

*DignityUSA works for respect and justice for people of all sexual orientations, genders, and gender identities—especially gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons—in the Catholic Church and the world through education, advocacy, and support.*

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continue to be targeted and subject to violence and threats, both here and around the globe, simply because of our identity. To all Dignity members and friends who have lost spouses, partners, family members, friends, or community members this year, know that your loved ones are in our prayers this month.

As Veterans Day approaches, we also give thanks to those who have served in the military, and to all who have worked to ensure that LGBTQ people can serve openly. We pray for all involved in current conflicts, and that a deep and lasting peace may come to troubled areas.

One of the most significant memorials observed in November is Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR), commemorated on November 20. During the first 10 months of 2016, at least 23 transgender people have been murdered in the U.S. This number has been climbing every year. Most of those murdered are women of color, mostly black women. The annual observance of TDOR must become more than another date on our calendars. As people of faith, committed to the dignity of each person, this memorial compels us to work for the eradication of such violence. Visit the [TDOR site](#) for a link to events for TDOR. (See related article on p. 4 of this issue of *Dateline*.)

And as the month ends, we are invited to reflect on all the blessings in our lives, and to raise prayers of gratitude. Thanksgiving is a time Dignity communities often celebrate the ways in which we are family to one another by enjoying a meal together and celebrating the gifts we treasure. At this time, DignityUSA's Board and staff are always especially grateful for all of you who support Dignity as members, donors, volunteers, and community members. We wish you all a wonderful celebration of Thanksgiving, and a deep sense of the many blessings you experience.

Finally, we urge you to vote in this very important election. So much is at stake, nationally, at the state level, and in local communities. May all who are elected be guided by Wisdom and commitment to the common good. May they further the cause of justice for all people, including the LGBTQ community.

## In November, We Remember and Give Thanks

By Marianne Duddy-Burke, DignityUSA Executive Director



As darkness becomes more of a presence in our daily lives this time of the year, our liturgical calendar calls us to reflection, remembrance, and anticipation. We Catholics start the month of November with two important feasts, All Saints Day and All Souls Day. Many Dignity Chapters honor LGBTQ people

and loved ones who have passed from this life in moving liturgies. We celebrate the fullness of their lives, and try to offer some condolence to those who are grieving. It is important that we do this. Even today, there are situations in which sexuality or gender identity is hidden during funerals. And even when the lives of the deceased have been fully acknowledged shortly after their deaths, these November remembrances help us affirm that they remain part of our Communion of Saints. This year, we must also recall the 49 people murdered at Pulse in Orlando, a sobering reminder that LGBTQ people

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## New Year, New *Dateline*

DignityUSA is constantly striving to improve our connections with our members, donors, and friends, and to increase our efficiency. Both goals were paramount when the Board reviewed our current communication processes at their meeting in Indianapolis, September 30 – October 2, 2016.

Recognizing that most people now want information quickly and in short, manageable amounts, the Board decided to make the following changes to our publications and schedule:

- As of January 1, 2017, *Dateline* will change from a monthly newsletter to a biweekly email blast. It will feature DignityUSA news, chapter and caucus news, information on upcoming events, transitions, and administrative news.
- Action alerts and information on major news stories will continue to be released by email and Facebook on an as-needed basis.
- Facebook updates will be posted daily.
- *Breath of the Spirit* will be sent weekly on Wednesdays by email and Facebook.
- The *QV* or *Quarterly Voice* is being suspended. As new issues emerge, DignityUSA may decide to publish a *DignityUSA Journal* that explains the issue and provides an LGBTQ Catholic perspective, continuing our long tradition as a thought leader.
- Information on elections, conference registration, and other news will be sent via email as needed.
- People who do not have access to email will continue to receive a monthly mailing of DignityUSA information. If you need this service, please contact Peggy Burns at 1-800-877-8797.

**Please be sure that we have your correct email information on file!** You can check this by emailing Peggy at [info@dignityusa.org](mailto:info@dignityusa.org). If you change emails in the future, please remember to let us know.

Chapter, caucus, and community news and information on transitions (weddings, deaths, births, adoptions, awards, etc.), including photos, can be submitted to [communications@dignityusa.org](mailto:communications@dignityusa.org).

Thank you to all who have worked on our print publications throughout the years. Your commitment to spreading the Good News has helped keep DignityUSA strong.

