



APRIL 2010, VOLUME 35, ISSUE 8

SERVING LGBT CATHOLICS SINCE 1974

Spirituality, Equality and Justice: Nurtured in a Welcoming Catholic Community

Looking for a great volunteer opportunity? We could use your help with our 36th Anniversary Dinner Dance. Please see Michelle Snyder for details.

The theme has been chosen for our 36th Anniversary Dinner/Dance...

“Where Charity and Love Prevail”

Thanks and congratulations to Jim Carlin for submitting the winning theme!
Our Keynote speaker will be the Reverend Mark Bidwell, from MCC-Detroit

We are looking for donations for the silent auction to be held at our Anniversary Dinner.

If you wish to donate an item or know of someone who can, please see Michelle Snyder for details on supporting this popular part of our celebration.

Keep in mind our Easter Mass on April 4

Please feel free to invite your family and friends to our celebration of Christ’s Resurrection!

Call to Action!!!!

We are very much in need of volunteers to help with after-Mass clean-up, particularly the Eucharist items and the social table.

These are but two of the behind-the-scenes responsibilities that don’t just happen on their own. It takes the generosity of each person in attendance at Mass to make sure that no one person is always burdened with the task of clean-up.

See Michelle Snyder or Frank D’Amore if you would like to help, even just once in a while.

Thank you!

February 10, 2010

Thank you for the kind letter and generous donation for the earthquake victims in Haiti. I've recently returned from a week in Haiti and my time there was intense. A small group of us - including 4 health care professionals - flew into the Dominican Republic, where we rented a van. We traveled over the border into Haiti with as much food, water and medical supplies as we could carry. We organized in an amazingly efficient and humbling way a "field clinic" consisting of a tent and a tarp. Exam rooms for privacy were created out of sheets. Our health professionals saw from 88 to 134 people each day. We also prayed with people and provided comfort and support for those grieving the loss of loved ones. This could not have happened without your generosity.

I am still a whirlwind of activity since I got back but didn't want another day to pass without extending my gratitude. For current updates, you can visit my website www.bishopgumbleton.org. I plan to return to Haiti in a few weeks, so I'll count on your prayers.

Peace,

Tom Gumbleton

It's time to clean out those closets and dresser drawers again.

Beginning April 18, we will start collecting your clean, used clothing to donate to our friends at the Capuchin Mission.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and please see Denise Smith if you have any questions.

It is important that we acknowledge those who support us in our lives. Even if we experience ourselves as

independent, there are many who make our independence possible. Let's acknowledge those whose values and actions sustain us, those we meet in recovery whose sharing and example inspire us. Let's acknowledge those we trust to be supportive to us in difficulty, those with whom we share sorrows, and those with whom we share laughter. The people who care about us deserve our gratitude. They show us that we are not alone in the world.

We're sustained and strengthened not only by those with whom we have long and deep associations but also by those merely passing through our day. An act of courtesy, a look of kindness, a smile of recognition, a momentary sharing --- these help form our sense of human interconnection and support.

Today, I am not alone. I am held and strengthened by a network of support.

Calendar of Events -

April 2010

4 - Easter Sunday

Dinner Dance tickets on sale

Rosary Sunday

11 - 2nd Sunday of Easter

Council Intent-to-Run deadline

Liturgy Planning meeting at 4:30

18 - 3rd Sunday of Easter

Council meeting, 4:30

General Membership Meeting,
immediately following Mass

Clothing Drive begins

25 - 4th Sunday of Easter

DignityUSA:

P.O. Box 376

Medford, MA 02155-0376

Phone: 800-877-8797

E-mail: info@dignityusa.org

2009/10 Dignity Detroit Council

President: Frank D'Amore

Vice-President/Liturgy Coordinator:

Claudia Welbes

Secretary: Sr. Therese Kearney, IHM

Treasurer: Glenn Crane

Community Involvement Coordinator:

Denise Smith

Social Chair: Michelle Snyder

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

For many years, Dignity Detroit has served our less fortunate brothers & sisters at the Soup Kitchen on Detroit's east side.

Our volunteer participation needs your help on the 2nd and 4th Friday each month between 3:30 - 6:00.

