

DIGNITY

A Monthly Newsletter
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EDITORIALS AND OFFICIAL POSITIONS

In reading a DIGNITY Newsletter, the reader is advised to make a distinction between what he reads in the editorial and what may be published as the official position of the Board of Directors on a given issue. The editorial is not a pronouncement from the Board of Directors, nor does it necessarily express its thinking. It expresses the thinking of the editor. From time to time official positions will be published in the name of the Board. These will be the results of discussions and research on the part of the entire Board. DIGNITY members are urged to express their opinions for or against any editorial or official position. Such letters (at least excerpts) will be printed -- without the name of the sender unless requested otherwise -- according to the amount of space available. Please send all letters concerned in the Newsletter to Bob Fournier, 240 Vista del Mar #8, Hollywood, Ca. 90068.

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POLICE POWER: AN EDITORIAL

Law and order are necessary to a democratic society. Without them, rights are violated; freedom becomes a nightmare; tyranny moves in. Christ taught us to "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." Accordingly, the Church insists that laws must be obeyed as well as those who exercise civil authority so long as there occurs no violation of God's law or human reason. This makes sense. But who decides whether or not there is a violation? The State always considers its own laws supreme and binding. Those who exercise civil authority never question their exercise of it. The Church may or may not proclaim a violation, depending on the political or social consequences (witness Cardinal McIntyre and civil rights).

In our country minority groups often suffer from unjust laws. The violation of minority rights goes uncorrected as long as the majority or the Church or the State does not suffer any discomfort. The discomfort comes about when the minority has been pushed to extreme and resorts to civil disobedience to reclaim its rights from an apathetic majority. The minority proclaims the violation of justice. Band wagons then roll, and one by one community leaders climb aboard for their share in the glory of victory over injustice.

One band wagon is stalled at the gate -- police power, the abuse of police power against the homophile community. To be sure, there are many fine policemen. And they are a necessary part of social order. To these we give our respect and gratitude. But there are others who stretch their authority to cover their personal prejudices against homophiles. They vent their hate illegally. They satisfy their prurient interests under the guise of duty. They employ physical violence, even primitive savagery. They destroy private property. They make false arrests. They solicit sex for themselves under threat of arrest. They set traps illegally and forge crude conversations in official reports. Such police deserve the term PLO, as distasteful as that may seem to law-and-order loving people. Such an over-riding interest in sex when real crimes with real victims go begging for solutions is queer indeed! Uniformed perverts of justice! They prey on us like vultures. What a beautiful source of revenue we are. Arrest and fine! What difference a false arrest? Get their money. Destroy their reputation. Make them suffer. Who would dare question or stop it? (Did someone say homophiles were sick?)

This behavior has been exhibited too long with impunity. Grave injustice is inflicted on a sizeable minority. But what difference the size? People are involved! If the law provides the excuse, time to abolish the law. After all, private sex between consenting adults is NOT the business of the law.

Homophiles obey laws, but not unjust ones. They respect authority, but not its abuse. They know the necessity of police power in an ordered society but are well aware that police power is not above the law. Abused, it is explosive. It aggravates until the thinking man resists. And we have many thinkers today in the homophile community.

We raise our voice for help from outside. But our veracity is always questioned. We are suspect because we are homosexual. Presumption of right lies with the police, the angels of justice who defend the all-holy law. We have to prove our innocence because we are presumed guilty. (Funny, I always thought it was the other way around.)

Still, we continue to raise our voice in a wilderness of heterosexuals, hoping that someday it will stir a genuine concern. Are there any left who hunger and thirst for justice? In particular, those of us who are Catholic beg our clergy to stop rationalizing their inertia, to stop preaching a gutless social justice, to get involved in issues other than nice ones, to stop playing the bureaucrat by defending the system so parishes and dioceses can function

smoothly. Lead us in correcting the injustices we suffer. Baptism gave us a right to call upon you. Lead us!

Injustice does exist. The homophile community has the right to fight it, the heterosexual community the duty. In the meantime, the police tromp on.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I was very pleased with the August Newsletter. Unfortunately, the wrong people are reading the "Modern Parable" and your editorial. It is the straight world that must reexamine its position and decide how faithfully it is, or is not, adhering to Christ's mandatum: to love all men and serve them. "How can we reach them???" has to be seriously considered by DIGNITY.
Kansas City, Mo.

Concerning your Newsletter of Aug. 5, '71, specifically, "Love: An Editorial." It's a masterpiece. It's about time someone put it down in black and white. ... The article gave question to Christ's sexuality. He could have been "gay" and he could have been "straight." ... But the article continues to state clearly that God is Love and Love is God and it should make no difference whatsoever what God was sexually! Thank Heavens we now have an intelligent-thinking gay religious group (CRH excepted). Right on!!! And "A Modern Parable" was so moving a piece that I cried.