## International Church Reform Leaders Call on the Church to End Anti-LGBT Violence

By Marianne Duddy-Burke, DignityUSA Executive Director

October 29, 2016: At a just-concluded gathering of more than 40 Church Reform leaders held just outside Chicago, there was strong interest in the experience of LGBTQ Catholics and families. A work group on these issues developed a resolution, which was **unanimously endorsed** by the representatives of 11 countries from Australia, Europe, North America, and South America.

*We, the representatives of an international network of priest groups and reform organizations (assembled in Chicago 2016), affirm that the dignity of the human person is clearly expressed in the Gospels and the social justice teachings of our Church. It is this dignity that should be the foundation of a truly Catholic response to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people and their families.*

*We, therefore, commit ourselves to stand against violence in all its forms--physical, emotional, spiritual and temporal--toward LGBT people. We encourage the Church's leaders and individual members to make the same commitment.*

A working group will be developing concrete actions to further this commitment, and we expect it will include promoting Solidarity Sunday in the communities and nations represented at this gathering.

## A Special Note from DignityUSA President Lewis Speaks-Tanner

October 29, 2016: This week, our Executive Director, Marianne Duddy-Burke, was part of an assembly of Church reformers that brought together lay leaders, women religious, and priests from 11 countries, four continents, and five languages. In two weeks, she will be one of two U.S. representatives to the meeting of *International Movement We Are Church* in Rome. In both circles, she is the only openly LGBTQ person there specifically charged with raising our concerns and witnessing to our gifts.

While in Rome, Marianne will be delivering the Reflection at a memorial for the victims of the Pulse shooting and other victims of anti-LGBTQ violence sponsored by LGBTQ Catholic groups in Italy. She will

also be meeting with officials at the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See.

We are very proud that the international Church is increasingly embracing its LGBTQ members and our families, and of the role DignityUSA has played, and will continue to play. We took seriously your charge from our

2015 Seattle convention about international concerns, and have made this work a priority. We ask for your prayers for these efforts, and for Marianne's travels. We also ask you to show your support for these initiatives with a financial gift. Your contribution of any amount can be made at <https://www.dignityusa.org/page/give>. You can also use this link to join DignityUSA, so Marianne will carry your voice.

Thank you for your support!



*International gathering of Catholic reform movement leaders in Chicago*



## Development News

### Campaign Yields New "Guardian Angels"

By Chris Pett, DignityUSA Board Member and Development Committee Chair



DignityUSA's Guardian Angel appeal was conducted in late September and early October and yielded five new Guardian Angels. Thanks to those who have joined more than 80 other Guardian Angels who have committed to be sustaining contributors to DignityUSA. It's not too late to sign up. Please go to DignityUSA <https://www.dignityusa.org/angel> website to check out how you can sign up today!

Our work overseas is being noticed: DignityUSA has received \$1,280 in contributions specifically to support our international work.

### DignityUSA is an Approved Charity for the Combined Federal Campaign!



**Attention Federal employees:** Starting with the Fall 2016 Campaign, you can designate DignityUSA as a charity to receive your pre-tax workplace contributions! Campaigns began in September; please indicate that you would like to have your gift benefit CFC number #73047 -- DignityUSA on paper form, or DignityUSA (Dignity, Inc.) online. We'd be so grateful if you elect to direct your giving to DignityUSA. Thank you for your support!

### Nov. 20: Trans Day of Remembrance

By Lauren Carpenter, DignityUSA Board Member

On November 20, communities around the world will gather to commemorate Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR), a day to honor and to grieve the transgender people who were murdered in hate crimes in the past year. At least 23 transgender people have been murdered this year, the majority of them transgender women of color.



Transgender Day of Remembrance is also a day for all people to commit to actions that will eliminate hatred and violence against transgender people. The Transgender Support Caucus encourages all chapters to commemorate TDOR in some way, especially as it falls on a Sunday this year. In early November, the Transgender Support Caucus will distribute a prayer and other resources for Dignity communities to use in their services. For more information on people to be remembered this year, and to post your community's service to a national list of events, please visit <https://tdor.info>.



## DignityUSA's Women's Gathering Traveling Light

By Ann Marie Szpakowska, Dignity/Buffalo

The 6th Dignity Women's Gathering took place on the weekend of September 23-25, 2016 at the Edward House on the outskirts of Framingham, Massachusetts. The Retreat and Conference Center is a Ministry of the United Church of Christ. Warmly welcomed and given a quick tour of the facility, we were soon left to fend for ourselves. We gravitated towards the sun-room adjacent to the assigned board room. Women arrived one by one and two by two from the Boston area, Buffalo, Long Island, and Madison. Hugs, smiles, and greeting followed as we once again reconnected, but soon became conscious of those who would not or could not be with us. We marveled that we had made it, given the obstacles and detours that plagued us. Our chosen theme was "Harvesting Your Gratitude Attitude." Honour, our emcee, pointed out that we already lived in gratefulness for all that was, is, and will be, and we simply needed to touch the memories of our blessings.

