



JULY 2012, VOLUME 38, ISSUE 3

SERVING LGBT CATHOLICS SINCE 1974

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

DignityUSA envisions and works for a time when Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender 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.

We will celebrate the July 22nd liturgy on the lawn adjacent to Madame Cadillac Hall at our normal 6pm time. **Be sure to bring a lawn chair or blanket on which to sit!**

If you can arrive early (5pm) to assist in setting things up and/or stay after Mass to help put things away, it would be greatly appreciated! We must carry from the chapel all the necessary items needed for liturgy.

Please see Sonja if you are able to assist with our special social that evening!

**Calendar of Events - July 2012**

- 1 - 13th Sunday of Ordinary Time  
Rosary Sunday
- 8 - 14th Sunday of Ordinary Time
- 15 - 15th Sunday of Ordinary Time  
Council Meeting @ 4:30  
General Membership Meeting, after Mass
- 22 - 16th Sunday of Ordinary Time  
"Mass in the Grass"
- 29 - 17th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Karl Barth was likely the greatest theologian of the twentieth century. He is best known as a prolific writer. His *Church Dogmatics* took more than thirty years to complete and is more than six million words long.

Late in his career Barth made a visit to the United States and lectured at the University of Chicago. The often-repeated story is that he was asked a last question before leaving the podium. The question: "What is the most important insight to God you have ever discovered?" The aged Barth paused for only a moment, smiled, and answered, "Jesus loves me this I know; for the Bible tells me so." Do you believe Jesus loves you? More to the point, do you believe God loves you? We sing it, preach it, and pray it. But by and large we do not believe it, no matter what the Bible says. Atheism is not a problem for most of us. We believe in the existence of God. But we do not believe God really loves us. We are as suspicious of him as an irritable landlord who only comes around when the rent is due.

This misgiving is most noticeable in our inability to trust God. See, it's hard to trust someone you quietly think is out to get you, so we try to keep God at a distance and handle things on our own. It's always been this way. In the Garden of Eden, what was it our archetypal parents, Adam and Eve, did there? They ate a piece of low-hanging fruit off of a forbidden tree. What was the name of that tree? It was the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Our ancestors, and every human since, made this decision: "I will take up the knowledge of what is good and what is evil – for me. I will determine what is right and what is wrong – for me. I will trust no one else to do this for me – not even my Maker." Of course it was the serpent who planted this seed of distrust in the human heart when he suggested to Eve that God was holding out on her. The fateful decision was made and our forbearers got what they wanted: Self-rule, independence, freedom to choose their own path. The end result was heartache, destruction, and frustration.

Original sin is humanity's inability to trust its Creator. It is the defiant "captain of our soul" way in which we refuse to believe God cares for us and has our best interests at heart. Sin is the human betrayal of divine love. It is rejection of the One who made us for himself. It is a chasing after ourselves, thinking our self-made freedom can make us happy. Have you ever been betrayed? Not just lied to, mind you, or had the wool pulled over your eyes, or suffered the garden variety deception, but heart-wrenching, vow-breaking, betrayal? Do you know what it is like for someone you love to throw that love aside like they were stripping off a dirty shirt? Do you know that violated feeling when a spouse or partner says, "I've found someone new," or "I don't love you anymore," or "I just have to be free?" God does.

He created, granted life, loved, and wished to guide his children, but more times than not, he was rejected. So, he did the unthinkable. He created himself as a man and came to a world that was chasing after lesser lovers. He came to absorb all the pain and heartbreak of the world's rejection. It was a tearful, piercing, bloody affair to love and forgive like this. But this is what the cross is: It is God, humiliated and bleeding, bearing up underneath the betrayal and rebellion of His own creation who do not believe his love is enough.

I look at the suffering mess of the cross and I see what C. S. Lewis called the "only true language of forgiveness." There Jesus says to me, "I know what you've done. I know how you have cheated on me. I know you want to go your own way. But I will bear the consequences, because this is how I love." And I can only respond with the words and melody of a child: "Jesus loves me this I know; for the Bible tells me so."

**Ronnie McBryer**

## **Mark your Calendars!**

Dates have been set for our 39<sup>th</sup> **AND** 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations.

Our 39<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration will take place on the weekend of May 4-5, 2013. Our Dinner Dance will be on Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> and our Anniversary Liturgy follows the next day, Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>. Why so early in May you ask? Very simply, May 18<sup>th</sup> was already taken; the Saturday before is Mother's Day weekend (our Liturgy would be on Mother's Day) and the Saturday after is Memorial Day weekend.

Our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration will take place on the weekend of May 17-18, 2014. Our Dinner Dance will be on Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup> and our Liturgy follows the next day, Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Equally Blessed: Sister Margaret Farley deserves honor, not censure***

*Equally Blessed* released the following statement in response to the criticism of *Just Love*, by Sister Margaret Farley, a Catholic theologian emeritus at Yale University released by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith:

We are saddened, but not surprised that the Roman Catholic hierarchy has found fault with the valuable work of yet another female theologian.

The Vatican's legalistic parsing of Sister Margaret Farley's work will only enhance her well-deserved reputation as a gifted scholar. Rome's attempt to steer Catholics away from *Just Love* will serve instead as a recommendation for all those who seek a sexual ethic rooted in justice and mutuality, rather than in platitudes and abstractions. The positions Sr. Margaret articulates resonate with many Catholics, who seek to live out the values of our faith in the context of real life.

