

Jubilee Discussions - Discussion Recording Form - 1

Date: 2/12/18_____

Chapter /Community/Caucus: Pittsburgh

SEGMENT ONE: RECALLING OUR ROOTS

Facilitator / Recorder Worksheet

What was the initial need that Dignity USA/ Dignity Dayton was organized to meet and that drove our rapid growth from a local community in L.A. to a national network of chapters? What "fueled" our engine"? There was NO place in Pittsburgh for us to go; no church would allow us; We found each other and finally there was a place where we could BE OURSELVES

How did the mission of Dignity evolve over time? What drove those changes in how we did our work? Consider dynamics in the organization, in the Church, and in society. In what ways might your chapter/community/caucus have contributed to this evolution? Our chapter had a rich tradition of former priests, former and active sisters and seminarians who gave us a deep spirituality. These folks have blessed us and kept us vibrant and appealing. We have been a progressive chapter working on Women's Equality Issues as the original group were women. Affirmation of self worth was truly our goal ; 2-3 retreats were held annually, and connected with the region's resources well.

The theme of our 50th Anniversary Conference is "True to the Spirit, True to Ourselves." In what ways has "being true to ourselves and true to the calling of the Spirit" evident in our history? Your local history? (See Patrick Journet's letter in Dateline) We have been successful at having the founding members of Dignity/Pittsburgh gather together with our currently active members for an annual Reunion Summer Picnic, as well as a Spring Potluck Dinner. We also plan an outdoor Eucharistic Liturgy at one of our member's homes. Bill and Donna P host a game night each Thursday evening for our members and supporters. This past Holy Thursday, those attending game night also celebrated

Eucharist together with the simplicity of those who gathered with Jesus at His Last Supper. Donna P provides us with a "spiritual snack" seven times a day in an email to help us remain centered in our indwelling source of peace and love, Jesus' Spirit, through all circumstances.

Three of our members, Donna B, and Bill and Donna P, serve on the planning committee for the Circle of Faith annual June Outdoor Program, which began four years ago. This COF gathering is a public interfaith welcome and inclusion program for LGBT individuals, their families, and their allies in the Pittsburgh area.

I am Dignity's representative for Shepherd Wellness which is a community in service and ministry for those affected by HIV/AIDS. We are also blessed to have Shepherd Wellness' founder FR Lynn C. Edwards joining us for our Sunday evening liturgies and socials.

We have helped in the Pittsburgh area in the service and feeding of our homeless population

Locally, and nationally, how has Dignity changed lives for the better?

Changed the Catholic Community? I joined Dignity/ Pittsburgh in the summer of 1981. We had 45-50 members. We met at St. Pamphilus, a Roman Catholic Church under the pastoral care of Franciscan Friars. Now we are in 2016 and I can truly say without hesitation that... "our Pittsburgh chapter has finally grown to become a community, a faith family." For years we were struggling to become a community.

In the last couple of years Rev. William (Bill) and Donna P returned to our chapter. Though actively absent for a couple years due to health reasons, they always lovingly supported us in prayer and financially since their initial association in 2001. Both of them and I are Board Directors for CITI Ministries, Inc. CITI Ministries is an organization that promotes the ministries of married priests and building up of small faith communities. Rev. Bill and Donna became our spiritual parents. The Spirit worked with Bill, Donna, and our core group to form our community, a family where all find a place to call "home".