



DECEMBER 2011, VOLUME 37, ISSUE 8

SERVING LGBT CATHOLICS SINCE 1974

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

# MERRY CHRISTMAS



Thank you for all  
you do!!!!

Wishing you and  
yours a very  
**Blessed and Merry  
Christmas!**

**Frank, Claudia,  
Glenn, Sr. Therese,  
Denise and Peter**

### Christmas Giving Tree

Our Annual Christmas Giving Tree project is just about complete. As you know, each year we ask the priests who preside at our Liturgies to provide a needy family in their parish or surrounding area whose Christmas needs a little help. Your generosity will go along way to brighten the holidays for some very deserving folks. All gifts must be back at Marygrove by Sunday, December 4th. Thanks!!!!

### World AIDS Day

Dignity Detroit will once again be participating in the Archdiocese of Detroit World AIDS Service at Ss Simon and Jude Catholic Church on Thursday, December 1st at 6:30 p.m., located at 32500 Palmer Road, Westland (West of Merriman, between Michigan Ave and Cherry Hill). Volunteers are needed to be part of the Reading of Names portion of the service.

If you are interested in reading, please let Chris Dixon know ([CDixon5846@aol.com](mailto:CDixon5846@aol.com)) as soon as possible. Also, if you would like to add any names to the list of those who have died from AIDS, please let Frank D'Amore know ([frankdamore@dignitydetroit.com](mailto:frankdamore@dignitydetroit.com)) as soon as possible so that the name(s) can be included in the service.

### Calendar of Events - December 2011

- 1** - World AIDS Day
- 4** - 2nd Sunday of Advent  
Rosary Sunday
- 11** - 3rd Sunday of Advent  
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
- 18** - 4th Sunday of Advent  
Council Meeting, 4:30
- 25** - Christmas Day - Mass at our usual 6 pm in the Chapel  
(January 1 - Feast of the Solemnity of Mary. Mass at 6 pm in the Chapel)

*"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."*

Those are the words of Simon Peter, one of Jesus' first disciples. And like most words put down on paper, these instructions have not always honored the intent of the author.

Having a "prepared answer" — that is, a ready opportunity to interact, dialogue and discuss beliefs with others — has been replaced with defensiveness, anger and out-and-out hostility toward those who see things differently. Many have forgotten to read the second half of old St. Pete's instructions: "But do this in a gentle and respectful way."

Yes, I am a follower of Jesus. Yes, I consider myself a Christian (on most days), and yes, there are a number of essential beliefs important to me. Yes, some of these beliefs are in conflict with the beliefs of others, and these conflicts are not easily dismissed. But my beliefs, as important as they may be, do not give me the right to be belligerent toward others who do not share my beliefs.

I will allow that Christians aren't the only ones who behave this way. This cutthroat way of life is consuming every facet of our society, resulting in a complete collapse of common civility — that's a column unto itself — and there is no relief on the near horizon. But for Christians, if Jesus is who this thing is about, then things should be different. Just because we have some assurance of our faith and beliefs, we forfeit the ability to share that assurance when we behave badly.

Our beliefs need not — should not — cannot — must not — be used to hurt others. Consistently, Christians are characterized as mean-spirited, judgmental, critical and inflexible. This is a reputation we have largely earned, because we have been more concerned with proving we are right than we have been proving God's profound love and grace. We have been more concerned with providing answers than we have with providing respect.

Even if such a group had all the answers to all the questions in the world (and humility should caution anyone from making such a claim), it would be impossible to hear what they had to say, because it is simply impossible to hear the truth when it is communicated from a hard heart.

