

JUNE 2011



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# The Independence

The Monthly Newsletter of Dignity/Philadelphia for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Catholics & Friends

## DIGNITY THROUGH THE YEARS *by Jimmy Calnan*

When Dignity USA was preparing to celebrate its 25th Anniversary at a bi-annual convention, chapters were invited to prepare a book of their history for display. Dignity/Philadelphia created an Ad-hoc Committee which worked on what became a three volume history. In order to accomplish this, file drawers full of reports, minutes from meetings and other memorabilia had to be sorted and cataloged. From this came the history books that we keep on file in the office. As a lead in to the chapter's 40th Anniversary in 2013, we are going to reprint in each monthly newsletter one year's fact sheet beginning with 1973 in this issue. We will try to include photos and copies of some of the documents mentioned in the reports. 1973 was reported in the May Newsletter.

### 1974

In January, negotiations continue in establishing a Dignity/Philadelphia Chapter with the national office. Members of the group which will eventually become Dignity/Philadelphia contact the City of Philadelphia in order that more gay and lesbian material be provided through the free library system. On February 18, 1974, the Philadelphia Liturgy Group officially becomes Dignity/Philadelphia. Bob Kahn and John Politis were appointed first Co-Chairpersons. The official residence at the time was 60 N. Third St., Philadelphia, PA 19106. On March 18, 1974, the first liturgy as Dignity/Philadelphia was celebrated at St. Rita's Church, 1164 S. Broad St., approximately twenty people were in attendance.

As of March 28, 1974, there were 590 members of Dignity National and twenty chapters. In June, it is reported to National Office that liturgies are continuing to be held at St. Rita's on a monthly basis. On June 27, 1974, Dignity/Philadelphia responds to a "not so favorable" article published in the Catholic Standard & Times. A four page article/response was sent. a "pilgrimage" mass in celebration of the Holy Year was held at the Cathedral on November 3, 1974. Thirty members of Dignity/Philadelphia attended the service. The Archdiocese was represented by members of the civil disobedience squad. The service was peaceful.

On December 22, 1974, the proposed Constitution of Dignity/Philadelphia was presented to the members for their review. On December 18, 1974, Father Robert Nugent, a founding chaplain, presented testimony before City Council relative to the civil rights bill before them. At this time, the bill did not pass.

### 50/50 FOR JUNE

ShelterBox is an international disaster relief charity that delivers emergency shelter, warmth and dignity to people affected by disaster worldwide. ShelterBox responds instantly to disasters all around the world delivering aid as quickly as possible to the people who need it most. Their goal is the help 500,000 people every year. At the heart of every ShelterBox is a disaster relief tent for a family of up to 10 people. It is designed to withstand extreme temperatures, high winds and heavy rainfall. Internally, each tent has privacy partitions that allow recipients to divide the space as they see fit. In addition to the tent, there is a range of other survival equipment including thermal blankets and insulated ground sheets, essential in areas where temperatures plummet at nightfall. Where malaria is prevalent mosquito nets are supplied, as well a life saving means of water purification. Visit their website for more information: <http://www.shelterbox.org/contact.php>



## DIGNITY/PHILADELPHIA REVISED MEMBERSHIP FORM BEGINS JANUARY 1, 2011

June renewals – please consider Dignity/USA membership

The Steering Committee has made a commitment to have a closer relationship with DignityUSA and they need your help. Please, when renewing your Dignity/Philadelphia membership also join DignityUSA. Please visit the DignityUSA website (<http://www.dignityusa.org/>) to see all the work DignityUSA does for us.

Over the years Dignity/Philadelphia has been one of the largest chapters in DignityUSA and we need to reclaim that position.

What does it mean to be a member of DignityUSA? By being a member of DignityUSA, you make a commitment to a national, if not international, organization and become a voice for GLBT Catholics and our friends. The media works with, and knows, DignityUSA and reaches out to the national office when a counterbalance viewpoint is sought.

Please speak with a member of the Steering Committee if you would like more information.

TOGETHER, our Voices are heard – locally, nationally and internationally! Let yours be heard – join both Dignity/Philadelphia and DignityUSA.

## TIDBITS AND PIECES:

- Dignity/Philadelphia membership is currently 146 members.
- Don't forget about the Dignity/USA Convention in Washington, DC, July 1-4. MegaBus for transportation can be had for \$1 if you make your reservation early. Look for more information in this newsletter.
- If a member of the chapter needs to take advantage of the Emergency Community Fund, please see the President or one of the coordinators of the Community Life Committee.
- Parking is available next to the church. Please see a member of the Steering Committee for a special placard.
- Limited funds in the Dan Estes and Michael Durkin funds for convention participation and attendance. The Estes Fund is for people with HIV/AIDS and the Durkin fund is for women. Please see a member of the Steering Committee to determine if you are eligible to help defray a part of the expenses to attend the convention. Donations to these two funds are always accepted.