Except for Kathy Ann and Alice, we all seem to have travelled light, while they had filled their car with what we might need – lap top and tablet, art supplies and games, CDs and player. Snacks, wine and Mary Kay's photo cards also appeared and were laid on tables. Although an outline of our time together had been generated, strangely name tags, hand-outs, or lyric sheets never showed up. After Honour located the right cable, the laptop was connected and we viewed and sang along to YouTube videos. The laptop gave us the freedom to share songs and readings that moved us. Ann Marie could not resist sharing Carrie Newcomer's "Room at the Table" in light of the theme of the DignityUSA Boston Conference of 2017. Soon the women sang and moved in delight, even expressing the possibility of including the song in some prayer time at the Conference.



No Dignity Women's Gathering would be complete without singing, and Kathy Ann's gestures to "One Woman's Welcome," yet even Chris was without her guitar. "I'm So Grateful" by Karen Drucker and "Sanctuary" by Carrie Newcomer were added to our repertoire. Justin Timberlake's "Can't Stop the Feeling" video made an appearance at this retreat setting our toes a tappin'. Our evening recreation was filled with laughter as we amused ourselves with a game of "Catch Phrase." It was new to some of us. You are given a word or a phrase and must clue the rest via other words or panto-mime. There were many hilarious moments. What would be your clue for "crack a smile?"

We listened to Mary Oliver's poem "Gratitude," and "Every Woman needs another Woman," an essay by Carolyn Lebandowski from the website [womanforone](http://womanforone.com). The Gospel retold the story of the ten lepers. Our Eucharist Prayer came from our liturgist, Diann Neu of WATER (Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual). Having wine but no hosts, pita or bread, we were given Wonder Bread and the salt shaker top to create cut-out hosts.

Our time together concluded in participating in the Catholic Lesbian Queer conference call sponsored by DignityUSA and WATER, facilitated by Marianne Duddy-Burke. The topic explored was Identifying Lesbian or Queer while in Religious Life. Becky Duddy-Burke spoke of her experiences which led to both rich conversation and the obligatory pregnant pauses. We became known as "the Women in the Living Room." While our phone was muted, some shared that we had either considered a vocation to religious life or spent our school years observing the comings and goings of "the nuns." "Why must they travel in threes?" we wondered as children.

The Women of Dignity will have four opportunities to get together at the Boston Conference in July: Pre-Convention Gathering, Women's Liturgy/Ritual,

*continued on page 6*



*Traveling Light, continued from page 5*

Women's Caucus, and Women's Dinner on the town. Mary Beth, a young Dignity/Boston member, whom we had the pleasure of meeting for the first time, has been "voluntold" to scope out some nearby restaurants where we could reserve a private room. Each of us will be expected to pay for our meal. While reminiscing, we gave Mary Beth a short history of our struggles as women in DignityUSA, an organization that continue to be mostly male, so it was great to see Christine again, one of our pioneer leaders when Regions were the norm and the Committee of Women's Concern was active and trying to link women across the chapters. The other three events have not been planned, so your needs, ideas, vision, and direction would be welcomed. You can "voluntell" yourself. You may email or call Peggy at the Dignity national office to give you direction as to who to contact.

You may be wondering why I would include the resources we used at the Women's Retreat in this article. Let me explain: It is in the hope that something may prove useful as chapters, friends, and families celebrate Thanksgiving. We are all susceptible to ruts and we think we have to do it like we've always done it. There is a place for old traditions, but the world won't end if we bring something new, borrowed, or bluesy. So check out the songs, find the videos, or read the essay or poem. We began our time together naming the women in their absence and we place their names on leaves, butterflies, and apples we glued to the tree. The tree along with twigs, leaves, and acorns became our altar cloth and then travelled to Dignity/Boston's 5:00 p.m. Sunday liturgy, where it became the altar parament (an ornamental ecclesiastical hanging).



