



The Independence

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

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CRAIG SCOTT: IN MEMORIAM

By Dick O'Malley

Craig Scott was a long-time member of Dignity Philadelphia (since 1987) and looked on Dignity as part of his extended family. Unfortunately, on Sunday, November 27th Craig lost his long struggle with cancer.

Craig was born in the city of Chester in 1953, not far from what was to be his final home, across the river, in nearby Swedesboro, New Jersey. He grew up in the Seventh Day Adventist Church, where he played the piano during Sabbath liturgies. Eventually he graduated from Andrews University in Michigan, the SDA's flagship educational institution.

When Craig came to realize that he was gay, his mentors persuaded him to attend a SDA sponsored camp in Reading, PA, which purported to help change people from gay to straight. Ironically, Craig found his first boyfriend in the camp, and when the Camp Director propositioned him, Craig helped to close it down. It was only the first of many examples in which he revealed himself to be a man of determination and action. Soon Craig found support in Kinship, the GLBT friendly equivalent of Dignity, in the SDA Church

Probably Craig's most important relationship was with his mother. He came out to her as a gay Christian and she totally accepted him. When he came down with HIV/AIDS, she loved him even when some relatives refused to accept him. Theirs was truly a love story. When his mother was dying, he did not want her to die alone in a hospital so he turned his home into a hospice and ministered to her. If there is any consolation in his passing, it is knowing that they are together again.

Fortunately for Craig, he also found support in members of his traditional family who were there when he needed them and who - along with his extended family of friends - nursed him in his home which once again became a hospice, this time for him.

Reflecting Craig's concerns for Dignity, one of which was about music, some of his friends are setting up the "Craig Scott Fund for the Music Ministry" and are requesting that donations be made in Craig's memory for this purpose. Craig Scott will surely be missed by his friends, one and all.



A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Joanne Collins

Hello everyone! This is truly the best time of the year for me. It's not because of the fancy Christmas trees, or even the gifts that are under it. As a matter of fact most of the time someone asks me what I want for Christmas, I either can't think of a single thing or I dread giving out my true size. What I love about Christmas is there's music everywhere and there is love seeing everyone, from someone going to a store and paying everyone's layaways off, to someone handing out 50 dollars bills to everyone passing. This is the season where 2 strangers will pass and take the time to wish each other well. One of the best Christmas gifts that I received didn't cost a penny. It was given to me Sunday morning at daybreak, when I was watching the news and saw the last of US soldier crossing the border out of Iraq, which signified the ended that war. The thought of these men and women coming home and knowing the joy that moms, dads, sons, and daughters everywhere will experience will be the perfect gift. So God bless everyone and have a safe and joyous Christmas.

FROM PHOTO TO WEB – SAFE AND SECURE

by Kevin Davies

Dignity member Tony L. will be instructing/discussing on Sunday, January 22, 2012 beginning at 4 pm how to edit and prepare photos for display on the web for family and friends using PhotoShop, Picassa (free) and Google Photo (also free). If time allows, we may delve into other mysteries of computing and the internet.

Class will be held at St. Luke's with refreshments being served. Also, there will be time after class to go for pizza and have a study group on everything we have learned.

If interested, please register by calling 215-546-2093, email dignityphila@aol.com or let me know at mass.

STEERING COMMITTEE MOTIONS

Submitted by Kevin Davies

At the December 4th Steering Committee, the following motions were presented and voted on by the SC members:

Motion 11-12-01: Be it moved that D/P appointment David Kalinowski to be committee chair of the D/P's Ad Hoc 40th Anniversary Celebration Party and David will recruit members for the committee. Passed unanimously.

Motion 11-12-02: Be it moved that these organizations be designated as 50/50 recipients: January 2012 - The Attic Youth Center; February 2012 - WOAR (Women Organized Against Rape); and March 2012 - Fund for Families (managed by Circle of Care, Family Planning Council). Passed unanimously.

Motion 11-12-03: Be it moved that the Community Emergency Fund and the Scholarship Fund be moved from the TD Bank account into two separate ING Accounts. Passed unanimously.