## DIGNITY/USA CONVENTION 2011

– July 1-4 in Washington, DC

Copies of the convention materials are on the Education Table during the social following mass each Sunday. If you did not receive one in the mail, please take one.

Convention theme is “Love Hopes All Things” and the Keynote Address speaker is Edwina Gateley; Discussion Leaders are Phil Donahue and Maureen Fiedler; and a host of Panel Speakers.

Register online <http://conv2011.dignityusa.org> and click on the REGISTER NOW button at the top of the page. Can also register by calling 800-977-8797 or email to [info@dignityusa.org](mailto:info@dignityusa.org) and request a paper registration form be mailed to you.

Renaissance Washington DC Downtown Hotel is the convention hotel. Convention rate is \$125 (single or double) if made by June 7, 2011 either by phone 800-266-9432 or online <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/dignity>.

Detailed schedule information is online <http://conv2011.dignityusa.org>

## DIGNITY AT BROAD STREET MINISTRY

by Jimmy Calnan

During our time of volunteering for the monthly food ministry program at Broad Street Ministry we have been organized by Caroline Blasius, a part time worker and full time student at the University of the Arts. Caroline is graduating this semester and will be leaving BSM so Dignity presented her with a Dignity gift bag which included a tee shirt, our “Cooking With Dignity” cook book, a pen and magnet.

Please plan to join us for this ministry on June 29 and July 27.



*John, Ray, Kevin, Michelle, Caroline, Michael, Jimmy and Steven (head tilted)*

## MOTION FROM THE MAY STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Be it moved that the May 50/50 be designated to ShelterBox. Motion made by Anjeanette Milner and seconded by Jimmy Calnan. Passed unanimously.

## DIGNITY/USA PUBLICATIONS

Copies of the latest Dignity/USA publications (Dateline for May 2011 and the Quarterly Voice for 1st Quarter 2011) are on the Education Table after mass.

The Quarterly Voice has a homily from Fr. Dick Young and an article from Fr. Bernard Lynch. Both were presidents at Dignity/Philadelphia.

The Dateline has updates on the convention and an article on collaboration of Roman Catholic Universities and Non-Denominational Divinity Schools.

## PRIDE PARADE ON JUNE 12

Volunteers are needed to staff the table at Penn's Landing and also to walk or ride on our float during the parade. A committee has been meeting to enhance the parade experience and encourages members (and their family and friends) to join us this year.

## FATHER RON HOSKINS PRESENTED THE CHAPTER SERVICE AWARD

At our 38<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass, Father Ron Hoskins was presented the Chapter Service Award for his many years (over 20) as presider on Sundays, presider for memorial masses, presider on holydays, being on call at the last minute to preside on a Sunday, his role as chaplain including visiting the sick and caring for the spiritual needs of the members of the chapter, and his yearly service at the Calcutta House Christmas Parties. Father Ron has been a godsend for Dignity/Philadelphia and the chapter is most fortunate to have been blessed with his presence throughout these years.



Kevin, Father Ron Hoskins, Joanne Collins

## 38TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION - SUNDAY, MAY 15

Please see the related articles in this newsletter concerning our 38<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The celebration began with a potluck dinner that included presenting the Community Service Award. Our 38<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass followed at 7pm and during the announcement portion of the mass Father Ron Hoskins was presented the Chapter Service Award (for this year only also known as the Susan Lucci Award). A champagne/sparkling cider toast by our Vice President Pat L during the social following mass completed a busy celebration. Many thanks to those who made all the activities possible.



## COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD WINNERS

The Philadelphia Gay Men's Chorus was formed in 1981 and during their first year the chorus went caroling in the bars. The first formal concert was on April 25, 1982, their debut at the Academy of Music was in March 1990 and they have performed at the opening ceremonies of the William Way LGBT Community Center and the new National Constitution Center. Their repertoire includes a broad range of styles, including art music from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century to the present, spirituals, sacred music, love ballads, comic pieces, Broadway and Hollywood, opera choruses, African, Asian, Native American and European folk songs, and the latest LGBT music. The chorus performs cabarets, fundraisers and other community events throughout the year.

