

# DIGNITY

A Monthly Newsletter  
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P.O. Box 6161, Los Angeles 90055  
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APRIL MEETING: Forty-two attended last month's meeting. Three points of business were considered: (1) The Board of Directors should draw up a scale of membership fees; (2) a dance is to be held on May 22; (3) Dignity should be represented in the Christopher Street West parade on June 27. Fr. Donald Maloney, S.J. (Chairman of Religion Studies at Loyola University) addressed those present, explaining recent developments in moral theology, emphasizing love as the basis of the Christian life, and minimizing sexual orientation. The lengthy question-answer period that followed reflected very well the sincere interest and concern of both speaker and audience. (Another Jesuit and a Maryknoll priest also attended the meeting.)

MAY MEETING: To be held at offices of One, Inc. (2256 Venice Blvd., 2nd floor) at 7:30 p.m. on Sat., May 15. Instead of having a speaker this time, we shall revert to our former practice of breaking into small groups for discussion in an effort to become better acquainted with one another. The questions to be used in each group should prove challenging. We hope to have a very good attendance. We need this opportunity to know each other better. (New-members are welcome as usual.)

CONFESSORS: Our members have recommended these priests as confessors:

- (1) Fr. Laubacher, S.J. at Blessed Sacrament in Hollywood (Sunset and Las Palmas) 462-6311.
- (2) Fr. Tom, O.S.A. at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Hollywood (Vermont near Los Feliz).
- (3) At Loyola University in Los Angeles: Fr. Donald Maloney, S.J. (Chairman of Religion Studies), Fr. Don Foren, S.J. (Chaplain), and Fr. Merrifield (President of the University). 670-1370.
- (4) Fr. Pat Nidorf, O.S.A. at Augustinian High School in San Diego. 714/282-2184.
- (5) Fr. R. Joubert, O.P. and Fr. Mark Barran, O.P. at Holy Rosary Church in Houston, Texas (3600 Travis St.)

What do we look for in a confessor? A truly religious priest. Someone who wants to nourish our union with the living God and who can understand us as an individual human being.

REQUESTS: If you need transportation to meetings, let us know. ... If you have a new mailing address or telephone number, please inform us. ... Can you recommend other priests to add to our list of confessors? Send name of priest, name and address of church and telephone number. ... Any news of interest in your area for gay Catholics?

NEW COMMITTEES: Armand is heading our new spiritual development committee. They are exploring the possibility of a retreat in the near future. Details later. ... Maurice has accepted chairmanship of attendance committee.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: The March 19 issue of the L.A. Free Press carried a bitterly anti-Catholic and ill-informed article entitled, "Gay Mass outlawed (sic) by Bishop." We sent a letter to the editor, but it was never printed. The April 14-27 issue of the Advocate carried a very fine article, correcting some of the errors in the Free Press article. A letter of commendation was sent to the editor of the Advocate and appeared in the May 12-25 issue together with the letter sent to the Free Press. We intend to continue calling attention to our existence and to give ever increasing witness to the fact that there are gay Catholics who love the Church and who are willing to work for recognition.

SEX BILL: California's Willy Brown sex reform bill #AB437 needs your help. The bill deletes all penalties for consensual oral or anal intercourse between persons 18 or older in private, whether they are of the same sex or opposite sexes. Write to your Assemblyman today. If you do not know his name, you may get such information from your County Clerk, the public library, or a local newspaper. Address all letters to your Assemblyman, State Capitol, Sacramento, California 95811.

LOVE - SEX: Fr. Donald Maloney, S.J., in his talk at the April meeting, mentioned that our moral life does not revolve around sex. It is neither the most important thing in our moral life, nor the most interesting. Yet some are so sex-conscious that they can conceive of no morally correct life except in terms of sexual correctness. "If the mechanics of my sex life follow traditional views, then I'm morally good." This is ridiculous. There is more to sex than its mechanics. There is more to love than sexual expression. Love is the basis of our Christian life. "By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Christ did not say that the sign of our living union with him is adherence to a set of dogmas or sexual orientation but rather a genuine love for one another. He made no exceptions to that. And he went so far as to say that we would be judged on the love we show others, not on truths we say yes to or the fact of our sexual orientation. Love gives our life meaning.

Of course, one basic expression of love is sex. Father Maloney was explicit in pointing out that in any relationship (straight or gay) the important thing is not the mechanics of sex but the love behind it. Am I giving myself? Am I showing consideration? Are the needs of the other considered? What does this sexual act really mean? If we use sex for our own selfish ends, then it becomes wrong. If we use it only to destroy loneliness, then we increase our loneliness. Sex involves another, and the other must be considered. That is where the love enters.

In our generation, sex is commonplace. The mention of it shocks few people. But the new prudery, the new hang-up, is intimacy -- there is a physical closeness but no closeness in feeling, no real giving, no real union that comes from the opening of our mind and heart.

Many homosexuals have doubts sometimes about their love-life in its sexual expression. But we must all learn to trust in God. We can't ever expect to have everything spelled out in black and white. Much of our life is lived in a gray area. There will always be some decisions we make that will be tinged with uncertainty. That is where our trust in God is tested. If I sincerely feel that homosexuality is not a sin for me (and how could it be if this is the unchosen direction of my sex drive?), then there is no need to mention it in confession. For me it is not wrong. We must learn to believe in our own conscience and to trust in God more.

Formerly, theologians gave us a list of don'ts. Mortal sins were spelled out in great detail. Many Catholics now are insecure if they can't have everything spelled out in that way. But, Fr. Maloney explained, this cannot always be done. There are circumstances in our life that we must consider in making our own decisions.

No individual act makes us what we are. The moral quality of our life is found in its basic orientation toward God. There will be failures, but they do not change the orientation of our life. What is my attitude toward God, life, the sacraments, toward anything that bears on my relation to God? This is my moral life. One act cannot be a mortal sin.

We should stop looking at others in terms of sex -- heterosexual and homosexual. St. Paul says: "No longer is there slave and freeman, Jew and Greek, male and female (and Fr. Maloney suggests we might add -- heterosexual and homosexual), but we are all one in Christ Jesus our Lord." What difference does our sexual orientation really make? Rather we should be concerned about an ever increasing effort on our part to show a more perfect love for God and every human being. If we do, our conscience will be at peace. After all, we are not going to be judged on sex. We shall be judged on love, the love that motivated every last action throughout our life.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? A priest who recently received publicity because of his work with gays was asked if he would perform a gay marriage. His answer: "No." He gave three reasons. (1) As an individual priest he did not feel he could authorize the use of the sacrament of matrimony in an untraditional way. (2) He did not wish to be flooded with requests to perform marriages for people he did not know. (3) In his experience he felt gay lovers did not give sufficient evidence of permanent commitment to each other. ... What do you think?

A BROTHER SPEAKS: Brother Modlin, C.S.C., associated with Notre Dame Boys High School in Bridgeport, Connecticut, was one of the members for a panel on counseling at the First National Conference on Religion and the Homosexual (March 24-25, 1971) in New York. The following is taken verbatim from his talk: (1) The Roman Catholic Church has never made a De Fide pronouncement on any moral question. (2) The Catholic Church has reversed its "official" position on moral questions many times. Compare Pius IX's Quanta Cura with Vatican II's statement on religious freedom, or Papal statements against usury issued in 1450 as opposed to modern interpretations. ... It might be noted in passing that the Council freely admits that its clergymen do not have all the answers. In The Church and the Modern World (M.43) we read: "Let the lay-man not imagine that his pastors are always such experts that to every problem which arises, however complicated, they can readily give him a concrete solution, or even that such is their mission."