Hollywood, Ca.

BOARD STATEMENT: NASH CASE. On July 17, 1971, Richard Nash was arrested for soliciting. Richard is a Unitarian minister and founder of Gay Fellowship. He has publicly acknowledged he is a homophile and has organized a gay caucus within his own denomination. The reported conversation that took place prior to the arrest is so out of character with what we know of Richard that we find it impossible to believe the police report. DIGNITY's Board of Directors prefers to accept the words of the defendant that he neither did nor said anything that was improper.

It is the considered opinion of the Board that the police all too often employ illegal means of arrest (entrapment), that they often arrest on false charges, and that on occasion physical violence is used without warrant. All of this constitutes a grave violation of justice that calls for immediate redress.

HUSTLING: The following is an excerpt from the letter of a priest in Hollywood. We would appreciate knowing your reaction.

"On the other hand, the problem of 'hustling' is crying out more and more for a drastic solution. Those of us who feel that the State should get out of the field of legislating private morality between consenting adults are finding it harder and harder to maintain our position in the face of the open flaunting of the rules of public decency that are presently occurring. Within the past month: twice in one night an attempted rape occurred against one of our 15 yr. old boys who is of a rather slow mentality; I have seen hustlers on the street openly manipulating themselves to attract attention; I have heard them call out to automobiles passing by 'Hi, fucker'; we have been forced to listen to their conversations - earthy in the extreme, describing their previous night's conquests; I, myself, easily identifiable in my clerical dress and walking on our own Church property, have been propositioned to 'have some fun and games'.

"While such activities are becoming more promiscuous, one does not hear from the gay community any word of condemnation, nor does one see any attempt at self-regulation. Is it any wonder, then, that the general public tends to identify the gay movement with an attempt to legalize such activities? I realize such identification is not true; there are many sincere people in the gay movement to whom such activity is anathema. But, in the face of the silence of the gay movement, such a conclusion is obvious."

QUICKIES: "Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey toward it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us." ... We urge you to give us your thinking on editorials, officials statements, the Newsletter in general. Please mail all letters concerning the DIGNITY Newsletter to Bob Fournier, 2040 Vista del Mar #8, Hollywood, Ca. 90068. ... "More than half the arrests made are for so-called crimes which don't have a victim. If such laws were wiped off the books, the effect would be the same as if we doubled the size of the police force." (Tom Wills, Professor of Law, University of Miami. Quoted in the Miami Herald.) ... 37 attended our August meeting. Total membership is now 131. ... If you have any personal items for the Newsletter's "Bulletin Board" column, send them to the editor before the first of each month. ... Why not remember DIGNITY in your will?

... A defense fund has been set up to aid the Rev. Richard Nash with the heavy legal expenses of proving his innocence. Make checks payable to DIGNITY. We would like to send one check from DIGNITY to the Fund. ... The Los Angeles Association of Laymen received the DIGNITY delegation most cordially on Aug. 4. The L.A.A.L. newsletter reported, in part: "Here again is another area in which the Catholic Church has discriminated against members of the Christian community because of uninformed and uneducated views toward the homosexual and his or her life-style. .. We must realize that we ourselves have perpetrated the awkward connotations associated with the word homosexual and it is our responsibility as Christians to right this unjustifiable wrong."

IN THE NEWS: On July 27 in Chicago the Legion of Mary joined with the Chicago Gay Alliance for Mass at St. Sebastian church. The parish council is to decide whether the group may hold a weekly Mass of their own on a regular basis. ... The Orange County (Ca.) chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union now has a Rights of Sexuality Committee. Official support of the gay movement has already begun. ... West Germany's two major political parties are backing proposals to reduce the consensual age for sex relations (including homosexual acts) from 21 to 18. ... Masses for gay Catholics in Seattle, Wash., have been temporarily discontinued because of Fr. Hartman's leave of absence.

RETREAT REPORT: Aug. 13 - 15 twenty-two members of DIGNITY made a retreat at the Benedictine Priory at Valyermo. Inspiring conferences, sensitivity sessions, the liturgy -- all contributed to a spiritually beautiful, rewarding experience. Many came with some apprehension. All left with a sense of enrichment and solidarity. Without any doubt, it was the most valuable project organized by DIGNITY.

UCLA PROGRAM: "Morality: Twilight Zone of the Law" is a lecture series/credit course offered Tuesdays, 7:00-9:45 p.m., 2160 Dickson Art Center at UCLA. There are 10 lectures, beginning Oct. 5. Enrollment for series - \$40.00; as a credit course - \$55.00. Attendance is by enrollment in series, or single admission (available only at door if space permits). Oct. 12 lecture: "Homosexuality" (Troy Perry, Pastor, first homosexual congregation; Jean Cerdova, President, national lesbian organization; Evelyn Hooker, former Research Psychologist at UCLA, specializing in male homosexuality).