Anna Crisus Women's Choir founded in the 70's to provide a safe haven for both gay and straight women to find their voices. The choir is recognized as both an agent of social change and a premier performing arts group. The choir has an eclectic repertoire and commitment to supporting original compositions by, for and about women. The choir's name has its origins in the Greek word "anacrusis", a word used in music to describe an "upbeat" or "feminine" entrance to a phrase. Physically, it may be described as the precise moment of anticipation and exhilaration which occurs as a singer takes a quick, deep breath before vocalizing.



At our 38<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Potluck Dinner one of the Community Service Awards was presented to The Philadelphia Gay Men's Chorus, represented by Kevin Engleman and Glen Abrams, with D/P President Jim DeSimone.

## Monthly Munchie

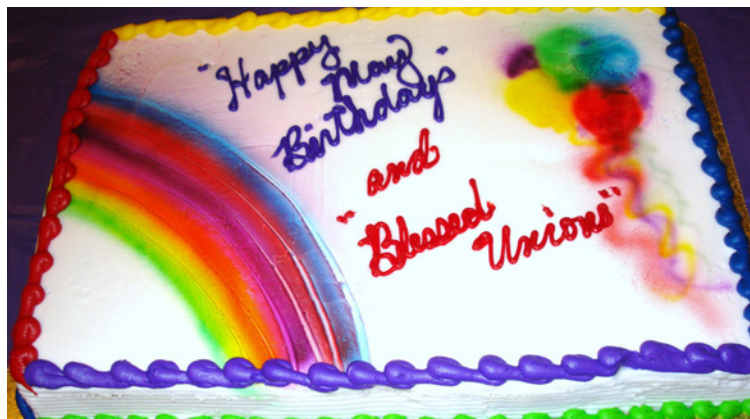
Our days are like the grass; like flowers of the field we blossom – PS 103:15

**HAPPY PRIDE MONTH**

## EQUALITY FORUM'S OUTFEST PHOTO SPREAD



Anjeanette and Jimmy



Double-duty cake to celebrate Dignity/Philadelphia's Couples' Blessing at mass for Equality Forum and May birthdays



Suzanne, Jimmy and Anjeanette



Linda and Melissa

## TWO SPIRITUAL TOOLS FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

by Sharon Browning

*Although attempting to bring about world peace through the internal transformation of individuals is difficult, it is the only way. The Dalai Lama*

*How can you think of saying, 'Friend, let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye, 'when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Luke 6:42*

*The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. Audre Lorde*

I was reminded of these sayings recently in a number of settings: while attending gatherings of earnest and dedicated individuals seeking a more just and inclusive Church, and while reading vitriolic email exchanges between good and loving people who are understandably outraged by the latest revelations in the clergy abuse scandals. It's clear that a great deal of time, effort, and expertise have been marshaled for the cause and that these efforts spring from a deep well of desire for a church that more clearly mirrors the Gospel. There is a tangible hunger for an institution that nurtures individuals who are, and which is itself, Bread for the Word.

Often, though, despite all of the hard work and expectation, there is no transformative energy moving us forward. It feels flat and stuck, yet another meeting or communication that may advance the enterprise, but at a lackluster, snail's pace. What's often missing is the fire of the Spirit, inspired ideas and planning that arise only when we are connected to the Source of all wisdom and allow that energy to move through us and into the world.

At the conclusion of one of these meetings, I approached one of the planners to discuss the possibilities for a more intentionally spiritual process. Perhaps in the future, the proceedings could be punctuated by intermittent reflective, prayerful pauses, a muezzin-like, bell-of-mindfulness-Angelus-ringing-type call to prayer, some mechanism for periodically bringing all of those assembled back to the moment, back to connection with the Divine within each and all. Such a process would ensure that those assembled stay rooted in the Spirit and make consistent efforts to bring Divine Light to shine on their endeavors. The planner looked surprised, and then said, "But that's not what we're about here. We're trying to change structures."

### UNITING HEAD AND HEART

This separation of head from heart, intellect from spirit, is precisely what has landed us in the precarious place in which we currently find ourselves – a rigid, hierarchical, alienating church so increasingly lifeless that hordes of deeply spiritual people flee from it, disaffected, discouraged, some trying to create alternative vibrant faith communities, others just giving up altogether. And for some of us, anger has turned to rage and we have gotten stuck there, unable to digest our powerful emotions and harness the resulting energy into passionate, inspired action for transformative change. We continue to spew negativity out into the world, creating even more of what we so desperately

want to heal. Too often, our good intentions become tainted and lost in blame and judgment about 'them' and 'their' failings. It's always someone else who needs to change.

