



DIGNITY

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR CATHOLIC HOMOPHILES AND CONCERNED HETEROPHILES

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EDITORIAL



OF SEX AND MATURITY

Physical maturity does not carry with it sexual maturity. Nor is sexual maturity the equivalent of sexual skill and finesse. It involves more than physical development, the knowledge of the sex act and the ability to perform it. Animals are endowed with the same sexual power we have but we do not refer to their activity as mature.

Sexual maturity demands that the sex act be a truly human act, not just performed by human beings but performed in such a way that something distinctively human is added to it. That something is the sharing of personality.

Two human beings, engaged in sexual activity, enjoy the fruit of maturity if they can honestly be themselves without role-playing (I must do this, you that; this is my position, that yours; I must be aggressive, you passive); if they are concerned about satisfying the psychological needs of each other, have regard for each other's feelings and exert every effort to satisfy the other sexually. The whole personality becomes involved and is shared.

Obviously, this cannot be experienced to the full in one night. Sexual proficiency there may be, but not maturity. The first night can be the beginning. There can be an incipient sharing of self that invites further exchange until total commitment is achieved. The sexual act is then both the expression of a loving union and the action that binds the two ever closer in love.

Still, sexual activity, even for one night, carries with it responsibility -- respect for the other as a person with needs, consideration and warmth. To see the other only as an object with which to satisfy one's own sexual need is grossly immature. To refuse to allow one's self to become further involved as a matter of principle is inhuman. The initial interplay of personality may uncover incompatibility and make further involvement unwise. For the moment, however, there remains the need for respect and consideration.

Whether the two are heterosexual or homosexual means nothing as far as maturity is concerned. Both are human beings and both have the same desire for the satisfaction of needs, the same capacity for love, the same right to respect and consideration.

The ultimate goal of sex is union in love, a union that matures when a sense of permanency pervades. This does not just happen, nor is it guaranteed when infatuation is strong. The initial attraction, the initial longing, the initial contacts are steps toward that full union in love that must be safeguarded, handled gently, allowing a certain freedom for personal development. When the two work at it, the union can be achieved. When the two work at it, the union can be lasting. But it does demand work, sacrifice, more attention to the needs of the other than of self, and keeping sex in its place -- not as a thrilling stimulus but as the expression of a genuine

love for the other. In one case the approach is selfish, in the other altruistic. In the latter is found the maturity that makes of sex a beautiful experience and allows it to become truly human and mature.

When sex is the vehicle through which the whole self is fully communicated to another, it seems obvious that the vehicle becomes a sacred instrument shared only by the two. Each can and should share self with others in limited degrees -- all involving love. But the total communication of self through sex is an action that finds its maturity and full meaning only when that action is restricted to the two in a lasting, loving union.

✻✻✻ LETTERS ✻✻✻

FIRE VICTIMS I just returned from a two day vacation in New Orleans. I went down to the quarter but could not pass by the Upstairs. A friend of mine, a Jesuit, was at the scene of the fire, held one guy as he watched his lover burn to death. . . . The silence of the Catholic Church and the refusal to hold a memorial service has still got me churned inside. Also the Jesuit silence; one of the men who died had been a Jesuit up to six months before. And the S.J. too kept hands off. I feel so helpless in the face of such silence. . . . My own feeling is deeper; if only this oh so human Church could muster just a bit of honesty what a different Church it would be.

Priest, S.J.
Georgia

FIRE VICTIMS (2) Enclosed is a check to help the victims of the fire. . . . I appreciated the comments in the July Newsletter. You cannot imagine the hatred of gay people in the South until you have lived here.

Member
DIGNITY/Baton Rouge

(Ed note: In our prayers let us remember another group of victims. Those who were tortured and murdered in Houston, Texas. The death of nearly 25 teenage boys can only be seen as an act of sadistic killing.

May they rest in peace.)

