



JULY 2011, VOLUME 37, ISSUE 3

SERVING LGBT CATHOLICS SINCE 1974

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

Calendar of Events -

July 2011

- 3** - 14th Sunday of Ordinary Time
- 10** - 15th Sunday of Ordinary Time
- 17** - 16th Sunday of Ordinary Time
Council meeting at 4:30
General Membership meeting, immediately following Mass
- 24** - 17th Sunday of Ordinary Time
- 31** - 18th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Just a note of appreciation for Dignity Detroit's participation in this year's Race for the Cure Breast Cancer Walk. Although Team Dignity had fewer walkers that participated on May 21, we still collected \$800.00. I am personally grateful for all the support Dignity Detroit continues to provide, not only for this Walk, but for all our outreach opportunities. Many Thanks.

Denise

The Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is on sabbatical for the summer.

Please join us in September when we resume this ministry on the 2nd Sunday.

Dear Dignity Detroit Family,

Thank you so very much for all your cards, condolences, hugs, kind words after the deaths of my husband, Ralph, on April 10 and my mom, Katharine, on May 29. Thank you, too, for making donations to both of the churches in my life: Sts. Simon and Jude in Westland and St. Raphael in Garden City. I really appreciate it.

I love you all. I love coming to Mass on the Sundays I can make it and seeing all of you. I feel like I'm home when I walk through the door. I always feel like I belong there. And I always find peace when I'm with you.

God bless you all!

Love and peace,

Chris Dixon

Frankly Speaking

July 1st brings about the beginning of a new Council year. We are fortunate in that everyone that was on the Leadership team last year remains a member of the team. At our meeting on July 17th, we will have our annual Planning session where we will map out as much of the year, between July 1st and June 30th (the end of our Council year) as possible

We will continue with the implementation of the Vision Statement that you, the membership, adopted several years ago now. Just in case you've forgotten is it: *Spirituality, Equality and Justice nurtured in a Welcoming Catholic Community*. We will also continue to report at the quarterly General Membership meetings on our progress.

Finally, at this year's Anniversary Dinner/Dance, our emcee extraordinaire, Joe Lempicki, was engaging me in our usual banter and referenced my years as President. I decided to do a little research and this is what I came up with. My actual membership in Dignity dates back to September, 1983.

July, 1984 – June, 1985: Spiritual Director (that is what the Vice-President was called back then)

July, 1985 – March, 1986: Vice-President (3 months until resignation of President)

April, 1986 – June, 1992: President (6 ½ years)

July, 1994 – June, 1995: Vice-President (still one year term back then)

July, 1996 – June, 2002: Vice-President (6 years)

July, 2003 – June, 2006: President (4 years)

July, 2008 – Present: President (4 years at the end of June, 2012)

Based on the information above, I am going on record in stating that this is it. It is time....some would argue way past time! June 30, 2012 is the date. I am doing so for two reasons. This is not purely for my sake, but most importantly, for the sake of the organization. I know there are people in our Dignity family who are capable of stepping into the role of president, will nurture the organization and make the organization better than ever.

Until later.....

Frank

Membership

On Sunday, June 12th, we were honored to have Marianne Duddy-Burke, Executive Director of DignityUSA at our Liturgy. In her remarks, she very graciously thanked our Detroit Chapter for all of their love and support of the entire Dignity organization over the years. She went on to thank Glenn Crane for his time and service to the National Board as Treasurer.

One of the facts she went on to state was that Detroit has always been one of the largest chapters in the National organization. She went on, however, to state that other chapters are breathing down our necks. I contact Peggy Burns of the National Board who coordinates the membership statistics, renewals, etc., and asked if I could get a copy of the latest membership numbers for all of the chapters. Peggy very graciously sent me the information within a couple of hours.

Here are the membership numbers of the six largest Chapters as of May 1st:

Washington, DC:	169
Boston:	89
New York:	81
Detroit:	75
San Francisco:	68
Denver:	44

We are confident that we can knock off both New York and Boston, but we need your help.

If you have never been a member of Dignity or your membership has inadvertently slipped, PLEASE consider joining/renewing soon. As Marianne also mentioned, scholarships are available to those who might need to take advantage of them. ALL DISCUSSIONS WILL BE HELD IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE!!!!!!

For a membership form or to discuss a possible scholarship, please contact Frank D'Amore (frankdamore@dignitydetroit.com).

The July council meeting will take place on July 17 at 4:00, instead of the usual 4:30. We will be using the extra 1/2 hour for our annual planning session.

The July General Membership will also take place on July 17, immediately following Mass. The meeting is open to all members and interested non-members, as well. There are only four (4) meetings a year. These meetings are usually less than 45 minutes in length and are a good way to find out what the Leadership Team is doing for you. Due to the meeting, there will be NO social after Mass.

The August council meeting will be delayed one week and held on August 28, due to summer schedule conflicts. The meeting will begin at the traditional 4:30 P.M. and be held in the area outside of the College Bookstore.

Affirmations community center has chosen a new Executive Director. Dave Garcia will take over the post on Aug. 15.

Affirmations' community-based search committee, consisting of Metro Detroit area LGBT and allied members such as Kofi Adoma, Jeff Antaya, Mark Blanke, London Bell, Carolyn Burdi Zip Johnson, Arlene Kish and Kathleen LaTosch, came to the decision after a nearly year-long search.

