



DIGNITY

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR CATHOLIC HOMOPHILES AND CONCERNED HETEROPHILES

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EDITORIAL



THE DAWN OF A NEW DAY

So often the Gay Catholic is confronted with discouragement in his/her Church. He or she has to contend with bishops and priests who are entirely ignorant of what it really means to be homosexual, who are almost defensive on the subject, who are more tradition-conscious than people-conscious -- administrators who lack the ability to do creative thinking as did the great Fathers and theologians of the past; fishers of men afraid to "put out into the deep," hugging the shores of tradition and crying out from rote "You can't do this; you can't do that" -- shepherds who are satisfied they are on the path to salvation and refuse to go out in search of the sheep who stray; lawmakers unwilling to lighten the crosses they place on the backs of those who struggle so desperately to remain within the household of faith while being kicked about by their own brothers and sisters in Christ. The fact that they struggle at all is a wonder -- surely to be rewarded by the Christ who asserted that the last will be first in his kingdom and the humbled exalted.

Gays find this true in so many confessionals, in so many parishes, in so many dioceses. But a remarkable change is taking place throughout the world for the homophile, especially for the Gay Catholic. In more and more confessionals, priests show greater respect for the conscience of the individual and his/her personal integrity. In more and more rectories, humane counseling is available from a priest who understands and does not condemn but seeks to help the Gay person find meaning and fulfillment in life, in fidelity to the nature that is his/her very personal possession, seeks to help the Gay find human love and divine love through his/her homosexuality.

In more and more colleges and seminaries courses in homosexuality are taught; homophiles are invited to speak; and acceptance grows. In more and more Catholic periodicals the unstudied stance of the Church is questioned. In more and more journals theologians strive for solutions. In more and more newspapers, articles appear in an attempt to educate the laity on the subject and to create an atmosphere of Christian acceptance.

More and more priests and religious are declaring themselves Gay. More and more are becoming involved in the struggle against social justice toward Gays. More and more write and speak on the subject. More and more move about in the Gay community.

And more and more the Gay Catholic is able to see the image of Christ in his priest. He knows more and more priests in whom he sees a good shepherd, one who serves, one who hungers and thirsts for social justice, one who doesn't hesitate to eat and drink with those whom society shuns, a father who loves his children.

A force is growing within the Church. It will not be stopped, no matter how loud the

outcry of prejudiced Christian minds and pinched Christian hearts. Hope continues to mount in the Gay Catholic community. Faith revives. Love expands. And the people of God must slowly see that the love experienced by Gays is indeed a genuine witness to divine love, a unique sharing in that love of God that no one can limit or define -- another aspect of a God who lives in light inaccessible, another insight that broadens our vision of that love and enables us to reach out into wider embrace our searching arms.

LETTERS

GAY PARISHES? As the only diocesan priest in America (perhaps in the world?) (perhaps in the history of Catholicism?) assigned to work full-time in a ministry to the Gay and Bisexual Communities, I would like to give some reflections on the continuing controversy about Gay Parishes vs. the Diaspora.

During many years of living in our black ghetto in Roxbury, Mass., I watched the black community struggle with the same problem. Right now I am caught up in the same controversy surrounding the placement of juvenile "delinquents" who are Gay.

As a street priest working with thousands of runaways and freaks here in Boston over the last few years it became necessary to have our own Mass for them since they were treated so shamefully when they appeared at Parish Masses. (Indeed our own Mass was ultimately "busted" by three Irish Catholic cops who knew that their God did not wish to be worshipped by long-hairs.)

It seems to me that we all share the ideal, the goal of one day being sophisticated and Christian enough to sit down with people of all colors and sexual persuasions -- to eat and drink with "sinners" as Jesus did, without condescension or embarrassment. Right now, however, we have to be practical. Catholics seem congenitally incapable, it would seem, in most Parishes of responding in a Christian fashion to Gays.

Now there may be some hardy Gay adults,

as there are blacks and Gay kinds in reform schools who are willing to lay themselves on the line for crashing the barriers. However, it is quite another thing to require such heroism of our people which we would be doing by failing to provide Gay parishes, or Gay half-way houses.

It seems intolerable to me to demand of Gay delinquents that they face the opprobrium and rape that lies in store for them in the reform schools and half-way houses of America, simply in order to break down prejudices. And so we work for Gay half-way houses, for now.

Here in Boston we have a unique opportunity to have a Mass at which Gays are welcome without calling it a Gay Mass or parish. It is comprised of street kids, college kids and unbiased straights as well as bisexuals. We are well into the attempt to integrate and are not expecting severe difficulties. But I submit that few communities are at this stage and that while we surely welcome heroism, it is another thing to demand it by our failure to establish Gay parishes or Masses.