TRANSEXUALS & TVs We are using the several chapters of DIGNITY to refer transexual and transvestite persons who are Catholic. Our experience with them has been wonderful . . . If the opportunity arises we will be more than glad to reciprocate and receive any referrals that you might have for us.

Erickson Educational Foundation
4047 Hundred Oaks Ave.
Baton Rouge, La.

(Ed. note: DIGNITY/Chicago has co-sponsored a program on TSs & TVs. Brother Modlin, CSC, of DIGNITY/Boston has written for EEF on the religious aspects.)

PHILLY I am extremely pleased with the recent newsletter. It's getting better all the time. It's my salvation! Truly!

Adele
Philadelphia, Pa.

PRAY FOR A MIRACLE Because I could not seem to find any empathy from my confessors - their only counsel was to abstain or seek psychiatric help - or as one priest suggested "pray for a miracle" I drifted from the Church which told me I was unfit for membership. Yet, regardless of these experiences I still have a deep sense of regard for the Church and would like to seek a reconciliation.

Earl
Ontario, Canada

GHETTO WALLS I have just finished reading "A pastoral Hypothesis" by Fr. Peter Fink, S.J. which appeared in the June issue of DIGNITY. I was tremendously impressed by the article and really consider it about as comprehensive and factual analysis of the entire gay scene as I have ever read -- particularly with reference to the destructive qualities of the typical gay ghetto life-style and the obligation and necessity of the Church in helping tear the ghetto walls down by affording gay people full recognition and welcome as human beings in society beyond the ghetto.

Carlos
San Francisco

MEXICO As a psychologist and priest assisting homosexuals in Mexico City, I am interested to know more about your apostolate ... Homophiles are taboo here and we have to do something in this country.
Priest
Mexico City

SWEDEN I am a Roman Catholic priest of the diocese of Stockholm. ... I have decided to ... devote myself at a low-tuned and non-polemical level to the ministry of homosexual men and women in Sweden. ... I have been in contact with MCC now for about 3 years ... (but) should like to be able to continue my ministry within the Catholic Church and exhaust all avenues open in this direction before taking the step of active engagement under auspices which might awake the impression that I had "left the Church".
Priest
Lund, Sweden



NEWS



GAY MINISTRY The Gay Ministry Task Force of the Society of the Divine Savior, Milwaukee, Wisc. has sent a mailing on their work to all members of the Salvatorian community. By September, the task force will decide whether or not to proceed in developing a workshop on sexuality for Salvatorians.

CLERGY SUPPORT An interreligious group of New York clergy has issued a statement in support of homophiles. In it, they said that although they deplore "the oppression of the gay minority in our society," they are "painfully aware that such discrimination and oppression have often been fostered by our own religious traditions." (The Living Church, 7-29-73)

NEW COMMITTEE Washington D.C.'s Council of Churches has formed a Committee on Sexual Orientation to propose, evaluate, and implement programs which relate to the Gay Community and the Church.

MARCH ON DC A new coalition, the National Gay Mobilizing Committee for a march on Washington, is being organized on the Urbana campus of the Un. of Illinois. The purpose is to mobilize people for a demonstration in the spring on DC for repeal of all anti-gay laws.



Contemplation. For an Oboe.

Lord, a gift from you: This. Always caught in my
throat. A fist. To cough, to gag, to spit up. Me.
Night of emptiness. Reflections of the black sun.
From you. This Final Object, wherein I dwell. A sign.
I think. To let go. To love as the seconds fly. To
purify. I.

Adele

Early Spring

See bone-shattered clouds, see marrow sky;
Cram my mouth with silence (I)
(Something) howes like a captive saint.

Buds come out copper,
Bronze, paint-brazen;
Red as tongues.

Nippling.

I worry, sister poplar:
Frost comes,
you die.

Clouds play their concluding drops.

Pussy willows flaunt their fur

Carling tendrils

Mons veneris.

Spunky, you trees, breaking
dormancy like that,
till one night, ice.

The breeze---that waves-unfurling,
underneath-me-swirling sea---

It carries out my held-hair in
Banners. Who knows who will see.

