

Our meeting of Jan. 23rd was one of our largest in attendance so far... and the discussions were electric. It was noted that the University of California at Irvine **FEB '71** is conducting a seminar by Dr. Lindauer on the Homosexual. To celebrate DIGNITY's first anniversary, our February meeting will be a Pot Luck. It will be held on Feb. 20th, Sat., 7:00 o'clock at St. Brendan's Church; 310 S. Van Ness Ave. As usual we will be in the parish hall which is in the basement of the rectory; entrance between the rectory and church... we should have a fantastic turn-out!

Bob Mitchell has made an appointment with the Archbishop of Los Angeles to discuss DIGNITY and its goals: more about this in our next news letter.

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I've never seen a statue raised to this particular saint, nor even a tiny medal worn in his honor. To this day down the highway of history he comes with a cloak of mystery held high before his face. His background is so vague that about the only things we know about him are: he lived in the third century, died in a pool of blood - a martyr - and was buried outside Rome. The mystery is that our own twentieth century remembers him when many a more prominent saint has withered brown through the passing years. But I doubt he would be flattered if he knew why - or how.

If we could resurrect him on February 14th, his feast day, and transported him across the sea to any city in America, you would have on your hands a very bewildered saint. As he trails his long white Roman robes past the candy-store windows with their large red hearts of shining pasteboard, and the drug-store windows with their little red greeting cards edged with paper-lace, and the flaring red signs everywhere: **DON'T FORGET ST. VALENTINE'S DAY! WON'T YOU BE MY VALENTINE?! -** your poor perplexed saint, the original Valentine, might wonder if they had not confused Valentine with Valentino.

But St. Valentine has somehow become part of the legend of love, and takes his place with June and moon, balconies and serenades, as one of the props on the stage of the sighing heart. Now the love they want St. Valentine to endorse, almost like a testimonial in a commercial, is love gone pagan. Better if they called it not St. Valentine's Day, but Cupid's Day and Cupid's Candy and Cupid's greeting cards after that fleshy little god whose only principle is pleasure.

"Won't you be my Valentine?" This SHOULD mean: won't you be my fine noble Christian Saint? There are many who would think twice before they asked for that. "Won't you be my Christian martyr?" But a martyr is one who stands for good and right, who is willing to suffer for the things which are a matter of principle.

Look again at that heart shaped box of candy in the window. It is red, and red is traditionally the color of love. But is it the true deep red of lasting loyalty or just the bold flaming red of hot lust. The box too is shaped like a heart, and the heart is traditionally the emblem of love. But this is a hollow heart, crammed only with creams and caramels which are soon consumed and leave the heart empty indeed. The box too at first glance seems to be bound firmly (as true love should be) because there it is tied with a ribbon and a big bow. But look a moment, and it turns out that the big bow is only a fluffy ornament on top and doesn't bind the box at all. In just the same way it is only a whim that holds pagan love together, and when that goes, they fall apart like an empty box of candy.

Well just look how gay love is portrayed on the screen, in the paper back novel, in the gay magazines. Would you ever suspect from all this that gay love could be sweet and wholesome and possibly shy and certainly beautiful and good? Certainly it is natural for a man to love another man, but certainly it is not natural, not the nature of man - that his love be no higher than that of an animal. Human love is... HUMAN, and therefore it must be guided by reason, subject to conscience, worthy of creatures who are also the children of God.

You're right, at times it is hard to be true to our ideals. But do you know of anything in life really worthwhile that isn't difficult. Perhaps this is why Christ on the cross allowed a soldier to open His side so that we might see the great red valentine of His own crimson bleeding Heart - a heart not pierced by a tiny Cupid's arrow but with a long cruel spear. A heart not fringed with dainty paper-lace, but circled, as visioned by St. Margaret Mary, with a wreath of sharp thorns. He wanted to remind us that if we want to keep our hearts happy and joyful and good, they too must be surrounded by the thorns of difficult things - the thorns of self-respect and self-restraint; the thorns of will-power and (what is more important) won't power. After all, if you look it up, you will see that Valentine means STRONG.