Fr. Paul R. Shanley
Archdiocese of Boston
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IMAGES AGAIN

I must commend your candor in your editorial, "What Image?" in the March issue ... most Americans are worried about their images! ... Isn't it a fact that ultimately most of us fear for them? ... that most of us "guard" our "images" carefully? Aren't most of us basically afraid, afraid of being hurt, afraid of what the world thinks of us?

... And haven't we, without reflection

sometimes, sought to hurt others (or hurt ourselves) as we have been hurt. Haven't we perpetuated the syndrome "hurt and be hurt" just to convince ourselves that we are men and "not piano keys" (to use Dostoevsky's words)? ... But, you ask, what will break this pattern of "hurt and be hurt?" Is it Love? "A love that expresses itself"? "A respect for the integrity of the individual and his/her capacity to love"? Partially -- Unfortunately, a "drag queen" will have little Love for a gay, striving "to appear straight," until all of us, including the "drag queen," learn how to love ourselves properly ... as Christ intended us to love ourselves and as He loves us. ...

We cannot hold up in our "undergrounds" nurturing our spites against ourselves, against each other, and love ourselves properly. Nor can we love others until we stop seeing each other as "images," "drag queens," "screaming fags," and "leather queens." Nor can we stop seeing them as images until we start to see ourselves, ... as the eternal image of Christ only, as your article so strongly suggests. ... Then, and only then, can we begin to love all kinds of men and women! ...

Yes, we are "free" to crawl into our "undergrounds" and wave a spiteful paw at the world, or we can resolve with the aid of grace to achieve the "possible impossibility" (Paul Tillich's phrase for it): forgiveness of our worst enemy -- ourselves. Then, we are "free" to love all men as Christ enjoined us.

We no longer need to be "afraid for our images." We need no longer live "tormented lives." We are "free" to spend our energies on our talents (including "drag"), in the service of Love.

Bravo! You've done it! DIGNITY is now a source for hope for many confused gays.

Theodore, Alabama

IMPRISONED GAYS You see, many of us here "gay people" have no family relations due to the fact of how we think, feel and live. So there is very little contact with the outside world. To be honest with you, the only people we can relate to is our people. We're still looked on as being sick and weak. This we

could do without! In here within the prison walls we try to stick together, we are very close and love each other very much. This is the only way we can live in here "solidarity" and more! Our spirit and will to see the day when we will be looked on as people, not sick or in need of help, but people!

San Quentin
Tamal, California

GIVE ME TIME

(In the musical version of "Zorba the Greek" is a beautiful song about a butterfly. See in it yourself, or a love affair, or an organization, or whatever. It becomes ever more beautiful and meaningful.)

Not too fast, not too fast,
Let it grow, let it last,
Nature knows when and why:
The butterfly.

I remember one morning when I saw a cocoon in the bark of a tree;
I remember I marvelled that imprisoned inside was a butterfly, waiting to be free.

I was very impatient so I warmed the cocoon with the breath of my sighs;
And the butterfly trembled and began to emerge like a miracle right before my eyes.

Not too fast, not too fast,
Let it grow, let it last,
Nature knows when and why.

All at once I discovered that his delicate wings were all crumbled and torn.
As he still wasn't ready and I had made him be born; I was stronger than nature and I made him be born.
But the wonder of life has a definite plan,
So he died in my hand, by the will, not of God, but of man.

Every man has a moment and I'm waiting for mine when I'm finally free.
But I mustn't be hurried, give me light, give me time, like the butterfly.





THE VERY WORDS



Norman Pittenger, an outstanding Anglican theologian, has written this concluding paragraph for the chapter, "The Morality of Homosexual Acts," in his book, TIME FOR CONSENT?

The purpose of this column is to give the very words of positions that have been taken in favor of homosexuality by organizations or the very words of professional people speaking positively on the subject.

The title of a famous story by Tolstoy is "Where Love is, there God is." Love can show itself in strange and unexpected places. I am ready to say that in homosexual love of the kind I have been discussing, God is present. He is present in the loving relationship and present also in the acts which express and cement that love. I know quite well that the very idea that this could be the case will appear shocking to many of my friends and to the majority of my fellow-clergymen. But I am convinced that what I have said is true because I have seen it to be true. Such human love where God is hiddenly present always needs the further "infusion" of the divine Love which we who are Christians believe that Christian fellowship, sacramental worship, and the reception of the sacramental elements can provide. The fellowship and the sacrament are not ours, but the Lord's. Who are we, to "fence" that table from any needy and hungry child of God? How can we, who are ready to confess ourselves ignorant and prejudiced and misguided men, refuse that gracious gift of Love to any man or woman who honestly comes asking for it?