My nostrils follow threads in air,
Felling my head with aminopreposterous.

The Clouds say, "Failure
to present an adminalable spectacle
is a crime against humanity."

I do not expose
these clouds,

Yet they expose me:
coming out too early,

Acheing/and aloud.

Juli

Manifesto

Oh my
dear this liberty
I dare

I wear it to the
finish unalloyed.
Losing it, I claim it back.
No fear or happenstance
Diminishes my joy. Juli



"Study the past,
in order to live in the
present so as to make
the future different."
Dorothy Day

August 15

To the temple of the Lord not
made by hands there today has
come to rest Mary, a holy tab-
ernacle, re-enlivened by the
living God. John Damascene



"I believe in God but does He believe in me
I'll believe in twenty Gods if they'll believe in me."
Mass by Leonard Bernstein.

GAY CREED

I believe in You God and I believe you believe in me.
I never had too much going with my worldly father so don't let them take you away from me too. You made Heaven and earth and you even created me knowing I'd be gay. You are proud of me and so I must be Gay-proud, knowing that I am made in your image and likeness if not in the all-American image of man and woman. And what of Jesus, your Son? My brother? Would He reject me as have so many of my worldly brothers? In the Trinity you loved two persons who were not of the opposite sex, Father. Perhaps you can understand why I love people not of the opposite sex. If I have trouble with the Virgin Mother, I hope she knows it's perhaps because of what they've done to her reality, and maybe a reflection of some of my problems with my earthly mother. Many of us Gays can really sympathize with Mary though, for we men find feminine qualities in ourselves.

Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate. How we Gays suffer under the oppressions of the State. It is expedient that we also die than that the community be upset in having to acknowledge us.

Crucifixion can be even more excruciating when it doesn't end in death. So many of my brothers and sisters have chosen to end life rather than suffer interminably. Rejection? Even your Father seemed to reject you, Jesus. I know what that means more than most men know. And many of your friends rejected you. But your Mother and some others remained faithful. Some of us don't even have that solace.

We descend into hell almost from the first moment of our awareness that we are different from and despised by even those men and women who bear your standard. They haven't been brothers and sisters to Blacks; they haven't been brothers and sisters to the poor, to the disenfranchised, the powerless, the oppressed and the exploited, and though they claim to follow Jesus, they wouldn't have been brothers and sisters to Him, the outsider, the agitator and non-conformist who hung around with guys, had a particular friendship with one, cried in public, disturbed the peace in a church, and had contempt for lawful authority, and was crucified because He ate and drank with sinners.



But you rose from the dead, and I'm rising and my people are rising from the death of anonymity and self contempt.

I believe in the Holy Spirit whom you loved, Father, even though the rules of my society would have forebade it since it wasn't "normal" heterosexual love. I believe in the holy Catholic Church - yes, but the suffering and derision it fostered or allowed to be visited upon thousands of my brothers and sisters through all ages I cannot embrace or approve. Look what they

have done to your song God. But then the Church is human not Divine like you and you never meant for me to worship anything but you.



As I believe you ascended into Heaven so I believe there is a place for me there. I no longer dread your judgment any more than do straight people. I rather long for your embrace when before all people you will proclaim: "this too is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. You rejected and humiliated him as you did my Divine Son."

I believe in the Communion of Saints and long for it the more because I have never known it in the Church on earth. But if there is a gay ghetto in Heaven, put me there with my brothers and sisters for there will I look for your Son, among the outcasts as He was on earth.



I harbor no bitterness toward mankind. Father forgive them for they know not what they did. It gave me, any way, the chance to do more than most -- most people love only those who love them: "See these Christians how they love one another." They boast that this the mark of a Christian. But Jesus said it was the mark of the pagan and the tax-gatherers. "Love those who do not love you." For me that includes most of the world, Lord, and I do love them. Help me when I falter in my love.

