



# Dateline

Monthly News Bulletin

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*DignityUSA works for respect and justice for all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons in the Catholic Church and the world through education, advocacy and support.*

## DignityUSA Convention 2005

By the time you read this, all members of **DignityUSA** should have received a registration packet for the upcoming **DignityUSA 17th Biennial Convention**. This looks to be one of the largest of our conventions, with over 180 people already pre-registered!

Our gathering will be held at the **Loew's Hotel** in downtown **Philadelphia (PA)**, from **Thursday, July 7<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2005**.

Our main keynote speaker will be Chrissy Gephardt, lesbian activist and daughter of Congressman Dick Gephardt.

Opening night ceremonies will include a special concert by Jason and deMarco, openly gay Christian "Spirit Pop" duo and life partners, currently touring the country singing their latest CD "Spirit Pop."

Our very special speaker and guest homilist for the Saturday evening liturgy will be Episcopal Bishop V. Gene Robinson, first openly gay consecrated Episcopal bishop.

Add to the above speakers and music performers, over 20 workshops, a special **DignityUSA** Leadership Conference, our "fabulous-as-usual" Dinner Dance and tons of sightseeing in the "City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection."

More information will be posted on the **DignityUSA** web site [www.dignityusa.org/convention05](http://www.dignityusa.org/convention05). This year, for the first time, you can register online. For further details, you may contact us at [Conv2005@dignityusa.org](mailto:Conv2005@dignityusa.org).

Hope to see you there!

## Happy Anniversary & Congratulations to:

**Sarasota (FL) - 1 Year**  
**Ft. Lauderdale (FL) - 19 Years**  
**Hartford (CN) - 30 Years**

The firm of Martin & Wall is providing  
CPA services for DignityUSA.  
For information about their services, visit  
[www.martinwallcpa.com](http://www.martinwallcpa.com)

## The Voice in New York, Wisconsin, Washington State

**DignityUSA** is the Voice for Catholic gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) persons. We are a Catholic religious Voice in the civil and political arena on GLBT issues in this new age of "moral politics," as well as a counterbalancing Voice to the Vatican rhetoric, often viewed as one of the most powerful and increasingly virulent anti-GLBT voices in the world.

Many supporters – GLBT and straight, younger and older, Catholic and otherwise – have joined **DignityUSA** as national members, especially in the past year or two, because they want to support, amplify and empower this Voice.

Recently, **DignityUSA** has joined with local chapters and members in New York, Wisconsin and Washington State to reinforce favorable court rulings and to speak to legislatures and state courts considering equal rights for housing, jobs, medical care, and marriage for GLBT citizens.

**DignityUSA's** Voice was prominent in recent press releases by the **National Religious Leadership Roundtable (NRLR)**, sponsored by the **National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF)**. See these press releases on our website [www.DignityUSA.org](http://www.DignityUSA.org).

Partnering with local DignityUSA folks and other national organizations is a powerful approach to being more effective in our great Mission. Your financial support for these efforts is essential, of course, but also join with us when "our" issues need our Voice in your locale.

## Honoring Fr. John McNeill

The united GLBT Christian Communities of **Dignity/Sarasota (FL)**, **Church of the Trinity, MCC (Sarasota, FL)** and the **SunCoast Cathedral, MCC (Venice, FL)** will honor God's gift to the GLBT Community — Father John McNeill, at the **Church of the Trinity, MCC** on April 3, 2005, at an 11:00 AM service.

Fr. McNeill, is a noted moral theologian, psychotherapist, teacher, writer, lecturer and author of the landmark books, "The Church and the Homosexual," "Taking A Chance on God," "Freedom, Glorious Freedom" and "Both Feet Firmly Placed in Midair."

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## *Honoring Fr. John McNeill* *Continued from page 1*

Father John has been extremely supportive of **Dignity/Sarasota** (FL). His visitations have solidified and given new meaning and vigor to this young, growing chapter and faith community.

On the occasion of Fr. McNeill's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, it is an honor and privilege for **Dignity/Sarasota** to join with the **Metropolitan Community Church (MCC)** to celebrate the life and work of this man of God, as well as the many contributions he has made to the GLBT community.

All who know Father John are invited to send their greetings and well wishes to the chapter so that they may be shared with him at the April 3, 2005 event. Cards may be sent to Father John McNeill, c/o Bart Coyle, 7578 Tori Way, Bradenton, FL, 34202.

