

Hi Bob. Here's our report from Round Three in the Jubilee series. Best regards.

Question One: How do we need to change to tackle the challenges ahead, and to take advantages of opportunities?

1. There is a current situation that might be an opportunity for us to take involvement. In the now-unfolding clergy sex scandal, there are voices who are critical of the pope and of the LGBT community, and who believe in the existence of a "homosexual agenda" that complicates any movement to end abuses by clergy. Could we seek out and identify and then support other voices, from clergy or laity, that have a more balanced view?

2. Here's a change: more focus on younger members. Many younger people seem angry at the church, perhaps because of the clergy abuse scandal. Some younger people seem to be just angry in general. Their presentation of anger represents an opportunity to meet them at that level, explore what their anger is about, and discern a community or interpersonal action plan.

3. One key opportunity is that our local archbishop is chairman of the Bishops' Conference on Family Life. We could attempt a contact with his office to ascertain if the conference's concept of family life includes LGBT families. We could investigate how the archdiocesan ministry to family life is set up, and how much, if any, participation is welcomed from non-archdiocesan sources.

4. There is an opportunity now with the current clergy abuse scandal to involve college students who would write letters of concern and support to local media.

5. One change would be to stop focusing on moving the church to revise its teachings on the morality of homosexuality.

Question Two: What should be our key priorities in the next few years? Which are the most important? What values from our history must we carry forward?

1. Values from our history: we've had a history of marching and making public demonstrations, such as protests and candlelight vigils. The larger community still means a lot to us, but the fervor needs to be re-kindled.

2. Our history shows that we have been effective in reacting to crises. History says we can persevere regardless of what happens in the larger church. We must be ready to follow thru on new, justice-related issues.

3. Let's focus on regaining fervor, by encouraging some writers among us to develop this theme, as a rallying call. A key priority would be to foster a higher profile, to publicize our positions on issues. We would need to fund a coordinator to manage this.

4. A revised priority: since young people, across the board and for whatever reason, don't seem to be interested in church involvement, let's target potential members in the age range of 40, 50, or 60 years. For most of our current membership, that would represent a "younger generation".

5. Important priority: don't come across as being only engaged in blatant pitches for money. It looks mercenary and can turn people off.

Question Three: What resources do we need to fuel our passion and purpose? What will make people invest lives and resources in support of our future?

1. Let's identify common ground with other similar progressive movements, possibly with justice as a focus. Let's develop this thru discussion groups.

2. We need financial resources to hire professional people to do essential tasks like p.r. campaigns. We can't expect to find the necessary resources only from within our own ranks.

3. We have a recently-arrived resource of a journalism/communications student at USC. He could be a promoter of our cause in other journalism circles or among his fellow students and campus contacts.

4. We need to utilize LGBT-identified sources, especially since they understand as fellow community members our perspective on issues that concern us.

5. Resources at other faith groups, such as Episcopalians, only offer us limited potential, since we have our deeply-rooted Catholic identity.

6. Our local parishes remain good resources. We can support various parish groups, as Dignity members, and then challenge them when/if ant-gay sentiments are expressed.

Question Four: What do we suggest to Dignity USA for a strategic plan for the future? Consider mission, goals, financial/people resources/outreach.

1. The local bishop in San Diego recently sent out a letter to all his parishes about clergy abuse and the importance of exposing all instances of abusive behavior by clergy. Dignity USA should be advised of this, so that news of this could be given the widest dissemination, with expectations that other bishops will want to take a similar action.

2. Dignity USA does not show much interest in demanding change in the institutional church. Dignity USA structurally resembles the institutional church in that both are strictly top-down organizations. Dignity USA seems to over-emphasize fundraising.

3. Dignity USA has a Young Adult caucus, but the level of success with that outreach is not made known. We (the chapter) don't know what the young adults are saying or bringing to us as concerns. Dignity Los Angeles gave financial support to the Young Adult caucus, in conjunction with the Boston gathering, but no information was received back, even about what might be interesting or engaging to them.

4. What public comments has Dignity USA made about current topics, such as the Kavanaugh nomination or the Me-Too Movement? Are the pronouncements of Dignity USA limited to only LGBT rights? What about abortion rights, or women as priests?

5. Could Dignity USA reflect a capacity for significant structural change?

END

SESSION FEEDBACK FORM

Our discussion took place on Saturday, September 22, and the percentage of the community that participated was about 50%. We've had a diminishing turnout with each session after the first one. Many members decided after attending one session that their views had been sufficiently expressed. This final discussion on DISCERNING THE PATH FORWARD was productive in the sense that it identified

several long-term issues that remain challenging. Participants seemed to be in agreement that "Recharging Our Fervor" was a notion to rally around as the search continues for a common response to these many issues.