We brought all we thought we needed. What was needed but forgotten was supplied. And we left lighter still, yet overflowing with a harvest of blessings, memory, and friendships we will revisit often, and reap when we meet again. When Jean and I got home an Amazon package awaited us and I opened Carrie Newcomer's book, "The Beautiful Not Yet." There a cycle poems from "Betty's Dinner: the Musical" called "A Circle of Seasons" caught my heart and ear:

This is how we love in the golden light of autumn.  
We know what is coming and so we walk further and longer.

Just to feel it and live it, and take it completely  
and joyously into our hearts.

But let go we must although we resist  
as surely as each leaf bids farewell to the branch,  
launching and lifting into the air.

Late autumn is the season of abundance and loss,  
the harvest comes in,

the gardens are made ready,  
the nights are getting longer,

and every day the leaves fall like so many golden coins.

But this loss does not feel like the wailing of grief.

It is more like the final notes of a beautiful song,  
when we lean into the ache of those last vibrations,

our hearts broken open,

empty hands reaching as the sound fades into soft  
memory.

The dark nights are coming, but they are not here yet.

So let us be grateful for what was and what is,

for the air filled with rain and dust

and the circling descent of fire colored leaves.



## *Faith Community News*

### **Dignity/Chicago Hosts "Coming out Stories"**

By Mike Hogan, Dignity/Chicago

On Saturday, October 22, Dignity/Chicago hosted an evening of story-telling by members and friends. The stories were focused on their coming out experiences, in celebration of National Coming Out Day. The stories were powerful, funny, sad, and all quite moving. There was a feeling of being in a sacred space as the story tellers shared their personal journeys. The gathering was held in the private dining room of a local restaurant and went from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., with refreshments being served. It was hard to believe that we were there for three hours. This was the first event sponsored by the Spiritual/Education Committee of the chapter. The chapter is looking to offer other opportunities outside of the liturgy to serve the needs of the LGBTQ community of Chicago. We advertised the event through email, Facebook, our chapter website, and various other social media. A wonderful result was that some of the people who came and told stories had never heard of Dignity, but saw it on Facebook. We had information about DignityUSA and Dignity/Chicago available.

Our chapter president, Ramon Rodriguez, opened the program with some information about our Spiritual/Education Committee and its goals and said that this was the first in a series of events. We had a simple survey for attendees to fill out and share their reactions to the program, and also to suggest possible program topics in the future. All of the comments were quite positive, and we received some great



suggestions. We also had attendees sign in and invited them to list their email addresses so that we would be able to keep in touch with them. It was an incredibly uplifting evening that not only introduced some new people to Dignity/Chicago, but also brought us closer together as a chapter.



## New York Chapter Presents Highest Service Award to GLAAD

By Jeff Stone, DignityUSA Director of Media Relations

Dignity/New York presented its highest service award to GLAAD at its forty-fourth anniversary dinner, held on October 24 at the Salmagundi Art Club in New York City. Ross Murray, currently GLAAD's programs director for the Global and U.S. South, accepted the chapter's Charles Gormley Award on behalf of his organization. The Gormley Award, given annually for outstanding longtime service to Dignity and the LGBTQ community, was presented particularly in recognition and appreciation of GLAAD's long history of offering vital assistance in media relations to Dignity/New York, DignityUSA, and many of our chapters and members across the country.

GLAAD's help was especially valuable during the height of the media attention to the sexual abuse crisis in the Church, the struggle for marriage equality, and, more recently, the election and early papacy of Pope Francis, the unjust firings of LGBTQ employees from Catholic institutions, and DignityUSA's increased focus on international LGBTQ issues. In addition to helping us hone our message and get it out through the media on numerous occasions, GLAAD staff have frequently attended our national conventions and offered media training to our spokespeople at the national and local levels.



*Left-to-right: Jeff Stone (Dignity/New York), Ross Murray (GLAAD), and Lewis Speaks-Tanner, DignityUSA President (Dignity/New York)*

DignityUSA President Lewis Speaks-Tanner, New York chapter secretary Jeff Stone, and Ross Murray gratefully acknowledged this long partnership in their remarks. Murray also highlighted what he saw as the ongoing vitality of Dignity, as we continue to bear witness that Catholic identity and LGBTQ identity need not be opposed; to hold the Vatican and the bishops accountable for words and actions regarding LGBTQ people that contradict Gospel values; and to work for the full inclusion and equality of LGBTQ people in Church and society, not in spite of our faith, but because of it.



## *Transition*

·REQUIESCAT IN·  
PACE

**George Lucas**

January 1, 1928—August 8, 2016

Longtime former Dignity/Seattle member, who hosted Dignity/Seattle's New Year's Eve parties as a prelude to his January 1st birthday.