*Ronnie McBrayer is a syndicated columnist, speaker and author. His books include "Leaving Religion, Following Jesus" and "The Jesus Tribe."*

### **White Elephant Auction**

Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> is the date. Immediately following our Liturgy is the time. The Library Lecture Hall is the place. Our annual White Elephant Auction is the event. Your assignment is to find that priceless (????) item you really don't want, but can't bring yourself to just throw out. Better yet, find the treasure you bought at last year's Auction. Either way, wrap it in Christmas paper and then watch in fun as Santa auctions the package off to the highest bidder.....SIGHT UNSEEN. This has always been an evening of great fun. Pizza and pop will be provided. Don't forget to bring your checkbook so that you can make a purchase or two yourself!!!

## Advertising Angels

We continue looking for Advertising Angels to help defray the cost of our *Between the Lines* monthly advertisement. The cost (which has not gone up for three years now) is \$1,550.00. Included in this price are 12 ads (1st issue of each month) and a free listing in the Pridesource Yellow Pages publication that is published annually.

If you can make a donation to help defray the cost of the advertisement, it would be most appreciated. If you are able to donate, please make your check payable to Dignity Detroit and put it in an envelope, write Advertising on the front of the envelope and then either hand it to Frank D'Amore or drop it in the collection basket.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Let me tell you a true story about something that happened last summer when I went into my neighborhood post office. Besides me, there were three other men and a little girl waiting in line. The first man was about my size. The second in line was very big, at least a head taller than me (and also bigger around!). I was next. Last was a man with his little girl. He had a colorful little cap on his head, which distinguished his ethnicity and his religion from the other men. He was quite a bit smaller than the guy ahead of me.

This last man was still getting his package ready, so he reached onto some shelves next to the line to get some labels or forms. And then, out of the blue, the big guy started yelling and swearing at the smaller man. He came right up close and leaned over him, saying, "I don't like you coming in here and getting in my way". The smaller man said, "I was just getting something, and please stop swearing in front of my little girl", but the big man just yelled louder and looked like he was going to start hitting.

Now, at my age I don't like to get into trouble, especially when it might be dangerous for me. And besides, I was just hurrying in there to mail off some of my inspirational CDs about helping others, so I really didn't feel I had the time to deal with this right now. I didn't know exactly what to do and, to be honest, I was scared. But it seemed like I had to do something. Without any more time to think, I squeezed between the two of them (which surprised them both) and simply said, "I'm just going to stand here".

Can you guess what happened next? The big guy started yelling at me instead of the smaller guy. But you know what? That first guy in line in front of the big guy then turned around and said in a calm voice, "Why don't you just be quiet? Nobody did anything to you."

Now the big guy seemed confused about which of the three of us he wanted to bully the most. And the most amazing phenomenon happened --- he didn't seem quite so big anymore. Instead of yelling at any one of us, he just muttered and mumbled and swore --- at no one in particular --- until he left the post office.

Now I thought about this whole thing for a long time and, of course, wrote a song about it. I could hardly believe that someone with so much hatred was right there in my own neighborhood. I thought about that little girl and how wide her eyes were as she watched what was happening. I wondered if I could have done something differently or what else might have happened with someone that crazy. But one thing became clear to me: I knew how I could have felt if I hadn't done anything.

Written by Michael Stern

From "Chicken Soup for the Soul - Stories for a Better World"

Dignity Detroit meets every Sunday evening at 6:00 pm  
Sacred Heart Chapel at Marygrove College  
8425 W. McNichols @ Wyoming

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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

**Capuchin Soup Kitchen**

Because so many groups want to help the Capuchins over the holidays, Dignity Detroit will not be needed at the Soup Kitchen the rest of this year. Our regular schedule resumes on Friday, January 13. Thanks to all who helped this year!

**DignityUSA:**

**P.O. Box 376**

**Medford, MA 02155-0376**

**Phone: 800-877-8797**

**E-mail: info@dignityusa.org**

**Dignity Detroit offers community outreach for our less fortunate brothers & sisters at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen in Detroit**

**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. Thank You!!!**



If we have no peace,  
it is because we have  
forgotten that we  
belong to each other.  
**Mother Teresa**

**Ken Wojciak**  
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