Motion 11-12-04: Be it moved that the Ad Hoc Audit Committee FY 2009-2010, Mike Viola and Rob Baker, be commended for a job well done. Passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL DONATIONS TO DIGNITY/PHILADELPHIA: TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE

There are many ways to financially support Dignity/Philadelphia (a 501c3 non-profit organization). Be a member of the chapter; make weekly offerings at mass; join the Stewardship Program; request a matching gift form from your employer; make bequests, planned gifts, or stock donations; and don't forget to remember Dignity/Philadelphia in your will. When you do your estate planning, no amount is too small to remember Dignity/Philadelphia. Everything you do is appreciated.

50/50 FOR JANUARY – THE ATTIC YOUTH GROUP CENTER

At the December the 50/50 for January was designated for the Attic Youth Group. The following is from their website: atticyouthcenter.org



The Attic creates opportunities for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth to develop into healthy, independent, civic-minded adults within a safe and supportive community, and promotes the acceptance of LGBTQ youth in society. The Attic is proud to be Philadelphia's only independent LGBTQ youth center.

The Attic provides youth and young adults (ages 14-21) with opportunities to: meet other youth, improve grades, prepare for a job or internship, talk with a counselor, support peers, become a leader, prepare for the GED, volunteer in the community and pursue interests and talents.

Programs at The Attic include: Life Skills Programming (career readiness, academic enrichment, health and wellness, arts and culture, youth leadership), Mental Health Services 7(counseling and case management), The Bryson Institute.

DIGNITY RETREAT - A SUCCESSFUL REFLECTION

by Dick O'Malley

On Saturday, Dec. 3rd, a dozen members of the Dignity community met together with Rev. Caryl Johnson to reflect on how to find God in everyday life. On what might have been a nebulous and boring topic, they found that it was exciting, even fun, to think of how God impacts their everyday lives. Just the thought that God's love is unending and unlimited provides hope that human beings can excel beyond their wildest dreams, despite setbacks and missteps.

God encompasses all of humanity no matter by what name the creator is known. In the case of Roman Catholicism, Catholics were taught by the Second Vatican Council that the "Church" was not the hierarchy or the pope, but rather the "People of God." This belief provides hope to the members of GLBT community who, according to the pope and hierarchy, are disordered; but more and more Catholics are coming to a different conclusion. Moreover, a Christian cannot divorce himself or herself from God's love. Thus no sin is unforgivable. God is always ready to forgive a transgression.

God is truly incomprehensible, but reveals herself or himself in everything we think or do, including our relationships whether in marriage or in friendships, neither of which, by the way, excludes disagreements. One of the "Play Room Rules" in St. Luke's nursery bears repeating: "Always try your best to be a good friend." As the old hymn reminds us: "taste and see how good God is."

Rev. Caryl Johnson, co-pastor, and spiritual director of the St. Mary Magdalene Catholic community in Drexel Hill, organized the retreat in such a way that each person had time to discuss issues and time to reflect on what was said. The gastronomic needs of all were ably met, as usual, by Leo Chang who provided much sustenance throughout the day, starting with a Continental Breakfast. The retreat seems to have fulfilled the expectations of all those present, and the evaluation form at the end allowed everyone to suggest topics for future retreats.

A special thanks to Leo for all his work, contribution and cooking skills!



People attending the retreat clockwise are John R, Leo, Steve, Linda, Joanne, Henry, Alice, Marge, Dick, Frank, Dolores, Caryl, Larry and Jim C.

DIGNITY AT BROAD STREET MINISTRY

World AIDS Day, December 1, was commemorated at Broad Street Ministry with an evening of events from 5:00 until 8:00. On Broad Street in front of the church was a series of billboards, one for each of the 30 years of the AIDS epidemic, proclaiming one significant event for each of those years. It was a chilling history of the progression of this disease and efforts to prevent and to cure it. There were also two mobile testing vans parked out front to provide rapid HIV testing.

Inside there was a fair of AIDS service providers offering prevention education information. Mayor Nutter stopped by to offer his support and there was entertainment by the Philadelphia Gay Men's Chorus and local dance groups. Broad Street Ministry also provided a meal to 289 people served by 13 volunteers from Dignity/Philadelphia.

Dignity still offers to volunteer for the monthly No Barriers Dinners and we are awaiting the final plans for the upcoming year. Future dates will be announced at liturgy.



Pictured above are the wonderful Dignity volunteers at the December 1, World AIDS Day celebration at Broad Street Ministry. Clockwise are Steve B., Jean, John, Don, Michael, Jimmy, Ray, Kevin, Leo, Bill, Ray, and Michael F.