And I believe in the forgiveness of sins. I have a lot of them. Perhaps even more than most have I abused my comrades. Somehow the contempt shown us by others has a way of making us then be contemptuous of our own. There have even been times when I stood by and was silent when Gays were reviled lest I reveal my own gayness. And I tend to be derisive of Gays who are different from me. "Christ, you know it ain't easy."

I believe in the resurrection of the body and wonder what it will mean to be free at last in life everlasting, where I can be truly myself and openly love all people.

AMEN

(Fr. Paul)



BOSTON GLOBE The July 22, 1973 issue of the Boston Globe has an excellent four page article on DIGNITY/Boston in the Globe Magazine section of the newspaper. Check your local library for this issue. Following are a few thoughts from the article. Gwen, a nun for 24 years: "The church in the past has always said 'refrain from sex if you can't have the normal kind.' Homosexuals are told they can lead a celibate life if they pray hard enough. That's unreal as can be." "You could fill any Catholic parish, even the cathedral, on any Sunday with gay people who have left the church," notes Ann, who for a time also chose that route. Organizational literature states that "DIGNITY exists, locally and nationally, for Roman Catholic homosexuals. It aims primarily to help Catholics integrate their religion with their homosexuality (and) all other functions of DIGNITY are secondary." Barney, a reformed alcoholic stated: "With DIGNITY, anyone who is gay and Roman Catholic and doesn't take advantage of the organization has got to be soft in the head." There are also interviews with Fathers Tom Oddo and Paul Shanley and Brother Bill Modlin.



DIGNITY



CONVENTION NEWS

This issue of DIGNITY is coming out during the middle of the month to give as much information to you on the convention as possible. The September newsletter will follow the convention.

The First National DIGNITY Convention is nearing - Labor Day weekend - August 31st, September 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. at the Holiday Inn, 1755 North Highland Avenue, Hollywood, Ca. All are welcome to attend, to participate in the many workshops, to meet the leadership of DIGNITY from across the country and to exchange ideas with the many priests, brothers and nuns who will be joining us. (See back page for registration form. Registrations are still being accepted.)

There will be two sections to the Convention: Delegate Sessions & Workshops.

Delegate Sessions: Two delegates have been requested from each Chapter & Mission. Hopefully as many women as men will be represented.

There are four areas to be covered:

1. The National Constitution.
2. Election of the National Board of Governors.
3. Position Statements.
4. Site of the next Convention.

1. The National Constitution. The main point of business will be the final ratification of the Constitution. A Constitution Committee has been working hard to set up a document that would reflect DIGNITY nationally. This Constitution has been a dialogue between the Chapters and the Administrative Services Group (DIGNITY/National). Since the Missions are new in DIGNITY they will benefit from this labor. A minimum national structure is set up which leaves the National Board of Governors the freedom to establish by-laws for running the National Board. Being consistent with present ASG policy the Chapters and Missions are free to develop their group to meet the needs of the Gay Catholic in their area.

There is a great concern among the leadership across the country on reaching more Gay Catholic Women and we feel that this present Constitution removes sexist language that offends many women and provides the basis for trust in which men and women can work together with honor and dignity.

This Constitution will be discussed and changes may be made but we present it here so you, the members of DIGNITY, will be able to reflect on it. After ratification the final Constitution will again be sent to you.

(Cont P. 12)

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We, a group of homophile Catholic men and women, together with other concerned people, in order to help us become better acquainted with our faith; to understand homophile life as seen in the light of Catholic faith and morals; to equip homophile Catholics with the knowledge and motivation that will move them to Christian action in the homophile community and society in general; to acquaint ourselves with the thought of theologians on religion and the homophile; and to provide social and recreational activities which will contribute to the development of meaningful relationships and provide positive reinforcement for our life style, life goals and ideals in a setting of Christian fellowship and love, do establish this Constitution for 'DIGNITY'.