Please see George K. or Denise S. if you can help with this important com-



Dignity Detroit meets every Sunday evening at 6:00 pm

Sacred Heart Chapel at Marygrove College

8425 W. McNichols @ Wyoming

Contact us at:

Postal Mail: P.O. Box 558, Royal Oak, MI 48068-0558

Voice-mail: 313-278-4786

E-mail: dignitydetroit74@yahoo.com

Website: www.dignitydetroit.org

We are a 501 (c) 3 organization

Dignity Detroit meetings:

Our meetings are open to all

Council -

Third Sunday every month @ 4:30 pm

General Membership -

Third Sunday of January, April, July and October,
immediately after Mass

DignityUSA Board Nominations Now Open

Submitted by dignityusa on Thu, 03/04/2010

Nominations are open for four (4) Directors-at-Large for a period of two years—October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2012.

Nominees for the Board of Directors "...must be current Regular Members of DignityUSA," i.e., "...any individual who pays any required Dues for Regular Membership and endorses the Statement of Position and Purpose of DignityUSA." Nominations may be submitted by nominee(s) or a third party using the MS Word. Nomination Form for Board of Directors found on DignityUSA's website at www.dignityusa.org/httpdocs/docs/DUSA_Nom10.doc

Completed forms should be sent to DignityUSA Nominations Committee, P.O. Box 376, Medford, MA 02155-0004, or by Fax to 781-397-0584, or e-mail to nominations10@dignityusa.org.

Nominations must be submitted no later than April 15, 2010.

Nominees are invited to submit digitized photos to be used in conjunction with election information and election ballots sent to the membership. Please submit the photos electronically to the Nominations Committee no later than April 15, 2010.

For information on the responsibilities of the Board of Directors, commitment, skills needed and becoming a candidate, please see www.dignityusa.org/serving-on-board. Questions or comments concerning Nominations 2010 should be e-mailed to nominations10@dignityusa.org ; or by calling Operations Manager Peggy Burns at 800-877-8797

Election ballots will be sent electronically to those who have provided us with an e-mail address; otherwise, those without e-mail addresses will have ballots mailed via USPS on or about May 20, 2010, to the address on our DignityUSA membership records.

Intent-to-Run forms are due April 11 for those eligible to run for Dignity Council.

Up for election of a two-year cycle are President, Treasurer and Social Chair.

Dinner Dance tickets are on sale between April 4 and May 9 for \$50 per person

No tickets will be available at the door!

Our venue will be Park Place in Dearborn. A buffet-style dinner, with vegetarian options, will be served.

As there will be an open bar, we most definitely urge all guests to please drink responsibly!!!

Don't call me a saint - I don't want to be dismissed that easily

Dorothy Day

There is nothing ordinary about love.

Seemingly small acts of love can totally change our experience of ourselves and others. The light in a friend's eyes, the grateful word or expression of someone we've helped, the squeeze of a hand, the tacitly understood sharing of warmth or excitement --- these can sustain us. They give us courage, energy, and inspiration for whatever we're facing. Instead of focusing on lack, we can see the wealth of love in the world and add to it. Whether in friendships, romantic partnerships, or other mutually caring relationships, the feelings of love that build and deepen in us are miracles.

See the love that sustains your life and each day do one thing to increase it.

Summer is a time for family celebrations. May begins with Mother's Day. Often that month witnesses First Communions and Graduations of all types. June brings Father's Day. Weddings, First Masses, anniversaries, family reunions and jubilees are other festive gatherings. It is good for us to celebrate with family and friends to count our blessings even in these difficult economic times.

We Capuchins also gather together each year to celebrate the jubilees of friars. All of us are conscious that it is because of the goodness of our benefactors that we are able to continue ministering to the downtrodden and poor. That is why we remember our supporting friends and their intentions in our Masses, prayers and activities. Because of your support of the Capuchin Missions Seraphic Mass Association, you certainly are included. Your gift is appreciated. Thank for the enrollment petitions. IN gratitude, we remember you and your special enrollment intentions given to support the mission ministries of Capuchin friars.

Gratefully yours,

Fr. Campion Baer, O.F.M. Capuchin

DignityUSA's Board of Directors will meet at the Radisson Plaza-Warwick Hotel, 220 South 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103, (215) 735-6000, Friday through Sunday, April 16-18, 2010.

We encourage DignityUSA members to see the board in action. You need not spend the entire weekend with us.

The board meets for about 3 hours Friday night. Work resumes by 9a on Saturday and goes through the day until about 6p The Board then wraps up its work in a 3-hour session ending at noon on Sunday.

DignityUSA members wishing to see the agenda, can contact Lewis Tanner at: secretary@dignityusa.org

The April newsletter went to press before the annual March Madness Raffle was to be conducted.