NEWS

OF RELIGIOUS INTEREST

Fr. Paul Shanley of Boston is engaged in a

work of bringing together for the celebration of the Eucharist (1) street kids from the Boston area who are looking for a community in which to worship comfortably, (2) groups of college students, and (3) members of the Gay community. Mass is offered every Sunday, 5:30 p.m. at Interfaith Center (corner of Massachusetts Ave. and Beacon St.) in Boston. (See Fr. Shanley's letter on p. 2.)

THE CHICAGO SUN-TIMES (April 7) carried an article on DIGNITY and UNITY, "Ministry to homosexuals brings action, little talk." In it, Fr. Robert Behnen, O.F.M., is quoted: "In the years ahead, the Church will have to face an enormous task in re-educating its clergy and laity. ... What many are coming to now is a conviction that homosexual activity can be good or evil depending upon many things, including the quality of the interpersonal relationship." In reference to special Masses for Gays, Fr. David McCarthy, S.J., argues: "These Masses fill a need. Many homosexuals don't

feel at ease in the Church. They say to themselves, 'If these other people knew I am homosexual, they wouldn't have anything to do with me.' Among themselves, however, homosexual Christians can be more relaxed."

In Washington, D.C. a conference was held at the People's Church wherein position papers on homosexuality were presented by Anglican theologian Norman Pittenger, Fr. John Harvey of the Archdiocese of Washington, Catholic University psychologist Mona Shevlin, Sgt. Charles Keyes of the D.C. Police Morals Division, and Mattachine President Franklin Kameny. Pastor Bryce Gorman considers the conference a way of opening up new dialogue.

The Presbyterians' Women in Leadership project has granted \$2,500 to the Lesbian Resource Center in Minneapolis (710 W. 22nd St., Minneapolis 55404) for operating expenses.

United Methodist Voluntary Services has given \$1800 for operating expenses at Gay Community Services of Minneapolis.

The Presbyterian TRENDS magazine will devote its July/August 48-page issue to "Homosexuality: Neither Sin nor Sickness." The position taken by the editors and authors, whether from the perspective of biblical, psychological, theological or personal considerations, is that homosexuality is a variant of sexuality that falls within normal limits -- the position of DIGNITY. The editors are determined to open up the subject of homosexuality so that a ministry of love and reconciliation might be expressed to persons oppressed because of their sexual orientation.

The editors expect a sell-out issue and request orders be placed before May 15. Single copies \$1, 3 or more to one address 80¢. Write: TRENDS, Witherspoon Bldg., Room 723, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

The Unitarian Universalist Association's board for the Pacific Southwest District unanimously approved appointment of the Rev. Richard Nash, a Los Angeles Gay activist, as "specialized minister for Gay concerns." Mr. Nash presently heads a counseling program at Gay Community Services Center. In a formal statement the board said: "In setting up such a specialized ministry, we recognize the need on the part of the denomination for greater sensitivity toward and affirmation of gay people as well as the need on the part of gay people for the services rendered by a liberal minister."

For the last few years a separate Gay Church movement has grown rapidly. Mr. Nash attributes this to the lack of acceptance Gays find in regular churches. Still, he has remained in a predominantly heterosexual church. "If any denomination is going to be able to affirm Gay people, it is the Unitarian Universalists. Their track record, while being far from perfect, is better than any I know. ... I'm for integration, when it will mean that Gay and non-Gay people, their needs, their traditions, and their special contributions can be taken equally seriously and when they will have equal access to all the opportunities a church provides."

Back in 1971 THE TEXAS METHODIST conducted a survey among Methodists on the subject of homosexuality. In response to the question, "Do you believe a person can be both Christian and homosexual?" 41% of the 533 responding said "Yes." And 60% of the ministers said "Yes." Some even referred to homosexuality as natural.

OF LEGAL INTEREST

In Bismark, N.D., the Legislature voted overwhelmingly to repeal its laws forbidding consensual private adult sex. The reform was part of a comprehensive criminal code revision to go into effect July 1, 1975. It repeals the 10-year maximum sentence for sodomy between consenting adults in private but continues to outlaw sexual acts in a public place (1-year penalty), adult sodomy with someone under 18 (1 year), and sodomy between minors under 18 (30 days).

In Washington, D.C. a superior court judge ruled the District's sodomy law unconstitutional as applied to consenting adults, even when committed in public. He will consider the law only as covering acts with minors.