CHRISTIAN STUDIES FORUM: The Paulist Fathers are sponsoring a series of 15 lectures with nationally and internationally well-know speakers. To be held Thursdays, 8:00-9:30 p.m., beginning Oct. 14. Season tickets - \$12.00, single admission - \$2.00. Place: Beverly Hills High Auditorium, 241 S. Morenc Dr., Beverly Hills, Ca. Some titles: "Contemporary Freedom vs. Scriptural Liberty" (Fr. John L. McKenzie - Oct. 14); "Christian Theology for the Future" (Fr. Eugene Burke, CSP - Jan. 13); "Contemporary Problems in Moral Theology" (Fr. Charles Curran - Feb. 24). We highly recommend the entire series.

DIGNITY PRIEST MEMBERS: It has been suggested that the priest members might like to be in touch with each other. If so, please inform us, and we will mail a list of names to those only who wish their names on such a list. Perhaps our priest members could form their own committee and discuss ways of contacting the rest of the clergy -- articles, letters, ads, etc.; ways of encouraging experts in various fields to write on the subject of homosexuality -- biblical scholars, sociologists, theologians, psychologists, historians, etc.

OUTSIDE LOS ANGELES: If you live outside the Los Angeles area, why not try to organize a chapter of DIGNITY for your area. Write to Joe Gilgamesh for particulars. It would be a great thing if gay Catholics could be organized throughout the country. Our voice would be much more effective in the Church if coming from one organization. We would have a common clearing house of ideas and eventually a national Board of Directors. Think about it. Contact others. Let's hear from you.

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QUEST

Love, define yourself that I may find you.
Love, what are you that I may see you? A God, a man, a woman, a splendid cosmos, a feeling, a security? Are you a blooming flower, a twinkling star, a smile, a Eucharist?
Who are you, Love, that I may know you? Lord or servant, human or divine, master or slave? Are you Christ's feeling for John, for me, for others? Are you mother, father, family, friend?
Love where are you that I may find you? Are you in me-outside me? Are you in others? Where are you hiding?
How difficult it is to comprehend you!
Define yourself that I may embrace you and imprison you.
O Lord, how infinite is your Wisdom!

John F.

CALDENDAR OF EVENTS

- September
- 8 Bi-centennial of the San Gabriel Mission. Civic and religious celebrations.
 - 8 Board meeting. Host: Maurice.
 - 12 Spiritual Development Committee, 7:30 p.m., at Jim and Jay's.
 - 18 General meeting of DIGNITY at ONE, Inc. (2256 Venice Bl., 2nd Floor). Guests welcome. Program: discussion groups.
 - 19 Mission tour. Mass at San Gabriel Mission, then to San Juan Capistrano. Time and place of departure to be announced at meeting on Sept. 18. (10 members made the last tour.)
 - 20 & 27 College course begins at ONE, Inc. To be conducted for two semesters every Monday 8:00-10:00 p.m. "Introduction to Homophile Studies." \$1.00 per class.
 - 22 & 29 Beginning of a series of lectures and discussions to be held at ONE, Inc., every Wednesday 8:00-10:00 p.m. \$1.00. "Homophile Life Styles."
 - 25 Opera night. At Frank & Mike's in Venice. Music and discussion: Development of opera from beginning to present. 7:30-10:00 p.m. Further details to be given at Sept. 18 meeting.
 - 25 & 26 Fall Festival at St. Andrew's Priory, Valyerno, Ca. Contemporary art exhibit, Indian art, cafe continental, rides, dinner, booths, puppet shows, quality shops, celebration with songs, dancing and prayer.
- October
- 3 3:00 p.m. lecture by Sociology Professor Howard Fradkin of Cal State, Long Beach: "Survey of 388 North American Homophiles." \$1.00. At ONE, Inc.
 - 30 International dinner and costume ball at Jim and Jay's. Details later.

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PEACE MOVEMENT

A letter of inquiry to any of the following will bring information about the peace movement.

PAX
 Box 139
 Murray Hill P.O.
 New York, N.Y. 10016

Fellowship for Social Justice
 2936 West 8th Street
 Los Angeles, Ca. 90005

Catholic Peace Fellowship
 339 Lafayette Street
 New York, N.Y. 10012

Fellowship of Reconciliation
 4356 1/2 Melrose Avenue
 Los Angeles, Ca. 90029

Clergy and Laymen Concerned about
 Vietnam
 Metropolitan AME Church
 1518 M Street, N.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20005

Peace Operations Center
 132 North Euclid Avenue
 Pasadena, Ca. 91101