797, or by email to [info@dignityusa.org](mailto:info@dignityusa.org). Thanks!

For further information on **Call to Action** and details on the 2005 national conference. Go to [www.cta-usa.org](http://www.cta-usa.org).

**Happy Anniversary  
& Congratulations to:**  
Greater Lansing (MI) - 17 years  
New Brunswick (NJ) - 21 years  
New Mexico (NM) - 21 years  
Indianapolis (IN) - 24 years  
Toledo (OH) - 28 years  
Buffalo (NY) - 29 years  
Pittsburgh (PA) - 31 years  
Twin Cities (MN) 31 years  
Seattle (WA) - 32 years  
New York (NY) - 33 years  
Washington (DC) - 33 years  
Los Angeles (CA) - 36 years

## A Director's Profile

Periodically, we present snapshot profiles of members of **DignityUSA's** National Board of Directors. We are pleased to present Rita Wagner, one of our new directors.

Rita tells us, "When our daughter, Gretchen came out to my husband and I in August 1995, it was a total surprise. For a birthday gift, she had given me a book entitled: "Straight Parents, Gay Children". When I asked if she were sure, her reply was a question, 'Are you sure you are heterosexual?' That was a great comeback!"

"I was led to Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays [**PFLAG**] after pouring over many books to learn what it means to be "gay." From there, I met **Dignity/Indianapolis (IN)**. I found great support in both groups and decided I was being called to serve the GLBT community."

After three years membership in **PFLAG**, Rita and her husband, Marvin, were elected co-presidents of **PFLAG/Indianapolis**.

They jumped into advocacy and support of the GLBT community with intensity and commitment. While serving the **PFLAG** chapter, they took active roles in Call to Action [**CTA**], **Dignity/Indianapolis**, The Catholic Parents Network and New Ways Ministry.

In **Dignity/Indianapolis**, Rita and Marvin are in charge of the monthly meal and hospitality. Rita is on the liturgy committee and sings in the community's choir.

Rita and Marvin are involved in a monthly discussion group of the local chapter of Call to Action. They attend the annual **CTA** conferences in Milwaukee, WI.

The couple financially support and attend retreats or workshops of New Ways Ministry and Catholic Parents Network—a project of New Ways Ministry, and periodically write articles for the Network's monthly newsletter.

Rita says, "I feel I am being led by the Holy Spirit in this direction [of advocacy, pastoral ministry, outreach and support]. I am humbled to have been chosen as a member of **DignityUSA's** National Board of Directors. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve!"

Thank you, Rita, for your dedicated volunteer service.



**October 9, 2005**

**DignityUSA** initiated Solidarity Sunday™ in 1995 as a way of making our opposition to anti-gay violence visible.

Help end violence directed towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, and those perceived as such.

Wear the Ribbon!

Pray the Prayer!

Take the Pledge!

Violence against any person is violence against all people.

For further information, check our website at

[www.dignityusa.org/solidarity/index/html](http://www.dignityusa.org/solidarity/index/html)