 I. STATEMENT OF POSITION AND PURPOSE

- A. We believe that ~~Catholic~~ ^{Catholic} homophiles are members of Christ's mystical Body, numbered among the people of God. We have an inherent dignity because God created us, Christ died for us, and the Holy Spirit sanctified us in Baptism, making us His Temple, and the channel through which the Love of God might become visible. Because of this, it is our right, our privilege and our duty to live the sacramental life of the Church, so that we might become more powerful instruments of God's Love working among all people.
- B. We believe that homosexuality is a natural variation of the use of sex, and that ~~homophiles~~ can express their sexuality in a manner that is consonant with Christ's teaching. We believe that ~~sex-~~uality should be exercised in an ethically responsible and unselfish way.
- C. As members of DIGNITY we wish to promote the cause of the homophile community. To do this, we must accept our responsibility to the Church, to Society and to the individual ~~Catholic homophile~~.
1. To the Church -- to work for the development of its sexual theology and for the acceptance of homophiles as full and equal members of the one Christ.
 2. To Society ----- to work for justice and social acceptance through education and legal reform.
 3. To the individual ~~homophile~~ ^{Catholic} -- to reinforce self-acceptance and ~~homophile's~~ sense of dignity, and to aid ~~homophile~~ in becoming a more active member of the Church and Society.

- Gay Catholics*
- D. DIGNITY is organized to unite all ~~Catholic~~ ~~homophiles~~, to develop leadership and to be an instrument through which the ~~Catholic~~ ~~homophile~~ may be heard by the Church and Society. *Gay*

Catholic
There are four areas of concern:

1. Spiritual Formation. We shall strive to achieve Christian Maturity through all the means at our disposal, especially the Mass, the sacraments, personal prayer and active love of neighbor. *Development*
2. Education. We wish to inform ourselves in all matters of faith as well as in all that concerns the ~~homophile~~ community so that we may develop the maturity of outlook needed to live fulfilling lives in which sexuality and spirituality are integrated, and to prepare us for ~~leadership~~ in the ~~homophile~~ movement. *Community service*
3. Social Involvement. As Catholics and as members of Society, we shall become involved in those actions that bring the love of Christ to others and provide the basis for social reform.
 - a. Toward individuals ... We wish to lead a life of service to others, hoping to render visible the love of Christ and contributing our share to building a community of love.
 - b. With ~~other~~ *Gay* groups ... We wish to work with other ~~homophile~~ groups for the cause of justice to the homophile community and for the promotion of a sense of solidarity.
 - c. With religious and secular groups ... We wish to work with them, that they may better understand homophiles and recognize present injustices.
4. Social Events. Activities of a social and recreational nature will be provided to promote an atmosphere where friendships can develop and mature, and where the homophile's sense of acceptance and dignity may be strengthened.

II. MEMBERSHIP

Membership in DIGNITY shall be open to all ~~homophile~~ ~~and heterophile~~ Catholics, clergy and laity, and to all other persons who share the religious and social values of DIGNITY, *who*

III. ORGANIZATION

A. BOARD OF GOVERNORS

J. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Governors shall be the official voice of DIGNITY. It shall establish and implement national policy. This Board shall be the Chartering authority and the final appeal board in all matters. The National Newsletter shall be under the direction of the Board of Governors.

2. BOARD MEMBERSHIP

- a. The Board shall initially consist of a minimum of five people with a possible expansion in subsequent years to a Board with a maximum of twelve people.
- b. Each Chapter and Mission of DIGNITY shall every two years elect from among its membership a representative to a National Election Committee. This Committee shall in turn elect the Board of Governors.

3. OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

The Board shall every two years elect from within its own membership a Chairperson and any other positions as deemed necessary. It shall be the responsibility of the Chairperson to see that complete and adequate minutes and financial records be kept.

4. COMMITTEES

The Board shall establish Committees as needed from within its own membership and/or the membership of DIGNITY at large in order to implement the policies and program of DIGNITY nationally.

