

DIGNITY

A Monthly Newsletter
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P.O. Box 6161, Los Angeles 90055
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MARCH MEETING: At 7:30 p.m. on March 20, sixty members and guests of Dignity met at the offices of One, Inc. for the monthly meeting. Joe K. gave a report for the membership committee, announcing that we now have 103 members. Dennis B. was elected secretary-treasurer for a one-year term. President Bob F. stated that meetings will be held on the third Saturday of every month at 7:30 p.m. Until other quarters are decided upon, we will meet at One, Inc. (2256 Venice Blvd., upstairs). Dr. Evelyn Hooker spoke on the "Hooker Report," and a lengthy discussion followed - intense, frank and rewarding.

HOOKER REPORT: Probably the single most important document concerning homosexuality ever formulated in the U.S. was submitted October 10, 1969 to the National Institute of Mental Health, an agency of the Federal Government. This "FINAL REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON HOMOSEXUALITY" was prepared by a group of outstanding behavioral, medical, social and legal scientists under the chairmanship of Dr. Evelyn Hooker, of the University of California at Los Angeles. Commissioned by government sponsorship, it represents the highest level which any informed and human statement concerning homosexuality has yet attained in the U.S. Believing that concerned citizens everywhere should be thoroughly acquainted with this document and be prepared to help see that its recommendations shall be acted upon, ONE, INC. has included its full text in a ONE Institute Quarterly (issue no.22). We urge you to circulate as many copies of this virtual "Magna Carta" as you can to good effect. Send to ONE, INC., 2256 Venice Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90006. (\$1.15 each, or 90¢ each for 10 or more copies.)

APRIL MEETING: To be held at One, Inc. on April 17 at 7:30 p.m. Members are asked to attend a parish Mass at St. Thomas (in the school) at 6:00 p.m. and to sit together (15th St. and Mariposa). Confessions are heard before Mass. Participation and manner of offering Mass are reported to be excellent. ... Fr. Donald Maloney, S.J. (Chairman of Religion Studies at Los Angeles Loyola University) will talk on "Morality and Conscience." Please make an extra effort to attend. We have a wonderful opportunity to get answers to difficult questions. (Non-members are asked to give a 50¢ donation.)

MEMBERSHIP: If you know of others who might like to become members, please invite them to a meeting or have them write to the membership chairman at the above address. If your membership has expired, won't you please renew it? (\$5 a year.)

INFORMATION REQUESTED: Has anything been done, or is anything being done now in your area by the Church to help the Catholic homosexuals, or is anything being done by Catholic gays to advance their cause? If so, please send details to Dignity president at above address.

CONFESSORS: We would like to compile a list of confessors in the Los Angeles area or any other area of the State of California or the country who are sympathetic to the problems of gays. If you know of such a priest, please send his name, parish, and address to Dignity president at above address.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: Gays who have become members of or are interested in A.A. may be glad to know that there are two A.A. groups for gays in the Los Angeles area. One meets every Friday at 8:30 p.m. at Hollywood and Sycamore (room 407), open to men and women. The other meets at 666 S. Coronado in the Shorham Hotel each Tuesday at 8:30 p.m., open to men only.

HONORARY MEMBER: Fr. John McNeil, S.J. of New York, who wrote a series of 3 articles on homosexuality in "The Homiletic and Pastoral Review," has accepted honorary membership in Dignity. He has also given us permission to reproduce his articles. We hope eventually to accomplish this and to distribute copies to all on our mailing list free of charge.

CATHOLIC CONSCIENCE: Evelyn Hooker remarked in her talk at our March meeting that she knows of no gays who are more troubled in conscience than Catholic gays because of the Church's opposition to them. What an accusation to make against the Church which claims to be Christ on earth. If we are such sinners, theologians and the bishops might recall that Christ ate with sinners and welcomed them. So why does the Church have such a hands-off policy? Why do so many even refuse to discuss it? It would seem that their regulations are spoken with the mouths of straights rather

then Christians. The fear and distaste of their straight world urged them to clothe their fear in terms of theological opposition.

Some gay Catholics hope for an overnight change in teaching. That will never be. But a change is slowly taking place. Gay Catholics should be aware of this.

Fr. Nouwen in INTIMACY says that "often the Bible has been used to try to prove that homosexuality is especially sinful, deserving of punishment, or sufficient reason for ostracism. ... However, neither the Bible nor the practices of the Middle Ages can be used to prove that homosexuality as such is a special perversion which asks for special punishment" (p.43-44). That the Bible can't be used to attack homosexuality is a definite change of thinking.

Fr. John McNeill, S.J. in the third article of a series on homosexuality in "The Homiletic and Pastoral Review" (Oct. 1970, p. 835) states: "We have already seen that there is a considerable body of expert opinion and experience which holds that in many cases a homosexual relationship 'may be the best type of human relationship of which a person is capable,' and as such could be judged an ethically responsible commitment in his situation." What a change of position!

By way of example, consider the matter of birth control. The Church has taught that it is intrinsically wrong; it can never be right. The same has been said of homosexuality. But now some theologians allow the conscience of the couple to make the choice, and priests in the confessional in increasing numbers sanction it. So why can't the gay follow his conscience?

The husband and wife are concerned not with the right to use sex, but with a way to use it so they will not be burdened, a way that was always considered mortally sinful. The gay, however, is denied the very use of sex, though it is just as much a part of his humanity as it is of the straight couple. What about his burden? His psychology allows him to adjust to no other way. But no consideration is given to his psychological needs, his physical tensions, his desperate search for a mate. What he does is wrong.

It's time the gay Catholic matured. It's time to give up the spoon-feeding of the Church by which the Catholic wants to be told every last thing he can or cannot do. It's time the gay Catholic joined the straight Catholic and began to use his own conscience. Remember, you cannot be held morally accountable for a condition you did not freely choose. You grew up with one sexual orientation. You have only one body, one life, one sexual power. You have an intrinsic right to find your own fulfillment in your life with your body and your power of sex. You have a right to use the power of sex in the only mentally healthy way for you.

It's time you looked at yourself realistically. It's time you allowed your own conscience to reach maturity and function with a sense of responsibility to your own mental health and total well-being. Those Catholic gays who can see the use of sex as morally right for them in the only sane way open to them are adjusted, happy Catholics. Don't create or prolong your own problems. There are theologians who are bending. Don't wait until the whole Church spells it out in black and white. You'll be dead by then. Know what's happening! Accept the challenge! Use your gay conscience and be proud that you are a gay Catholic. Live as a gay Catholic: use sex your way; receive the sacraments. If Dutch gay Catholics can do it, why can't we?

THOUGHTS ON GAY MARRIAGES: Want to settle down with that special someone? Really? A gay marriage is not so much a matter of finding the right person as being the right person. If we say, "I love you," the emphasis should be on YOU. If the "I love you" is there, no gay relationship will ever break from the outside, no matter how many regiments of marching troubles bear down against it. If each can honestly say "I love you; I put you before any other creature in the whole world," two devoted people will run out the blackest storm not only safely but with a kind of secret joy.

"Going together" is a romantic holiday. A gay marriage is a job. No one lives in romantic splendor like the tiny figures atop the wedding cake. Nobody stumbles into a gay marriage. You work hard to make it. You climb toward it. Little things will irritate, like pebbles in your shoe. But you keep climbing. You close your eyes to this, or close your ears to that, or close your mouth to something else. You are sensitive about some things. Presume your lover is, too. It will mean constantly thinking of him. It will mean a total giving. You don't just go half way. In that case you only meet. You go three-quarters of the way. A gay marriage means you make the other person happy. It is not a question of finding the right person, but of being the right person.