"It's been a long and committed process - we wanted to make sure we had the best candidate," says Zip Johnson, co-chair of the search committee and vice president of the board of directors at Affirmations. "We were very impressed with Dave and are excited to bring him to Affirmations."

"I'm excited to start this new chapter of advocacy and partnership with the LGBT and allied community throughout Michigan," Garcia said. "Affirmations has and will continue to play a key role for the LGBT community throughout our state and I am looking forward to working with those who support us to create a safer, more welcoming and fair Michigan for all LGBT and allied people."

Garcia began advocacy work for the LGBT community in 2000, after being fired as Community Services Coordinator of Swartz Creek for attempting to start a Gay Straight Alliance in the public schools. Currently Garcia serves as the Executive Director of Kalamazoo's Gay and Lesbian Resource Center.

When asked about the fate of Kalamazoo's GLRC, Garcia said, "We've been putting together a transition plan, as the center has known this was a possibility. (The executive committee) will likely have a plan available by the end of the week."

Knowing Jesus well may take all eternity, by Ronnie McBrayer

The Rev. Ken Autry is the former pastor at First United Methodist Church on the lake yard in DeFuniak Springs, Fla. I say, "former" pastor only because he has now moved on to another appointment. Those Methodists won't let their preachers sit still for long.

He once shared a letter with his congregation that I have yet to get out of my mind. The letter, while not written to the Rev. Autry, had been written by a parishioner who had become quite disgruntled with her pastor. This is not uncommon. Sometimes there is the perception that those of the cloth should be absolutely faultless. When failures occur, and they certainly will, the fallout can be crushing.

This is too bad. Sure, there are some bad apples in the barrel, but most pastors, priests and rabbis are doing the best they can to honor their calling and to help others. They make mistakes, but don't we all? This particular church member gave no quarter for such ministerial blunders.

With teeth on edge, she poured out a venomous letter to her pastor, recounting his failures, demeaning his family. She compared him to other great pastors that had gone before him (always good for your self-esteem). She pretty much read him the riot act.

It was the conclusion of the letter that rings in my ears. She wrote, "I pray that you will come to know Jesus as I do, rather than just knowing Jesus like you do." When we need ammunition against our enemies, any bullet will do. Even Jesus.

Since his incarnation, Christ has taken on the form we require of him. The zealots of his time wanted him to be a revolutionary with sword in hand. The legalists tried so very hard to make him a traditionalist. The anxious masses, and those closest to him, attempted to make him their king. In fact, Jesus' eventual crucifixion was due largely to the fact that he would not play by the rules. He would not be the kind of Messiah people thought he should be. He would not conform.

We continue the tradition. If needed, we will wrap Christ in the red, white and blue and send him out before our armies waving the flag. We will use his words to strengthen capitalism (or some other "ism") and justify our greed. We will explain away his hardest sayings in order to get cozy with him or we will drop his name in the right circles if it will garner a few more votes in November.

Yes, it seems we've got Jesus right where we want him: Shrink-wrapped, canned, freeze-dried. In an emergency just add water. The Jesus who walked the Palestinian hills of the first century was a far cry from these things. Certainly he would have shocked us.

The calloused hands of a carpenter; the olive skin of the Middle East; the dirty feet, shaggy hair and tattered clothes of an impoverished wanderer: He is nothing like the white, middle-class, blue-eyed Jesus that appeared on my Sunday school flannel graph board.

I admit I don't always recognize Jesus. Just when I think I have him figured out, he does something crazy: Like command me to love my enemies; or tell me to do good to those who don't deserve it; or challenge me to give away my possessions; or instruct me to turn the other cheek; or allow himself to be crucified.

In his unconventional, eccentric manner he runs roughshod over my preconceptions. He overturns the established order of my life. He surprises me with his fierce grace. He calls me to himself demanding my soul, my life, my all.

Jesus asked his disciples on his last night on earth, "Do you not yet know who I am, even after all the time I have been with you?" I am afraid the answer is still an embarrassing, no. But thankfully, we'll have all of eternity to get to know this wild-eyed Jewish rabbi a little better. Maybe, just maybe, that will be time enough.

Ronnie McBrayer is the author of "Leaving Religion, Following Jesus."

Dignity Detroit meets every Sunday evening at 6:00 pm
Sacred Heart Chapel at Marygrove College

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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

The world's longest railway is in Peru. The Central Railway climbs to 15,694 feet in the Galera tunnel, 108 miles from Lima. Tourists take it to get to the ruins of Machu Picchu.

DignityUSA:

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

Dignity Detroit offers community outreach for our less fortunate brothers & sisters at the Capuchin 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.
Thank You!!!



Comments or Insults?

There is a fine line between what we may think is an innocent comment or remark and an insult. When we make a remark regarding one's clothes or general appearance, job, weight loss or gain, etc., we all need to be sensitive to the other person's feelings. We have no idea what is going on in their personal life. There very well could be a very valid reason behind a person's appearance, clothes, etc., that we are not aware of. There are members of the LGBT community who consider such comments or remarks as campy, but those same comments or remarks might be cutting into a person's well-being. We all need to be careful before we judge and speak.

