



AUGUST 2011, VOLUME 37, ISSUE 4

SERVING LGBT CATHOLICS SINCE 1974

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

The Walk for Life benefiting the pro-life Blue Water Pregnancy Care Center takes place on Saturday, September 10, 2011 at Pine Grove Park. ( 1204 Pine Grove, Port Huron )

Registration starts at 8:30am and the walk begins at 9:00

For more info, you may contact the Blue Water Pregnancy Care Center at 730 Griswold Street, Port Huron 48060 or call 810-985-4673.

[www.bwpcc.info](http://www.bwpcc.info)

**Vision Statement**

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find the most recent copy of our Vision Statement and the actions that the Leadership team, as well you, the membership have taken in carrying out that Vision Statement. As we have done the last three years, we continue to use the Vision Statement as a means of holding ourselves accountable and reporting to you, the membership. Each July 1<sup>st</sup>, we clear the slate and start anew. Our next update will be distributed in October at the next quarterly report.

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

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

**DignityUSA Board of Directors**

We are pleased to announce that the DignityUSA Board of Directors will be holding their October meeting here in Detroit the weekend of the 14<sup>th</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup>.

All sessions will take place at the Doubletree Hotel, located on the corner of Ford Road and the Southfield Expressway. We are hoping that some of the folks can stay for our Liturgy on Sunday evening.

As the dates approach, we may be looking for some folks to make airport runs on Friday (arrivals) morning and again on Sunday afternoon (departures).....we will keep you posted.

The meetings are open to anyone interested in attending.

**Calendar of Events -**

**August 2011**

- 7 - 19th Sunday of Ordinary Time**
- 14 - 20th Sunday of Ordinary Time**
- 21 - 21st Sunday of Ordinary Time**
- 28 - 22nd Sunday of Ordinary Time**
- Council meeting @ 4:30**

## On Your Mark, Get Set, Play

The British painter Charles Hunt knew something about life that he apparently also knew was worth passing on in vivid, soft and whimsical imagery, in images that stick to the soul. In his famous work *The House of Cards*, Hunt teases us with it. At first, the painting seems to be nothing more than a kind of domestic snapshot. Until we look again. There, behind the placid rendition of children playing, Hunt's oil painting gives us a variation of what has become one of life's givens: "the family that prays together, stays together," we say. True enough. But Hunt puts a parallel point on the essence of what it means to have a happy life. He paints for the world to see: "the family, the group, the couple, the persons that play together, stay together."

In a highly-productive consumer society, it is a lesson dearly to be learned.

Here we see again what far too many of us forgot far too long ago: there is something about taking the time to do nothing important that is important. Play washes ambition out of the soul. Instead, it is about doing something simply for the pure joy of doing it. For one brief moment in the midst of striving to stay alive, there is no product to be produced, no personal gain to be sought, nothing to prove. That may be why childhood is so largely devoted to play, to the exhilaration of aimlessness. It is the one period in life when we are allowed to wallow in the understanding that just being alive is enough for us. No money or medals needed. No evaluations expected. No better or worse implied.

Play releases the mind to think outside the boundaries of both the self and the society that shapes us. It teaches us the joy of freedom and gives us the right to break all the rules: we can dirty our shoes, laugh out loud, slide in the grass and blow bubbles to nowhere and no one will care. It enables us to stop taking ourselves too seriously, an insight of eternal importance if we are to live well with others and be able to bear our own failures later when being able to fail becomes our greatest success in life.

We learn, too, that, in the end, life is itself a "house of cards" built to collapse—however much the strain or tension, skill or concentration we give it as we go. Play exposes us to the fact that there is nothing we ever do in life, however high we go in the process, that is permanent. Only that simple lesson itself is permanent. And, in the end, that may well be enough to carry us calmly and expectantly from one of life's games to the next.

— from the July 2011 [Monastic Way](#) by Joan Chittister

## **DignityUSA Convention**

Or how I spent my summer vacation. I had the pleasure of attending my eighth DignityUSA convention over the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend in Washington, DC. For me, these events are more like family reunions than conventions. I made acquaintances back at the first gathering I attended in San Francisco in 1989 and it was great to have the opportunity to re-connect with these folks and others I've met over the years. There were several highlights of the convention including an appearance by Phil Donahue, who moderated one of the plenary sessions. Edwina Gateley was absolutely energetic, enlightening and entertaining in her keynote address, "Love Hopes All Things". With our arrival a day early, we had time to do some sightseeing that included the Vietnam War Memorial Wall, the Korean War Memorial and the Lincoln Memorial. The fireworks on the National Mall were a sight to behold. We literally sat down on Constitution Avenue to watch the display and as we watched, the Washington Monument was just to the left of the display but right in our line of sight.