In San Francisco the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that police officers may not secretly observe activity in public restrooms. Attorneys say this decision firmly establishes that all police spying into restrooms is illegal. A class action suit pending before the U.S. District Court of Northern California seeks to bar the federal government from indiscriminately firing Gays.

In Seattle the attorney for John Singer and Paul Barwick submitted a brief to the Washington Court of Appeals after the two Gays were denied a marriage license by the state.

In Little Rock the Arkansas Supreme Court rejected a challenge to the state's sodomy law based on its ambiguity. The defense is considering taking the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In Tampa police continue to make homosexual solicitation arrests in spite of a court ruling invalidating that law. Police Chief

Littleton claims the court decision was never legally binding.

In Georgia there are interesting contrasts. Atlanta Mayor Sam Massell has named Gay activist Charles St. John to the city's 21-member Community Relations Commission after a year and a half of pressure from the Atlanta Gay Liberation Front. Ellis MacDougall, new head of Georgia's state prison system, has called for a law that would require sex offenders to be castrated, including homosexuals. In Athens, Gays at the University of Georgia who recently won a court case upholding their right to organize now have their first Gay studies class. In Augusta, pressure by the vice squad caused a restaurant owner to cancel a dinner to be sponsored at his place by the local GLF. The vice chief threatened that he would "bear down on him" if he did not call off the dinner.

PRISONERS UNITED

The Prisoner's Coalition, a statewide Washington group

seeking quicker release for the imprisoned, now has a man working with it who will work exclusively with Gay prisoners. Bob Rinehart said there is a great need for people interested in helping Gay prisoners, especially to write letters to them. If interested, contact Bob Rinehart, 9600 Burke Ave. N., Room 2459 B, Seattle, WA.

FREE CLINICS

The National Free Clinics Council Convention was held in

Estes Park, Colorado, March 29 - April 1. It made several concessions to Gay rights, including the addition of a Gay woman and a Gay man to the council's executive board.

At the very beginning of the convention a Gay caucus was established with 30 of the participants. A Gay awareness workshop was held, "the best attended workshop at the convention," according to Don Kilhefner, executive director and president of the Los Angeles Free Clinic Council. A position paper was presented to the convention, calling for the free clinics to stop assuming clients are heterosexual, to allow more Gays on the staffs, and to develop programs specifically for Gays.

A group of Gay free clinic workers was es-

tablished, with headquarters at Gay Community Services Center, 1614 Wilshire Bl., Los Angeles, CA 90017.

Kilhefner commented that the convention was "very receptive" to the Gay requests and offered "tremendous support for Gay problems."

✳️✳️✳️ **QUICKIES** ✳️✳️✳️

The Council on Religion and the Homosexual in Milwaukee meets the 2nd Tue. of each month. For time and location, call 383-0716. The Most Rev. Paul L. Seitz, Bishop of Kontum (South Viet-Nam) requests help in his diocese for orphans and refugees. Send gifts to him c/o Box 507, Nashua, N.H. 03060. DIGNITY is now well on the way to 500 members nationally. Gay Catholics interested in ecumenism and interfaith liturgical services should call the "Home Liturgy" group in Philadelphia, 925-9149 or 426-4653. This group is not part of DIGNITY. If you move, please notify us of your change of address.

DIGNUS

We all know the pain of exposure, job discrimination and separation from family. We all know the pain of being alone, not having anyone to lean on, someone to help carry our crosses. Yes, we know about pain, but are we worthy of this pain? Of the crosses that come into our lives?

The Church teaches us that we were created to know, love and serve God that at the end of this life we may enjoy His eternal love.

Yet, we have these crosses, this pain that has driven many of us away from our Faith and even the love of God. What should our attitude be toward these challenges? How should we face our difficulties? We have the answer in Our Lord's strength toward His Cross and Passion. He did not limit His vision only to His Cross, nor His intentions only to His Passion. These

were the steps to a much higher goal. If we are to call ourselves Christian, we are obliged to take a Christ-like strength toward our situation. We fail in our responsibility to life if we do not face our difficulties head-on.

Every human being has value and is precious in the sight of God. We are unique and singular and have worth as children of God. We all know that at times our situation become very heavy; at times our pain is more than we can bear. We have only to look at the Cross and see how far we have to go.

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." We, too, are members of this Lamb. We, too, are worthy to be slain. We, too, have the right to our Resurrection.

richard
L.A. Spiritual Development
Committee

NATIONAL CONVENTION

National DIGNITY convention in Los Angeles, August 31 - September 3. The convention will be open to the public, but some sessions will be for official delegate business, the establishing of a national board. If a Chapter knows whether or not it will be represented at the convention with two delegates, please inform the Chapters Chairman at the National Office soon. Could we begin to get an idea also on about how many from the Chapter will attend?