The donation amount raised from the raffle will be highlighted in the May issue

In Africa, a step backward on human rights

By Desmond Tutu Friday, March 12, 2010

Hate has no place in the house of God. No one should be excluded from our love, our compassion or our concern because of race or gender, faith or ethnicity -- or because of their sexual orientation. Nor should anyone be excluded from health care on any of these grounds. In my country of South Africa, we struggled for years against the evil system of apartheid that divided human beings, children of the same God, by racial classification and then denied many of them fundamental human rights. We knew this was wrong. Thankfully, the world supported us in our struggle for freedom and dignity.

It is time to stand up against another wrong.

Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are part of so many families. They are part of the human family. They are part of God's family. And of course they are part of the African family. But a wave of hate is spreading across my beloved continent. People are again being denied their fundamental rights and freedoms. Men have been falsely charged and imprisoned in Senegal, and health services for these men and their community have suffered. In Malawi, men have been jailed and humiliated for expressing their partnerships with other men. Just this month, mobs in Mtwapa Township, Kenya, attacked men they suspected of being gay. Kenyan religious leaders, I am ashamed to say, threatened an HIV clinic there for providing counseling services to all members of that community, because the clerics wanted gay men excluded.

Uganda's parliament is debating legislation that would make homosexuality punishable by life imprisonment, and more discriminatory legislation has been debated in Rwanda and Burundi. These are terrible backward steps for human rights in Africa.

Our lesbian and gay brothers and sisters across Africa are living in fear. And they are living in hiding -- away from care, away from the protection the state should offer to every citizen and away from health care in the AIDS era, when all of us, especially Africans, need access to essential HIV services. That this pandering to intolerance is being done by politicians looking for scapegoats for their failures is not surprising. But it is a great wrong. An even larger offense is that it is being done in the name of God. Show me where Christ said "Love thy fellow man, except for the gay ones." Gay people, too, are made in my God's image. I would never worship a homophobic God.

"But they are sinners," I can hear the preachers and politicians say. "They are choosing a life of sin for which they must be punished." My scientist and medical friends have shared with me a reality that so many gay people have confirmed, I now know it in my heart to be true. No one chooses to be gay. Sexual orientation, like skin color, is another feature of our diversity as a human family. Isn't it amazing that we are all made in God's image, and yet there is so much diversity among his people? Does God love his dark- or his light-skinned children less? The brave more than the timid? And does any of us know the mind of God so well that we can decide for him who is included, and who is excluded, from the circle of his love?

The wave of hate must stop. Politicians who profit from exploiting this hate, from fanning it, must not be tempted by this easy way to profit from fear and misunderstanding. And my fellow clerics, of all faiths, must stand up for the principles of universal dignity and fellowship. Exclusion is never the way forward on our shared paths to freedom and justice.

The writer is archbishop emeritus of Cape Town, South Africa. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984.

Catholics for Equality Organizational Meeting Submitted by Mark Matson on Thu, 03/04/2010

DignityUSA was requested to participate in a seminal and hastily organized gathering of Catholic LGBT advocates in Washington, DC on January 30 and 31, 2010. I represented DignityUSA in lieu of Executive Director Marianne Duddy-Burke, who was unable to clear her calendar on short notice. I was joined by Board members Mark Clark and Tom Yates, both of Dignity/Washington. Ray Panas, President of Dignity/Washington was also present.

The meeting was convened by Phil Attey, a Washington attorney, and Rev. Dr. Joe Palacios, a Jesuit priest from Los Angeles currently on the faculty at Georgetown University. The purpose of the meeting was to address the increasing role of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and state Bishops' conferences on LGBT political issues, and to coordinate efforts to shift Catholic public opinion and voter behaviors. We joined the following individuals and organizations.

Rev. Anthony Adams – Bilerico.com **Joanna Blotner** – Human Rights Campaign

Chuck Colbert – Freelance journalist and frequent contributor to National Catholic Reporter

Frank DeBernardo – New Ways Ministry **Rev. Geoffrey Farrow** – Los Angeles, CA

Sr. Jeannine Gramick, SL – National Coalition of American Nuns **Sharon Groves** – Human Rights Campaign

Charles Martel – Catholics for Marriage Equality in Massachusetts **Peter Montgomery** – People for the American Way

Matthew Myers – New Ways Ministry **Shiva Subbaraman** – Georgetown LGBTQ Resource Center

Anne Underwood – Catholics for Marriage Equality in Maine

DignityUSA was warmly welcomed by the organizers as a thought leader and long-time advocate for LGBT Catholics. We significantly influenced the conversations that weekend. The group resolved to create a new educational and political organization to educate and mobilize fair-minded Catholic voters to advance LGBT equality issues at the federal, state, and local levels. The new group will address both immediate political concerns and long term social-cultural change through public awareness campaigns and grassroots mobilization efforts. The new organization is called Catholics for Equality. It will build on the talents and resources of already existing LGBT political and progressive Catholic organizations and coordinate strategies and resources in our united campaign. I see it as a Catholic equivalent to HRC (Human Rights Campaign).

