

## Jubilee Discussions - Discussion Recording Form - 2

Submitted by: Gene Corpuz Date 3/25/18

Chapter or Community Dignity Honolulu (Discussion was held on 2/15/18)

### BEFORE:

- Review the Facilitator Guide, focusing attention on the objectives, session outline, roles and potential approaches to managing the discussion and capturing the information
- Prepare the approaches to the discussion, e.g. post its, small and large group discussions, brainstorming, voting, etc.

### AFTER:

- Notify the Board representative that this first segment is completed and plan on returning the inputs within 14 days
- Review the notes and any other information (videos, artifacts, etc.) to ensure they are legible and can be forwarded to the designated DignityUSA board representative
- If possible, feel free to summarize the notes into key points so that the less detailed, most important content is provided

Complete the feedback sheet and return it with the other information

## SEGMENT TWO: TAKING STOCK TODAY

Facilitator / Recorder Worksheet

**How is the national movement called Dignity different today than it was in the 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's? How is your local expression different? How are YOU different?**

- 1960's : Gay and lesbian people wanted to be acknowledged as valid citizens and resisted being labeled sinful and sick
- Dignity started in 1969 (Los Angeles, San Diego) and then to New York with help from Fr. John McNeil
- Dignity members wanted to be accepted in churches, although not ready to come out due to the risk of losing their jobs, being rejected by their families, and general acceptance in the community.
- At the Dignity convention in Chicago in the 70's, there was a general feeling that many members were non-sexual/celibate, and that they wanted to be good Catholics
- Dignity Honolulu began in 1976 and was officially chartered at the Dignity USA convention in 1977
- Gay and lesbian people started to come out due to Harvey Milk and his opposition to Proposition 6 in California during the 70's. The LGBT community victory opposing this proposition encouraged many to come out of the closet and be proud and gay. Gay pride spread all over the country.
- Also in the 80's, Catholic priests were more sympathetic toward gay people

- This was demonstrated during the Dignity USA convention in Seattle when the Eucharistic liturgy was held in the Cathedral and approved by Archbishop Hunthausen (1975-1991).
- Gay people in the 70's and 80's were cautious about coming out as shown by Dignity members using alias on membership rosters. In fact there were spies at Dignity gatherings (conventions, liturgies, etc.)
- This can be contrasted with out priest with their partners at Dignity events. In addition Gene, current president of Dignity Honolulu has been commenting on gay issues in the media (newspaper, TV)
- From the 70's there have been thousands of books written on LGBTQI issues. On such author was Dignity USA's own Fr. John McNeil. His first book was "The Church and the Homosexual" and his last book was "Sex as God Intended (copyright 2008).

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- From the late 80's and early 90's there were more members in Dignity Honolulu. Many of them although Christian, were not Catholic but came to Dignity events because they were accepted as being Christian and gay. They have now joined other churches which are "open and affirming", some even displaying the rainbow flag.
- We have had more women in our local chapter, with some serving on the board and as lay presiders. Now we only have one woman attending our events, who is going into ministry but does not participate regularly.
- We have the support of the Ecumenical Catholic Church which ministers to our chapter with mass twice a month. They have ordained new priests and have consecrated a bishop in their order.

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- We are different now that we are older. We are blessed by the positive strides in equal rights such as marriage equality, and non discrimination laws in our state for LGBT people for employment, and public accommodations. Same gender marriage is a "game changer" in that some of our members have officiated at weddings and some members of Dignity Honolulu are either married or considering it for themselves.
- One couple is now residing in a senior living facility that provides assisted living services due the declining health status of one of the partners. Their acceptance as couple is impressive.

**Considering the passion and conviction that fueled our growth, how well is our “engine” running, in terms of inspiring passion, involvement, change, etc. – in service to our mission today?**

- The change to Dignity USA's mission statement was unanimous. The addition of Q & I for Queer and Intersex resulted in the inclusion of LGBTQI, the six letters matching the 6 colors on the rainbow flag. This change indicates that Dignity USA is relevant today.

- It was noted at the Dignity USA convention in San Francisco (2009) that our membership is aging. A concerted effort was made to reach younger people - Young Adult Caucus. It has been successful with more younger members (under 40) joining Dignity USA, some of them attending the biennial conventions/conferences and serving on the Dignity USA Board
- These younger members are conscious that goal of this organization is to be spiritually aware and disciplined, rather than just to be OUT and gay. This understanding aligns with the Mission Statement and Statement of Position and Purpose

**Is the mission and purpose of Dignity still relevant today? If not, why not? If it is, what key challenges and opportunities do you see ahead?**

- Under the atmosphere of our current Administration we have been challenged to speak truth to power as a non-profit, non-political organization. Although Pope Francis has shown support for LGBT people, the current hierarchy in the U.S. still promotes discrimination such as the firing of gay and lesbian employees in the Church as well as denying gay lesbian couples from adopting children through Catholic Charities. Dignity has been outspoken on these issue have been called upon as a resource.
- The Dignity USA membership is more diverse with more women and people of color, as well as members not affiliated with a chapter like the current Dignity USA Vice President, Lauren who is committed to serving the organization.
- Local chapters have members who are supportive of one another which contributes their health and well-being. Our Christian mentoring and involvements with members, friends, and allies contribute to the well-being of those in our communities.

**With the benefit of hindsight, how has Dignity changed lives for the better, locally and nationally? Changed the Catholic community? Impacted the LGBTQ social justice movement?**

- Dignity USA has been the source for responses to breaking news regarding LGBTQI issues locally and nationally. Marianne Duddy-Burke has been our champion in this regard. Kevin Callegari while President of Dignity USA, was our "Martin Luther" when he nailed Dignity's thesis to a door in Rome.
- Others associated with Dignity have helped clarified issues of sexuality and spirituality such as the before-mentioned John McNeil, Sr. Jeanine Gramick, Daniel Helminiak, and Patrick S. Cheng (author-- "An Introduction to Queer Theology-Radical Love)
- Dignity members have been present at courtrooms, lobbied in legislatures, present at pride marches and other demonstrations to defend human rights and bring about justice -- marriage equality.
- Dignity both nationally and locally have confronted the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church when LGBTQI Catholics have suffered violence and prejudice from the Church.
- For Dignity to be relevant today, it needs to address the needs of both its younger and older members. Younger members - looking for new ways to express their spirituality; older members --who require more care and support due to their health status and socioeconomic standing. Bill Baird, an active

member in Dignity for many years, has moved into a senior community with his partner John which supports the LGBT elders. We need to find ways we can support our aging membership physically and spiritually.

## SESSION FEEDBACK FORM

(To be completed following each Segment discussion)

- Approximately what percentage of your community participated? \_\_. How productive was this conversation for your community? As a facilitator, what worked well and why?
  - About 40% of the local membership participated in this discussion
  - It was a very productive conversation because of the varying levels of experience and history that the members have with Dignity
  - What worked well was more advance notice of the date and time of the planned discussion and frequent mention during announcements at liturgy
  
- What would you do differently next time? Consider both the preparation, the actual conversation and follow-up.
  - We would probably keep the format similar-- we had our discussion in a restaurant that had large tables that the group could discuss the various questions while having dinner
  
- What are your suggestions for improving the supporting materials, process and the discussion they were meant to encourage?
  - N/A