Personally, there was one eerie moment for me. One of the panelist in the 1<sup>st</sup> plenary session entitled, "One House, Many Mansions", was a woman from Columbus, Ohio. Her name is Marie Sweeney. To make things even a little more eerie, this Marie Sweeney at one time served in campus ministry just as our Marie Sweeney, IHM did here at Marygrove. Although a little eerie, I can tell you that both Marie's were cut of the same cloth and Sr. Marie Sweeney would have been extremely proud of Marie Sweeney and the message she had for all of us.

Cannot wait until Minneapolis in 2013!!!!

Frank

Sunday, September 18<sup>th</sup> is the date. Downtown Royal Oak is the place.

Registration is now open for anyone interested in joining the Dignity Detroit AIDS Walk team. All you need do is visit [www.aidswalkdetroit.org](http://www.aidswalkdetroit.org), click on register and then on join our team. There is no cost involved in registering to walk. There will be an option to make an initial donation, however it is not necessary to do so. To date, we have nine (9) people registered and have collected \$1,825.00.

We would like to have enough people on our team so that we can participate in the Quilt Opening Ceremony by opening a panel or two.

If you cannot join us in walking, please consider making a donation in support of the Dignity Walk team. You can do that online, by dropping your donation in the large collection container at the After-Mass social, or give it to Frank D'Amore.

As always, thanks for your support in this most worthwhile event.

## The way down is ultimately the way up

When my wife insisted that I accompany her to the gym, I thought it was a good idea. She had been pressing me about it for some time, and combined with my recent lipid readings, I finally relented and agreed to go. When she informed me that we must rise at 4:30 in the morning and that we would be participating in a cardiac spinning class, I didn't even blink. I love the early morning, and I've spent hours on a bicycle with a couple of century rides in my repertoire. Spinning class? Why didn't you say that's where we were going? How hard could it actually be? I strolled into the gym, my cycling shorts barely able to contain my bravado.

The class was led by an attractive, lean, athletic woman with the body fat of a celery stick. She casually introduced herself and set me up on my bike. She made small talk with others about work and children and seemed harmless enough. When the class began ... everything changed. Buoyed by the thumping and deafening music, celery girl was transformed into a whirling dervish of torment. Gone were the casual demeanor and the early morning chitchat. These were replaced by a pedaling cadence that would have caused a juiced pro cyclist to cringe. Oh, how she bellowed and screamed at the class. I screamed, too — in agony.

I kept up appearances for a while. My pride would allow nothing else. Ultimately I was reduced to a trembling, lightheaded heap with what felt like burning razor blades in my lungs. The instructor and her little group of cycling fascists, including my wife, disappeared over the spinning horizon. I was in over my head, and I finally admitted it.

The night before my cardiac adventure/disaster I had read the accounts of Simon Peter's denial of Jesus. You may remember the story. Simon Peter, full of bluster and bravado, made bold promises about his commitment and abilities in the face of adversity. Suffering on a cross? Why didn't you say that's where we were going? No problem. Simon boasted that he would go to the wall — to the death if necessary — in his commitment to Christ. Even if everyone else fell by the wayside, he wouldn't. How hard could it actually be?

Jesus, lovingly but uncompromising, told Peter the truth: "Before the rooster crows (that is, even before the sun rises and the day begins), you will deny that you even know me, three times." Simon Peter was insulted. His pride would allow nothing else. But, by the time the sun rose, Peter had been reduced to a whimpering, trembling and cowardly defector. Confronted by those accusing him of being a follower of his now arrested and condemned Rabbi, Peter called down curses from heaven. He renounced the Christ he loved and abandoned Jesus to the civil and religious authorities. The outspoken leader of the band of disciples was a turncoat. He was in over his head, and finally he had to admit it.

Thankfully, Jesus didn't leave him there. After his crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus specifically sought out Simon Peter. Jesus embraced him. Forgave him. Restored him. The shame and self-disgust were washed away by mercy. This forever changed the man. Yes, he remained gruff and curt; after all, he was a hard-working fisherman. But he never recovered from the forgiveness extended by the very one he had thrice denied. It ruined him in the best possible way.

We all fail. We all disappoint. We all have moments — sometimes multiple moments — when the crowd peddles by us. And we sit there exhausted, used up, in over our heads. In those moments, Christ comes to us. Not with criticism, but encouragement. Lovingly, he lets us catch our breath. Then, uncompromising, he puts us back on the seat, and back in the saddle.

He understands and offers grace best: No one who has ever failed, at faith or at riding a bike, has ever gotten fit by remaining where he fell.

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

*More from the DignityUSA Convention...*

After returning to Dignity Detroit after a long absence, I am happy to say I quickly received a warm welcome and acceptance during a difficult time in my life. When the opportunity arose to attend the Dignity USA Biennial Convention, I reviewed the convention information and decided to attend. The camaraderie seen between all the US chapters was amazing. It was obvious that many individuals had developed friendships from past conventions that still continue. Love Hopes All Things, Dignity USA Convention 2011 Washington DC, was the first on many conventions I will be attending.