If the organizers' aspirations are well grounded in the skills and contacts they described, I see this organization evolving into a very significant ally in DignityUSA's mission to "amplify the voice" of LGBT Catholics, their families, and friends. They are experienced political organizers with access to "deep pockets", and are being actively supported by HRC. Catholics for Equality will focus on influencing legislation and the behavior of Catholic voters in a way that DignityUSA cannot with our 501(c)(3) designation. It will address issues affecting the LGBT community, including discrimination in employment, military service, housing and public accommodations, and legal recognition of family – civil marriage, adoption & custody, immigration, insurance, hospital visitation, etc.

The group decided to create an interim development board that will oversee work leading to the organization's official launch on Ascension Thursday – May 13, 2010. The Catholics for Equality Development Board was assigned the following tasks:

1. Develop a strategic plan for the organization.
2. Incorporate Catholics for Equality as a 501(c)(4) organization.
3. Develop a communications strategy and program to orchestrate the organizational launch which will involve institutional branding and the creating of both online and print materials.
4. Identify and solicit initial funding.
5. Develop an outreach strategy for bringing in community including influential theologians.

DignityUSA will hold two seats on the board, represented by Marianne Duddy-Burke and myself. We will be working to ensure the group evolves in a fashion that complements our own mission and vision, rather than competes with it. We will keep you posted on developments.

Vision Statement Spirituality, Equality and Justice nurtured in a welcoming Catholic Community

Statements of Principle

*** We will explore ways to be innovative with our ministry**

*** We will encourage ministry, community and social involvement**

Promoted and encouraged involvement in AIDS Walk – Detroit

Raised \$11,344.00 for Health Emergency Lifeline Programs (H.E.L.P) --- 19 Walkers

Sponsored Canned Good/Non-Perishable items collection to benefit Ruth Ellis Center

Sponsored Halloween Candy Collection to benefit the children at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen

Issue letter of support to Women Religious here in the United States in light of Vatican investigation of Women Religious Communities.

Held "Volunteer Sunday" where those in attendance were given a chance to volunteer to become more involved in the organization. Form also e-mailed to distribution list and published in Monthly Newsletter.

Sponsored Christmas Giving Tree to provide holiday gifts to needy families of the parishes where our Presiders serve.

Issued statement of support to Charles Pugh and Jim Razor for winning their respective elective offices.

Sponsored Hygiene Kit Collection with all items collected being donated to the Capuchin Soup Kitchen.

Partnered with St. Mark Catholic Church for the Comerica Park concession stand staffing during the upcoming 2010 Baseball Season.

Raised \$1,050 to send to Bishop Gumbleton for the Haiti earthquake relief.

*** We will support and expand membership**

Sent membership renewal reminders to folks whose membership expired September 1 (72 people --- 47 have renewed to date)

Sent membership letters requesting feedback on attendance at Liturgy and financial support of the organization

Updated "Dignity Detroit Potential New Member Information" packets available at every Liturgy.

Distribute informational flyers to both Affirmations and Just 4 Us.

*** We will network with GLBT and social justice groups**

*** We will become a respectful voice on GLBT issues**

*** We will set goals, develop processes and monitor progress to accomplish our objectives**

Prioritized Action by the Year 2011

*** Dignity Detroit will have a public relations plan and all Council members will have received public relations training**

Entire current Council, monthly newsletter editor, representative from PFLAG Detroit and Affirmations attended four (4) Media Training Session conducted by Ann Craig, *Director of Religion, Faith and Values of GLAAD*.

*** We will have social activities within Dignity Detroit and with partners in the GLBT-friendly community**

*** Twenty-five percent of the Dignity Detroit membership will participate in discussion groups**

March 31, 2010

NOTE: Although there doesn't seem to be an appropriate category, a new rental agreement was signed on October 9, 2009 between Marygrove College (Dr. David Fike, President) and Dignity Detroit (Frank D'Amore, President). The new agreement covers the period beginning with January 1, 2010 and running through December 31, 2014.