Ah, we humans. Complicated creatures that we are, with our left and right brains frequently at odds with each other, no wonder we get stuck. How can we move forward with hope, and joy, and freedom? What to do? How to be? How discern next steps in our individual and communal quest for the reign of God, anchored to earth through us? As the Dalai Lama suggests, our own inner transformation is the key; can we undertake the difficult and painful task of changing our own hearts? In Jesus' formulation of this universal truth, we must first remove the log from our own eyes. So much of our effort is filled with ego and a lack of reflective prayerfulness; no wonder transformational change eludes us. Ego-centric, unreflective behaviors are precisely what created the patriarchal church, and as Audre Lorde famously observed, "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house."

There are a few simple things we could do to break this impasse...simple in concept, but very difficult in practice. Here are two suggestions, one communal, one personal:

## COMMUNAL REFLECTION

Build reflective, prayerful pauses into every meeting, reform gathering, protest and demonstration...any and every group meeting intended to hasten change in the church. I'm not talking about rote prayers, petitions, or words aimed at changing the hearts of anyone other than ourselves, although those have their place and value. Rather, how would things shift if we were intentionally to create empty spaces, silent, creative moments to allow ourselves to listen to the still, small voice within us, to seek divine guidance?

Some conferences and meeting utilize a process where a 'spiritual reflector' is given the task of listening intently throughout the gathering, and then of intermittently holding a mirror up to all in attendance, summarizing what has transpired, and then posing questions for reflective, prayerful consideration. Everything stops while all present pause, breathe, reflect, listen to and share the inner wisdom that is found in every human heart. These gatherings are vibrant, charged with energy. Such deep listening to ourselves and each other is transformative.

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

Another obstacle to transformational change is our unhealthy egos...the part in each and every one of us that wants to feel superior to another, that is more concerned with self promotion than with the Common Good. All of us suffer from what Eckhart Tolle calls "Unconscious Manifestations of Ego," behaviors of which we are largely unaware but that impede us, preventing us from being conduits for the Spirit. If I am full of myself, there is no room for the indwelling God to be expressed through me.

Tolle's list is illuminating; this is foundational self-knowledge, essential subject matter for our personal reflection and prayer. It's a list to be reviewed with gentleness toward ourselves and each other; every single one of us has adopted some or all of these behaviors over the years in order to feel safe and loved, and we unthinkingly do these things day in and day out. It is our unexamined repetition of them that creates so much harm in the world. Awareness of how and when we resort to these strategies is spiritually and emotionally freeing.

Here's the list, adapted from Tolle's *A New Earth*, for your careful consideration and reflection.

- Desiring, seeking, or demanding recognition for something you did. Being upset, disgruntled, angry, or 'holding on' if you don't get it.
- Trying to get attention by talking about your problems, the story of your life, issues, etc. Interrupting, pulling attention to yourself rather than listening to the other person.
- Giving your opinion when nobody has asked for it and it makes no difference to the situation.
- Being more concerned with how the other person sees you than with the other person.
- Trying to make an impression on others through knowledge, status, possessions, etc. For some, boasting of the OPPOSITE, e.g. a simple lifestyle, lack of possessions.
- Bringing about temporary ego inflation through angry reaction against someone or something. (Think cable news shows, and then think of your own personal version.)
- Taking things personally, feeling offended.
- Making yourself right and others wrong through futile mental or verbal complaining, gymnastics, explaining. Constant judging of others. Being sure you are right.
- Wanting to see, or appear important.

Which of these behaviors do we engage in? When? Why? How did these behaviors serve us in the past, and can we now see them for the dysfunctions they are, and gently let them go? Can we choose to simply Be, quiet our minds, open our hearts, wake up and be conscious of the Spirit ever waiting in the wings to blow past our ego dysfunctions and work her wondrous miracles in the world through our uniquely-gifted selves?

How often are we in meetings or situations where we see these behaviors, and know them to be obstructionist and counter-productive? More importantly, which can we claim as our own? It is easier to see them in others than to acknowledge these habitual behaviors ourselves. Yet all of us share these human tendencies and are capable of bringing them to consciousness, recognizing their destructive power, and choosing not to engage in them. This self-reflective practice is essential if we are to bring about our own individual internal transformation and is the *sine qua non* of widespread social change and transformation. This is how we remove the log in our own eye.