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CHAPTER NEWS



CHICAGO: Gay Mass every Sun., 7:00 p.m., at St. Sebastian Church (824 W. Wellington), followed by coffee social in school cafeteria. Confessions every Sunday for one-half hour before Mass. Classes in Christian doctrine every Sunday after Mass. Six priests serve as advisors to DIGNITY here, offering Mass, hearing confessions, and conducting the classes. Gifts of food and clothing were brought to the altar during the Lenten Masses to be given to the needy of the area. Anniversary of DIGNITY/Chicago to be celebrated with open house after Mass on Sun., May 6 and a dinner on Sat., June 2. Easter Mass included a candlelight procession and renewal of baptismal vows.

LOUISVILLE:

LOS ANGELES: Members and guests meet every 3rd Sat. for the monthly General Meeting, 8:00 p.m., at Los Angeles City College Newman Center (4665 Willowbrook, 2 blks. west of Vermont & 1 blk. south of Santa Monica). April meeting was pre-ceeded by Easter paraliturgical service. May 12, 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., Spring Dance at LACC Newman Center, with DJ. \$1.50. Picnic planned for June 17, Griffith Park. Spiritual Development Committee plans to start small local groups concerned with spiritual growth. Each growth will determine its own directions and modus agendi. If you have any newsletters from '69 (put out by Fr. Pat), we would like to borrow them for copying. If you want info about DIGNITY or have some urgent need, call our answering service: 661-6191. Your call will be returned. May General Meeting on 19th. Program: small rap sessions on Gay Identity and the Church.

NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY: Mass is celebrated at 7:30 p.m. before the General Meeting at the Jesuit Residence (220 W. 98th St.). April 11 General Meeting featured Ms. Roz Riegleson from NYU. She spoke on where the Gay movement's at. Elections for New Board of Directors to be held May 23.

SAN DIEGO: Members and guests meet 2nd Sat. of each month, 8:00 p.m. For location of meeting, call Pat (448-8384). A beach party is planned for Mon., May 28, at Torey Pines Beach, 12:00 noon. General Meeting for May moved up to May 19 at San Diego State Intersection House, 5717 Lindo Paseo (2 blks. south of campus, 1/2 blk. west of Campanile), 8:00 p.m. Planned for June - Theatre Party and Picnic at Green Valley Falls.

WASHINGTON, D.C.: Members and guests meet every 1st & 3rd Fri. at George Washington University Newman Center, 2210 F St., N.W., 8:00 p.m. For info call Fr. Salomone (529-5304).

MISSIONS

BOSTON: Members & guests meet 1st Sun. of each month at Randolph Country Club in Randolph, 1:00 p.m. 70 attended the April meeting. Religious Committee sponsored a Discussion of Prayer and a Lenten Prayer Service on April 11. On one Sun. of the month (other than the meeting Sun.) DIGNITY will have a Eucharistic celebration and social evening. First one was held Palm Sun. On Easter, members attended Mass celebrated by Fr. Shanley at Interfaith Center. Educational Committee is planning a lecture series and the Social Committee a party in the near future. Members are urged to write to their Senators and Representatives about the legislation on Gay rights now before the Massachusetts Congress.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA: Members and guests meet the 1st Sun. of each month at St. Peter's church (Alabama & 24th Sts.), 4:00 p.m. For info, call: John Hammett (282-3170), Paula McGorkle (771-7289), or Tom Fry (626-7780), or write to DIGNITY, 2449 Harrison, S.F. 94110. Two study workshops were held in April on traditional attitudes toward sex and sexuality -- theological and anthropological views of the Church's biblical traditions regarding sex and sexuality. Special Mass and meeting on Palm Sunday at Franciscan School of Theology in Berkely. Small house meetings (with Mass, supper, fellowship) held throughout Bay Area during April. May 25-27 a retreat is scheduled to be held in a nearby retreat center, conducted by Fr. David McBriar. \$10-\$15 for the weekend.

SEATTLE: Members and guests meet 1st & 3rd Sat. of each month, 8:00 p.m. at Seattle Counseling Center (1720 16th Ave.)

OTHER AREAS: Preparatory work to establishing missions is still being carried on in Cincinnati, Cleveland, St. Louis.

Address all mail concerning DIGNITY newsletter to:

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- in Washington, D.C. area: DIGNITY/Washington, D.C., c/o Fr. Gregory Salomone, O.P., 487 Michigan Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017

In all other areas send mail to DIGNITY/National Office, P.O. Box 6161, Los Angeles, CA 90055