We applaud particularly Sister Margaret's understanding that "same-sex relationships and activities can be justified according to the same sexual ethic as heterosexual relationships." As always, when differing with the hierarchy she makes it clear that this is purely her personal opinion. Yet the scholarly care with which she reaches it will be persuasive to Catholic readers who do not believe the Vatican's claim that intellectual inquiry is unnecessary because the truth is what the Vatican says it is.

We are hopeful that Sister Margaret's strong body of work will inspire and encourage other Catholic theologians to continue this kind of research.

Keith Taylor had never forgotten his parents' lessons in generosity, evident in tithing to their church and helping others. Nor had he forgotten the helping hand his boss had given him in his youth. Keith knew he wanted to help others, but on a university professor's salary, he thought he'd never have the money to spare. Then he changed the way he thought. He decided to live on less to set aside \$350 a month. Next, on a simple, homemade website that he called ModestNeeds.org, Keith offered a one-time gift to whoever needed it. Even without any advertising or publicity, a few people found his site. One young man wrote to him, asking for \$78 to fix his car so that he could get to work and pay his rent. This small, unexpected-but-necessary expense stood between the man's self-sufficiency and disaster. Keith paid the car-repair bill, and it made all the difference in that young man's life.

Keith had launched ModestNeeds.org on March 21, 2002. On May 1 of that year, he received request number 100 from a working couple with five children in Baltimore, Maryland. Madeline and her husband had been shocked to get a huge water bill from the city in December 2001. They discovered a leaking pipe under the house and had it fixed, then paid down the bill the best they could for months. But by April there just wasn't enough to feed a family of seven, pay all the bills, and pay extra on that debt. The city was about to auction this family's home to collect the balance of the water bill, which was \$310.09. For a \$310.09 utility bill, this family was about to become homeless. The auction was set for Monday morning, and on Friday the balance in the ModestNeeds.org bank account was \$36 short of what was needed to help this family. On his way to the post office, Keith prayed for a miracle to save the family's home. A miracle was waiting in the mail. The letter from a teacher explained that she had heard about the Modest Needs Foundation and told her students about it. The class had chosen to give up lunchtime ice cream for one day to help somebody else. The teacher had made a small donation herself and asked the school to send a check. "The enclosed check was for forty dollars exactly --- just a few dollars more than was necessary to pay off the city of Baltimore," Taylor recalls. "At eleven fifty-one PM on Sunday, May twelfth, two thousand two --- nine minutes before the final deadline --- the auction of this family's home was stopped, thanks to the generosity of these children and the power of their ice-cream sandwich blockade."

As people heard about ModestNeeds.org, or found it on the website, word spread --- and the good news reached the media. Keith was interviewed by newspapers and magazines, including *People* and *Reader's Digest*, and appeared on radio and television shows, including *Today* and *The Early Show*. Thousands began to visit Keith's site and to write to him. But they weren't all writing to ask for help; they were writing to offer help. They wanted to know where to send the money to help others. In March 2004, Keith literally stumbled across Jessica, a homeless twenty-year-old in New York City. She had a tin cup, which he accidentally knocked over, and a sign that read, "Homeless five more days. Still hungry. Help if you can." Jessica had applied for a program that provided food and shelter for homeless women who demonstrated a commitment to self-sufficiency by seeking work. When she got a job, the program would help her get a home. She was accepted into the program and would have a place to stay after only five more nights on the freezing streets. Keith searched the city until he found a clean, safe hotel that would provide a room with breakfast for five days at half price. Then he went back for Jessica. She couldn't believe that anyone would give her a place to stay, expecting nothing in return. "I explained, very simply, that we wanted to help her because we wanted her to know how much she was worth to all of us," Keith said.

Jessica was still crying when Keith left her in that hotel room. "Wait." Wiping her eyes, she took Keith's hand and emptied her tin cup into it. Closing his hand around the change, she looked up into his face and smiled. "Request number thirty-six thousand, three hundred sixty-eight 'Mom of Two Needs Help with Rent', was funded in part by two dollars and sixty-eight cents in change donated to the Modest Needs Foundation by a person who didn't have a permanent residence, but who, thanks to this community's generosity, isn't quite homeless in the way that she was before," Keith said.

How much does it take to change a life? To the person who needs it, \$100 is a lot of money --- yet twenty of us giving only \$5 each have the power to help keep that person self-sufficient. The Modest Needs Foundation's motto is "Small Change. A World of Difference." Today, millions of people have visited the ModestNeeds.org site. How many more can we help with the small fortune that's on our dressers, in our coat pockets, or spread in the bottoms of our purses? It takes less than we have. As his father told him when Keith first shared his plan to give part of his income away to strangers, "If you do this, you will never want for anything the rest of your life." Dad was right.

Written by James Robert Daniels, from "*Chicken Soup for the Soul --- Celebrating People Who Make a Difference*"

Dignity Detroit meets every Sunday evening at 6:00 pm

Sacred Heart Chapel at Marygrove College

8425 W. McNichols @ Wyoming

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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:**

P.O. Box 376

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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!!!**

To the many wounded, Catholic lesbians and straight women out there, to the young adults seeking for a place to be activists, to the GLBT people of color who feel they have to choose between their two identities, to all of you, we say, "Come. Come, join us, and support the growing movement of creating a just church. Come, join us, speak out loud the truth of your life and know the love of God. Come, join us, you have a place at the table where Jesus waits and where together we can be church. Come, for there is plenty of work to do."

Lourdes Rodriguez-Nogues  
DignityUSA President, in  
Where Two or More Are Gathered in My Name

