



Discussion Recording Form

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Chapter or Community: Dignity Boston, founded 1972.

Following is our report from Segment Three: DISCERNING THE PATH FORWARD.

Our community discussion took place over two evenings – one in October 2018 and the second in December 2018, in order to encourage the largest possible percentage of the community to participate.

Questions were also shared in advance in order to encourage submission of responses via email.

The committee opted to initiate Segment 3 by asking the following question, which was then discussed in small groups at tables over dinner, and reported out to the full group:

10/21/2018

Prompt 1: Think about Dignity Boston. In ten or fifteen years, if you were a leader of Dignity Boston, what would you say you're up to in the chapter? What's new? What projects are you working on? What does the life of the chapter look like?

Bonus question: How did you get there?

Prompt 2: Think about DignityUSA. In ten or fifteen years, if you were a leader of DignityUSA, what would you say you're up to in the national organization? What's new? What projects are you working on? What does the life of the organization look like?

Bonus question: How did you get there?

Each group had this conversation at their own tables, created a poster, and displayed their poster around the room. The groups are listed below as 1-6, with notes from their vision for Dignity Boston and DignityUSA.



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Dignity Boston	Dignity USA
<p>Group 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue with the diocese continuing or increasing • Hopefully more reciprocal dialogue with the Vatican than it's been before now 	<p>Group 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As time goes by and more young people get married and have children, we should now be starting to develop a religious education (K-12). We should start this now. • We should develop a program to deal with wakes and funerals • Continued Conferences • Continued non-electronic and non-internet-based information (e.g. mailings) • Potentially having a headquarters for DUSA
<p>Group 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of us will be much older than we are today • Some of us will have concerns about driving, transportation problems • Could have impact on membership, attendance, how we have liturgy • Change in time of service, meeting during the day • Spreading out across the state, going back to home liturgies • Changing up frequency of how often we meet • Switch up neighborhoods where we meet • Catholic church of USA separates from Rome with an opportunity to merge more Catholic inclusive communities • Reawakening the spirituality of young people 	<p>Group 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will be known as "The Force" • Healing of Catholic/Christian+ communities which will bring folks back to church • Regionalization of USA • Broadcast liturgies • Global connections increased • Coming together of global organizations • USA as liaison to the Vatican to work on policy, doctrine, and dogma • Coming together of one cohesive unit that negates the need of DignityUSA
<p>Group 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflected in lots of other groups 	<p>Group 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding beyond the LGBTQI community



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See ourselves as part of a larger network of other small, faith, intentional communities that already exist • See our future as broadening our membership to include whoever comes through our doors and having to market ourselves as that, not strictly for LGBTQI Catholics • Providing service and ministries across a lifespan (children, older adults, families, etc.) • DUSA doing similar outreach • Hope to be attractive to a broader population, but that will necessitate giving up some of our own identity as an LGBTQI organization. This is a challenge to let go in order to be open to a broader opportunity and possibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of further sexual ethics study, statements • Insist that the Church change the language about sexuality in the Catechism.
<p>Group 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain LGBTQI "core" of our identity while welcoming other social justice Catholics • People who are not seeing social justice work in the institutional church will want to associate with us • Offering social justice work for LGBTQI people through a Catholic lens • Righteous anger through a faith lens • Continue to feed our human resources through leadership development • Intersectional and intergenerational • The Institutional Church is becoming like "the Emperor has no clothes" about human sexuality, but also because they have handled the clergy sex abuse crisis so poorly and without 	<p>Group 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flourishing, even if the local chapter model is de-emphasized • More virtual/social media connections • More regional gatherings to connect USA members • More USA-driven initiatives that serve all -- e.g. religious education • We'll be globally interconnected • How do we be a resource for sexual ethics without becoming the sheriff?



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<p>integrity that many people are fleeing. Important to name that. There are so many people who are wounded by the institutional church in ways that do not have to do with their sexual orientation.</p>	
<p>Group 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think we'll be doing a lot of the same things, as we were ten years ago • Harbor to the Bay HIV/AIDS fundraising ride, Friday Night Supper meals program, Thanksgiving liturgy and community meal, Pride celebration, etc. • May take on another cause (in the same way that we took on equal marriage and protecting transgender equality in Commonwealth of MA) • Reaching out to straight allies more frequently and with more depth • Reaching out to more age groups • Unsure if we'll be in the same space • Will trans-awareness still be an issue to work on? 	<p>Group 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take on international LGBTQI issues, shifting of attention • May be ordaining our own priests at the USA level • Will trans issues still be an issue? • Fighting the unfolding sexual abuse crisis of the Church and ensuring that we don't become the scapegoats • Further separating from the institutional Church
<p>Group 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having lots of families with kids • Lots of people of the global majority • Large in-person membership • People participate through music liturgically • Members create our music (write and arrange) • We break out of LGBTQI, getting the disenfranchised of the institutional church • Social Justice is a community foundation • Continue to evolve theologically (e.g. environmental stewardship) 	<p>Group 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-respected and known internationally • Clear brand (we are not the funeral parlor!) • Continued strong leadership • Eradicating harmful and dehumanizing theology of the church • More alliances with other like-minded communities and organizations • Enhanced opportunities for collaboration among chapters • More diverse leadership • Staff of 100 people who are all paid!



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Dignity Boston	Dignity USA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More equal value for lay-led and clergy-led liturgies 	

SEGMENT THREE: DISCERNING THE PATH FORWARD

Facilitator / Recorder Worksheet
Community Discussion – December 9, 2018

1. When we last met we talked about key challenges and opportunities we saw ahead. Those were.... How do we need to change to tackle the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities?