The convention was composed of plenary panel sessions, keynote address, workshops, caucuses, liturgical services and social gatherings. Two of the plenary panel sessions of interest to me were "Catholic GLBT Civic Affairs" and "Celebrating Marriage with Dignity". One of the plenary panel sessions "Our Place as Change Agents" was moderated by Phil Donahue. I remember during Junior High and High School years looking ahead in the TV Guide listings to see what the topics were going to be on the Phil Donahue Show. Whenever there were GLBT issues, you could be assured Phil Donahue would be standing up for our community. This was still evident from all of his comments throughout the plenary panel discussion. The attendees at the convention were not just gay men; it was truly a mixture of GLBT and straight allies. It was impressive to see a group of 20-25 GLBT young Catholics recognized on stage for their work as a group. I kept my liturgical program and convention program if anyone wants to look at them.

Our Dignity Detroit group still left plenty of time for other outside fun. We managed to get in visits to the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, a view of the Whitehouse on Pennsylvania Ave, short tour on the Potomac River, Washington National Cathedral, Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception (absolutely beautiful) and Georgetown & Dupont Circle for dinner. Lastly, let's not forget our visit to the Smithsonian Arts and Sciences. Here we watched our very own President of Dignity Detroit, Frank D'Amore; try to get those ruby red shoes on through the glass showcase. Photos (4x6) can be purchased for \$2.00, with all proceeds going to the Dignity Detroit general fund.

Mark your calendars now! The next Dignity USA Biennial Convention, "Let Justice Roll Like a River", is July 4-7, 2013 in Minneapolis at the Minneapolis Hilton. It would be great to have a large Detroit contingency group for the next convention.

Thank you to all of my travel buddies, Frank D'Amore, Glenn Crane and John Fox, I had a wonderful time.

Rick Roos

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

8425 W. McNichols @ Wyoming

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Website: [www.dignitydetroit.org](http://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:**

**P.O. Box 376**

**Medford, MA 02155-0376**

**Phone: 800-877-8797**

**E-mail: [info@dignityusa.org](mailto:info@dignityusa.org)**

**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!!!**



A religious cowboy lost his favorite Bible while he was mending fences out on the range.

Three weeks later a cow walked up to him carrying the Bible in its mouth.

The cowboy couldn't believe his eyes. He took the precious book out of the cow's mouth, raised his eyes heavenward and exclaimed, "It's a miracle!"

"Not really," said the cow. "Your name is written inside the cover."

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 Bookstore.



## **Dignity Detroit 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**

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of every month)  
Observed Solidarity Sunday (Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>) --- calling for an end to physical/verbal abuse against all of God's children  
Held Scripture/Communion Service in absence of a priest  
Held mini one-day retreat at Visitation North  
Held annual Family/Couples Blessing on Feast of the Holy Family  
Provided daily Reflection books during Advent, Lent and Easter  
Used Corporal Works of Mercy to call during Lent to those who cry out for help  
Used dramatic 1<sup>st</sup> reading on the Feast of Pentecost  
Included tribute to Armed Forces personnel (current members and family members) on Memorial Day weekend.  
Held 2<sup>nd</sup> annual "Mass on the Grass"  
Updated information brochure and business cards

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

Promote and encourage involvement in AIDS Walk – Detroit. Collected \$13,650.00 to benefit Health Emergency Lifeline Programs (H.E.L.P) --- 20 Walkers registered  
Partnered with St. Mark Catholic Church for the Comerica Park concession stand staffing during the 2010 Baseball Season raising \$1,600.00  
Held end-of-Summer pot luck with crock pot raffle in September  
Observed National Coming Out Day on Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> (it is actually Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>) with toaster oven raffle during after-Mass social  
Held Food Drive in October to benefit St. Mark Church food pantry  
Assisted with the planning and participated in the Archdiocese of Detroit World AIDS Service at SS. Simon and Jude on December 1st  
Provided Christmas gifts to nine (9) families and three (3) individuals from parishes of our Presiders  
Published former Membership Directory as new Community Directory  
Signed on as a sponsor for Marygrove College Contemporary Author Lecture Series  
Provided copies of Daniel Helminiak's updated brochure, *Catholicism, Homosexuality and Dignity: Questions and Answers* available to all members and Mass attendees.  
Held personal hygiene kit collection to benefit St. Mark Catholic Church outreach program  
Held annual clothing drive to benefit St. Mark Catholic Church outreach program  
Signed on as a sponsor of the Detroit Together Men's Chorus Spring Concert

#### **We will support and expand membership**

Renewed Advertising in Between the Lines as a means of stirring interest in Dignity Detroit

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

Signed on as a sponsor of Together in Faith conference  
Sent PFLAG/Detroit contribution in honor of their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Signed on as participant in Motor City Pride in June (downtown Detroit)  
Share display space at Pridefest with PFLAG/Ann Arbor  
Attendance at Pride Banquet

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

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

Progress reported at every General Membership Meeting

### **Prioritized Action by the Year 2011**

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

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

Twenty-five percent of the Dignity Detroit membership will participate in discussion groups --- **to be worked on, but no longer as a 2011 year-end prioritized action.**