B. CHAPTERS, EXTENSIONS, MISSIONS AND MEMBERS AT LARGE

DIGNITY shall function through Chapters, Extensions, Missions and Members-at-Large acting in harmony with this Constitution.

1. CHAPTERS

A Chapter shall consist of a group of at least twenty-five dues-paying members, Chartered by the National Board of Governors after functioning under Chapter Rules for a period of at least six months. Chapters with fewer than twenty-five members recognized prior to the date of the 1st. DIGNITY NATIONAL CONVENTION - August 31, September 1, 2 and 3, 1973 shall continue to receive full Chapter status.

Chapters shall be expected to develop and maintain the following defined herein as Chapter Rules:

- a. A minimal organization of two governing officers and permanent standing committees to care for the four areas of concern set forth in the Statement of Position and Purpose (Section I. D.).
- b. A governing Board to be known as the Board of Directors.
- c. Chapter By-Laws to be adopted by the Chapter membership and approved by the Board of Governors.

2. EXTENSIONS

An extension shall consist of Chapter members, who because of factors of time and distance cannot participate fully in the Chapter and, therefore, choose to meet to strengthen their social and spiritual development.

The formation of Extensions shall require final approval of the Board of Directors of the Chapter and the Extension shall be responsible to the Board of Directors.

An extension may become a Chapter when it meets the requirement of the Chapter Rules.

3. MISSIONS

A Mission is a group of members who are meeting with the expressed intention of forming a Chapter. *or a group which consists of fewer than 25 members.*

The Board of Governors shall assist and supervise the formation and growth of Missions.

A Mission may become a Chapter when it meets the requirements of the Chapter Rules.

A mission shall have all the rights

4. MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

People not living in the area of a Chapter or Mission may become members by paying dues to the National Office. The Board of Governors shall be responsible for the nurture of these members.

IV. AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

Amendments to the Constitution shall first be submitted in writing to the Board of Governors. The Board upon a simple majority vote of its members shall present it to the membership of DIGNITY. This action shall constitute a notice to amend. Two thirds of the votes cast from among the ~~ag~~ membership of DIGNITY shall be necessary for passage of an amendment.



If you would like to become a member-at-large you can join DIGNITY by sending one of the following into DIGNITY, P.O. Box 6161, Los Angeles, Ca. 90055 for a years membership.

___ Regular \$10.00 ___ Lovers \$15.00 ___ Business \$15.00
___ Contributing \$25.00

Name _____ Birth date _____ Phone _____

Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Occupation _____ Date _____

2. Election of the National Board of Governors. Nominations for the National Board of Governors will be made and an election will be held. This new Board will hold a panel September 3rd. to express their ideas on the future of DIGNITY.

3. Position Statements. Positions on various subjects will be made to reflect the concerns of DIGNITY as a national organization. A few could be:

Place of Gay Catholics in the Church
 Women in DIGNITY
 The Church's responsibility to Gay Catholic
 The Gay's responsibility to the Church
 Ministry to the Gay

If you have some area you would like explored please send it in for consideration.

4. Site of the next Convention. The place, time and who will host the next Convention will be discussed.

Workshops: There are many exciting workshops for non-delegates attending the convention. Some of them are:

Homosexuality in Scripture and Tradition
 Pardon Me, Myth—alleged causes of homosexuality
 Women in DIGNITY
 Holiness, Wholeness and the Gay Personality
 Potential Interaction of the Gay Community and the Church
 Sociodrama - Let us change roles
 Fidelity, Promiscuity & Open Relationships
 and more.

The schedule for the workshops and other activities will be available at the Convention.

The Convention opens Friday, August 31, 1973 at 7:00 PM at the Holiday Inn, 1755 No. Highland Ave., Hollywood, CA.

Friday, August 31st.:

Registration starts (7PM)
 Orientation
 Opening Address by Fr. John J. McNeill, S.J. (to set the tone).
 Social

Saturday, September 1st.:

Mass (8:30AM)
 Workshops and Delegate Sessions
 Tours of Gay Los Angeles Night Life