The fruit of this practice is compassion; when we claim these behaviors as our own, we don't judge others when we see these actions in them. Knowing that we share the same frail tendencies, we recognize our unity with others and are moved to compassion for them...and for ourselves. Energy freed from self-absorption, blame, and judgment is available to do the work of the Spirit. Imagine. A New Pentecost.

Lent is the perfect time to practice these reflective skills. We are blessed with a liturgical season specifically intended as an opportunity to slow down, engage in some crucial self-reflection, do the work of internal transformation, and begin anew. Let's change the world by changing ourselves.

Sharon Browning is currently working with the Philadelphia-based Just Listening Project which fosters personal and social change through the practice of non-judgmental listening skills. Browning is an attorney and a spiritual director and supervisor, and facilitates retreats and workshops on a variety of topics.

This article submitted by Jim Clay and reprinted with permission of the author, Sharon Browning and Southeastern Pennsylvania Women's Ordination Conference. It appeared in the March-June 2011 issue of their newsletter, EQUAL WRITES. [www.sepawoc.org](http://www.sepawoc.org)

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS (weekly mass at 330 S 13th Street between Pine and Spruce Streets)

## June is Pride Month

- Thurs, June 2 Ascension Thursday Liturgy at 7:30pm**
- Friday, June 3 Prayer Around The Cross
- Sunday, June 5 Eucharistic Liturgy at 7pm Investiture of Officers**  
Steering Committee Meeting at 4:30pm
- Sunday, June 12 Pentecost Sunday Liturgy at 7pm**  
Liturgy Committee Meeting at 4:30pm  
Pride Parade and Festival  
(see newsletter article)
- Sunday, June 19 Trinity Sunday Liturgy at 7pm Father's Day**
- Sunday, June 26 Corpus Christi Liturgy at 7pm**

## July 1-4 is the Dignity/USA National Convention

- Friday, July 1 Prayer Around The Cross at 7pm
- Sunday, July 3** Steering Committee Meeting at 4:30pm  
**Eucharistic Liturgy at 7pm**
- Monday, July 4 Independence Day
- Sunday, July 10** Liturgy Committee Meeting at 4:30pm  
**Eucharistic Liturgy at 7pm**
- Sunday, July 17 Eucharistic Liturgy at 7pm Healing Mass**
- Friday, July 22 Feast of Mary Magdalene
- Sunday, July 24 Eucharistic Liturgy at 7pm**
- Sunday, July 31 Eucharistic Liturgy at 7pm**



## PRAYER INTENTIONS

Please sign our Prayer Intentions book if you have anyone you would like the community to remember in our prayers.

**The deadline for submission of articles for the July newsletter is June 19, 2011.**

### New Steering Committee

Joanne Collins – President  
 Jimmy Calnan – Vice President  
 Kevin Davies – Secretary  
 Linda Barrett – Treasurer  
 Jim Clay – Liturgy Committee Coordinator  
 Anjeanette & Suzanne – Community Life Committee Co-coordinators  
 Vacant – Communications Co-coordinator  
 Vacant – Education Committee Coordinator  
 Chaplains: Barbara Gindhart & Father Ron Hoskins



The Catholic Christian Tradition in the L/G/B/T Community  
**Celebrate Who You Are And Embrace The Person God Calls You To Be!**  
*Yes, I want to be a member of the Dignity family!*

I am joining as a **new member**  I am **renewing my membership**  **Address Change**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers: cell \_\_\_\_\_ home \_\_\_\_\_ work \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ to receive Dignity/Philadelphia's Newsletter (*The Independence*) and the latest news via email blasts. Your support through your dues to Dignity/USA will entitle you to voting privileges in national elections; subscriptions to the monthly Dateline and Quarterly Voice; discounted registration for biennial conventions and other Dignity/USA events; and access to Dignity News email list and chat groups.

Scholarships are available for Dignity/Philadelphia and Dignity/USA memberships. Contact the Dignity/Philadelphia Vice President for more information ([vp.dignityphila@gmail.com](mailto:vp.dignityphila@gmail.com)).

*The total amount of your dues and donations to both Dignity/Philadelphia and Dignity/USA may be included in one check. We will forward your Dignity/USA dues/donations and your contact information to the Dignity/USA national office.*

**Please enclose your check, payable to Dignity/Philadelphia, and mail to: Dignity/Philadelphia, P.O. Box 53348, Philadelphia, PA 19105.**

**Individual annual dues:**  
 Dignity/Phila \$20;  
 Dignity/USA \$30  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Total**

**Couple's annual dues:**  
 Dignity/Phila \$35;  
 Dignity/USA \$60  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Total**