If you would like more information, please contact Bart Coyle (**Dignity/Sarasota**), (941) 359-3236 or email [digsrq@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:digsrq@tampabay.rr.com).

## **DignityUSA Website Reaches Out Globally**



Thanks to the World Wide Web, **DignityUSA** reaches out to thousands of GLBT Catholics and supporters in the United States and around the globe in a way not possible a decade ago.

According to data collected by our online tracking system, our website ([www.dignityusa.org](http://www.dignityusa.org)) logged 15,798 site visits in February (the most recent month for which we had complete data at the time this article was written). That averages 564 visits per day. Not surprisingly, site visits typically increase when **DignityUSA** is making headlines, such as when we receive national news media coverage or when we run a national ad. For example, in early November 2004, we ran an online ad at Andrew Sullivan's website, [www.andrewsullivan.com](http://www.andrewsullivan.com), which generated a noticeable spike in interest in our website.

Many visitors (29%) reached our site by typing our URL directly into their browser, but most reached us via major search engines such as Google, Yahoo, or MSN, typing in terms like "dignity," "gay Catholics," or "Catholicism and homosexuality." Some visitors get to us via links from other websites: A web page for an episode of the PBS series "Frontline" titled "The Assault on Gay America" still brings frequent visitors to our site, even though the documentary aired five years ago. Links on the websites for the Human Rights Campaign and the National Conference of Independent Catholic Bishops also generate hits to our site.

Most exciting is that thanks to the Web, **DignityUSA** truly has a global reach: Search engines from Canada, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, and the United Kingdom were among the top methods for reaching our site in recent months.

Other than the homepage, the most-visited page on our website each month is consistently Daniel Helminiak's

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"Catholicism, Homosexuality, and Dignity"

([www.dignityusa.org/faq.html](http://www.dignityusa.org/faq.html)). This suggests that one of our website's primary roles is to reach out to people who want to learn more about being Catholic and gay and DignityUSA — proving it to be a valuable marketing tool.

Other pages that attract a high number of visitors:

- **DignityUSA** in the News ([www.dignityusa.org/news](http://www.dignityusa.org/news))
- The weekly spiritual and liturgical resource "*Breath of the Spirit*" ([www.dignityusa.org/breath/spirit.html](http://www.dignityusa.org/breath/spirit.html))
- The directory of local chapters ([www.dignityusa.org/local.html](http://www.dignityusa.org/local.html))
- The archive of **DignityUSA**'s 35-year history ([www.dignityusa.org/archives](http://www.dignityusa.org/archives))

## **What You Can Find Online at DignityUSA**

Our national website, [www.dignityusa.org](http://www.dignityusa.org), has undergone much expansion since it went online in 1996. The site now contains more than 350 pages that provide valuable ongoing information about **DignityUSA**'s activities and educational information for GLBT Catholics.

Did you know that you can do the following at [www.dignityusa.org](http://www.dignityusa.org)?

- Sign up as a member, renew your membership, update your contact information, or make a donation using our secure online form: [www.dignityusa.org/mem\\_reg](http://www.dignityusa.org/mem_reg)
- Read the latest monthly **DignityUSA** DATELINE (our national newsletter) in HTML, or as a downloadable PDF file, and view archived issues since 1996 in HTML format: [www.dignityusa.org/datelines](http://www.dignityusa.org/datelines)
- Learn about volunteer and internship activities at **DignityUSA**: [www.dignityusa.org/volunteer.html](http://www.dignityusa.org/volunteer.html)
- Visit **DignityUSA**'s guide to couple's ministry: [www.dignityusa.org/couples](http://www.dignityusa.org/couples)
- Explore a variety of resources about religion and being GLBT: [www.dignityusa.org/resources.html](http://www.dignityusa.org/resources.html)
- Visit other like-minded organizations: [www.dignityusa.org/links.html](http://www.dignityusa.org/links.html)

Can't find a specific topic you're looking for? Use our online search engine on our homepage at [www.dignityusa.org](http://www.dignityusa.org)

## **Breaking News**

In a recent election by the **DignityUSA** National Board of Directors, Gene Corpuz, of Hawaii, and Leo Egashira, of the State of Washington, were elected to the Board. Both have accepted.

Rosemary Burdick has resigned from the national board due to conflicting time pressures of her regular employment. We thank her for her past service and wish her well.

## **DignityUSA Vision Statement**

**DignityUSA** envisions and works for a time when Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Catholics are affirmed and experience dignity through the integration of their spirituality with their sexuality and, as beloved persons of God, participate fully in all aspects of life within the Church and Society.