RETREAT FOLLOW-UP – INTERESTED?

Several books were mentioned at the retreat held December 3, and several of the attendees expressed interest in the books mentioned by the retreat leader. Some of us would like to continue meeting and hopefully discuss one of the books, a particular chapter in one of the books, and/or present a full-blown out PowerPoint Presentation on one of the books (especially from those that take Tony's class on January 22, 2012). Are you interested? The three books up for discussion are as follows:

- 1) **Where the Hell Is God?**, by Richard Leonard, S.J. Copyright 2010. Mahwah, NJ: Hidden Spring (An imprint of Paulist Press).

- 2) **The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything: Spirituality for Real Life**, James Martin, S.J. and
- 3) **Why God won't go away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief**, by Andrew Newberg, Eugene D'Aquili and Vince Rause (Mar 26, 2002)

We can get access to any of these books and reproduce the table of contents for you to review. We can then arrange for several members to read particular chapters that interest them or the whole books for those overachievers, and set up a discussion or reading group on a Sunday prior to services. Please let me know if you are interested either by email, msh.vera@comcast.net, or phone-wise, 215/476-8578 or at church on Sundays. I hope to hear from some of you. It seemed to me that there was a need in getting together and discussing a topic central to all of us.

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The Education Committee develops a brochure for newcomers; another successful New Year's Eve is co-sponsored with other groups; the President writes an article in the newsletter confronting the notion that Dignity is conservative; Ann B. speaks to a group of students at Villanova and the session confirms her thoughts that gay/lesbians remain a shadowy issue. Joe completes his term and is succeeded by Michael Rocks who becomes the fifth President of Dignity/Philadelphia and who speaks out on commercial radio that fall.

The long awaited days arrive. Dignity/Philadelphia assumes its role as host of the 6th Biennial Dignity International Convention at the Franklin Plaza Hotel. Liturgies, Workshops, Friendships, the Mummies, and a Dinner Dance are part of the event. The Spirit is truly alive. Our gayness is proudly and spiritually articulated. All the blood, sweat and tears have culminated in an extraordinary celebration. As with all events, there is a negative. One delegate is sexually attacked by an outsider to the convention. A beloved and devoted chaplain is prohibited from any involvement with Dignity. His absence is strongly felt throughout the community.

FREE PICTURES!

If your attractive picture is featured in any of the articles featured in any Dignity newsletter, and you would like a copy, please let me know. I will print this out for you – and in color; I just need to know. Let me know on 215/476-8578.

- Dolores

“We may have all come on different ships,
but we're in the same boat now.”

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

Happy MLK Day of Service

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

January, 2012- Mental Wellness Month

- Sunday, January 1** **New Year's Day Eucharistic Liturgy at 7 p.m.**
- Friday, January 6 Prayer Around the Cross at 7 p.m
- Sunday, January 8** **Eucharistic Liturgy at 7 p.m.**
- Steering Committee Meeting
- Sunday, January 15** **Commemoration Mass for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day at 7 p.m. Liturgy Committee Meeting**
- Monday, January 16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Sunday, January 22** **Christian Unity Liturgy at 7 p.m.**
- Sunday, January 29** **Eucharistic Liturgy at 7 p.m.**

February 2012 - Black History Month

- Sunday, Feb. 5** **Eucharistic Liturgy at 7 p.m. Steering Committee Meeting**
- Sunday, Feb. 12** **Eucharistic Liturgy at 7 p.m. Liturgy Committee Meeting**
- Tuesday, Feb. 14 St. Valentine's Day
- Sunday, Feb. 19** **Eucharistic Liturgy at 7 p.m. - Healing Mass**
- Wednesday, Feb. 22 Ash Wednesday, Mass at 7:30 p.m.
- Sunday, Feb. 26** **Eucharistic Liturgy at 7 p.m., First Sunday in Lent Fast and Prayer for AIDS**



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 February newsletter is January 21.

Steering Committee

- Joanne Collins – President
- Jimmy Calnan – Vice President
- Kevin Davies – Secretary
- Linda Barrett – Treasurer
- Jim Clay/Dick O'Malley - Liturgy Committee Co-ordinators
- Vacant – Community Life Committee Co-ordinators
- M. Dolores Vera, Michelle Perrone - Communications Co-ordinators
- 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).

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**