- We have not yet achieved full inclusion in church or society
- Interfacing with the institutional church when we are outside of it
- Mission and purpose of DignityUSA are still relevant today
- Consider being more inclusive to people outside of LGBTQI community
- How to stay relevant when there are more “affirming” congregations, Catholic and otherwise
- Thinking about the future of DignityUSA in shorter increments (2-3 years) not 10

2. What should the key priorities of DignityUSA be in the next few years? What’s most important to us; what values from our rich history do we want to ensure are carried forward?

KEY PRIORITIES FOR DIGNITYUSA

1. Growth
2. Collaboration - Global
3. Counter-balance institutional church – Be the voice for LGBTQI Catholics
4. Be intentional about welcoming non-LGBTQI people – outreach to progressive “seekers.”
5. Be nimble about language – stay current with identity terminology.

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6. Center the “T” part of our LGBTQI identity. Actively inclusify language, and make other trans-welcoming changes. Educate ourselves.
7. Connect DignityUSA messaging to opportunities for local experience – worship, socializing, finding community, activism.
8. Remember our triple identity – we’re a church, a community and a family.

3. What resources do we need to fuel our “engine” (passion and purpose) in the future? Why would people want to invest their life energy and financial resources in support of this desired future?

These questions were answered with two “Post it” exercises, in which participants posted their ideas on flip charts as a spark to discussion and deeper consideration.

Post it exercise #1 - What resources do we need to fuel our engine (passion + purpose) in the future?

1. Fearlessness
2. People
3. Anti-bias training for the board
4. \$ (four post-it notes)
5. Hire professional to manage social media with dedicated collections to support this endeavor.
6. Some time to rest to balance our gifts of time to our liturgies and committee.
7. Music
8. Empowered and bold laity – even bolder religious and Curia.
9. Using our talents.
10. New expanded progressive theology and liturgical practice.
11. Strong social media presence.
12. Volunteer time.
13. Protecting our most active members by sharing knowledge and delegating responsibilities to avoid burnout.
14. To fuel our engine – Youth, Greater numbers, more money.
15. Many people with willingness to work toward common goal.

16. Creative ways of advertising.
17. Energy.
18. Volunteer time.
19. Financial stability.
20. Advocating for intersectional justice.
21. Organizational support.
22. Education for everyone about language and newer ways of understanding LGBTQI.
23. Knowledge in social media.
24. Clearly defined messaging to tell our stories.
25. Growth in numbers.
26. Community building resources – we can't do it alone!
27. Connection with younger and more racially and religiously diverse groups.
28. Connection between chapters.
29. Kindness.

Post it exercise #2 – Why would people want to invest their life energy and financial resources in support of this desired future?

1. People will invest when they know their money is used for necessities, not coverups.
2. Authenticity without hierarchical resistance.
3. We save lives.
4. Esteem value.
5. Justice, Justice, Justice.
6. Dignity is a forever home.
7. Evangelize – continue a faith tradition.
8. Show the church hierarchy how it is done!
9. People will invest \$ when they hear what we do through DignityUSA responding to church doctrine.
10. Upholding God-given identity with a supportive framework.
11. Preserve life.
12. Shared ownership.
13. Legacy.
14. Because they have a real stake in our community.
15. Sustain community.
16. Truth.
17. Our loyalty is to our members, not the institution – Integrity – Grassroots.
18. To help others encounter Christ in a loving way.
19. Faith in Dignity.



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20. Because we're family and we care for each other.
21. Because we have beautiful liturgy that speaks genuinely to our experience.
22. Believe in Dignity's mission and instilling change within the Catholic church.
23. "We can still be your way of compassion."
24. To be part of social justice work.
25. Dignity Boston stands for you.
26. Dignity = Gospel Values
27. Connection and stories
28. Relationships – human connections with like-minded and like-acting people
29. Internal community building and learning activities.
30. Active rather than reactive.
31. Dignity provides hope.
32. This work is needed so that we can keep our home (this community.)
33. To feel a sense of connection with others who are like-minded.
34. To ensure a loving and safe place to share God's love comfortably.

4. What is this community's guidance to the national leadership as they create a strategic plan for the next few years of DignityUSA's mission and work? Consider topics such as key commitments to mission, key goals, investments, financial resources, volunteer and leadership resources, talent recruitment and partnerships/outreach.

DignityUSA is heading in the right direction, reaching outward globally and nationally to the greatest extent possible. Our orientation as a national organization and a movement should be looking at the needs of the world and determining where we can best address them.

We were founded in the idea of bringing people from isolation into community and affirming human dignity. That is still our work today, so our lens should always be to ask ourselves: does this work bring people from isolation or separation into community and connection, and does this work affirm human dignity? If the answer is yes, it is our work. The rest is all prioritization, what can we take on now or what must we address later, what can we afford, do we have the staff and resources?



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SESSION FEEDBACK FORM

(To be completed following each Segment discussions)

- 1) Approximately what percentage of your community participated? ____ How productive was this conversation for your community? As a facilitator, what worked well and why?

Segment Three: About 80-90% of our usual attendees participated in this conversation. By having two sessions for segment 3 and serving dinner both times, we were able to attract more overall voices to the conversation, including those who had been in the community for 40 years seated at the same table with those who had been in the community for less than 6 months. The community took the process seriously in the mist of our business time of the year and addressed the questions with conviction and concern.

We definitely needed two evenings to cover all of this.

- 2) What would you do differently next time? Consider both preparation, the actual conversation and follow-up.

Jubilee conversations have been a powerful reminder that we enjoy talking with each other about our community and national organization. Most of us in the room are passionate, committed and involved.

- 3) What are your suggestions for improving the supporting materials, process, and the discussion they were meant to encourage?

The framing questions were helpful in building our understanding of the output you wanted from the conversations, but we needed to revise the questions in order to make them work in our context.