



The Independence

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

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DIGNITY AND ME - PART 2

Michael Rocks

Mike is 64 years old and first came to the Dignity Chapter in 1976. He is one of 10 children. Mike has served in the Air Force and has studied for the priesthood. He works as a Clinical Social Worker.



When he first started coming to Mass, Dignity liturgies were held in the basement of a building on 12th Street; from there the small congregation moved to Trinity Church at 22nd and Spruce. Father Paul, still one of our priests today, was presiding at the time. Mike said he had a feeling of “finally finding the place you’ve been looking for.” Eucharist has always been the center of his spiritual life and the chapter gave him a place to be himself while participating in mass. Like so many gay people before him, he had been leading a double life. On his second visit to Dignity he brought along his guitar, which started his 30-plus years working on our liturgies’ music.

Today, as he did on that first Sunday, he sees Dignity/Philadelphia as an important Eucharistic Community for LGBT people. But he notes that in his generation, so many people grew up within the social life of their parishes: CYO’s, church-led Boy Scouts, dance mixers, etc. Today, the younger people coming through our doors have had a different journey through the Church. But they still need to “unlearn” the Church teaching about what it means to be gay.

As for his thoughts on Dignity’s relevance today, he says “our purpose is to stand and witness to the Church that *we are* the Church.” Mike also notes that the banners hung at liturgy are a consoling reminder to him of just how much our chapter has lost through the years. He wonders “just how different would my life be if these friends had not died.”

And he ended with saying how important it is to see younger people coming to mass. “They are the future of Dignity”, he says, “We need to listen to them.”

This is the second in a series dealing with some of the history of Dignity Philadelphia, that next year celebrates 40 years of service to the Catholic GLBT community. Michael Flynn conducted this interview.

DIGNITY BACK AT BROAD STREET MINISTRY

Members of the chapter volunteered as servers for the No Barriers Dinners at Broad Street Ministry until the program ended last spring. With the initiative by Mayor Nutter to feed the homeless indoors where additional services can be offered, Rev. Bill Golderer, pastor at BSM, has started evening dinners several days a week and twice weekly lunches.

When he received our Community Service Award last May, we indicated to Rev. Golderer that we were waiting to rejoin his volunteer corp. The time to begin is Wednesday, January 30, at 3:00 p.m. Dinners are being offered earlier than previously since many folks were not able to attend because of curfews at the shelters.

Dignity will staff the last Wednesday of the month dinners from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. We need about 12 volunteers each month to cover the approximately 150 diners to be served.

Please consider putting this important ministry on your calendar and make the necessary plans to be available. Additional information will follow at liturgies or by e-blasts.

50/50 FOR JANUARY 2013

At the December 2nd Steering Committee Meeting, just one motion for 50/50 Donations was discussed, voted on and passed. Here is the 50/50 for January:

Motion 12-12-01 made by Jimmy Calnan; seconded by David Kalinowski. Be it moved that the January 2013



(continued on page 2)

50/50 be designated to North Shore Animal League America for their foster care of animals from Hurricane Sandy. Passed unanimously.

Hurricane Sandy: North Shore Animal League America Provides Relief

North Shore Animal League America continues to conduct emergency rescue and relief efforts for the animals and people affected by Hurricane Sandy. Since they opened their emergency animal shelter on Sunday, October 28 at Mitchel Field in Nassau County, NY, they have taken in over 400 animals that were displaced when their owners had to evacuate their homes.

In addition to providing shelter, they are making sure that every animal receives food, water, medical treatment and, just as important, compassionate care until they can be reunited with their families.

Their Mobile Rescue Units are also out in storm-damaged communities distributing free dog and cat food that Purina PetCare Company has generously donated.

Dignity/Philadelphia in 1993 (Dignity at 20 years old!)

On Sunday, February 28, the Chapter held a community meeting to discuss “the celebrant (presider) asking guest clergy of other denominations to share at the altar as well as at the Word.” Over 40 members voiced the gamut of opinions on the subject, many of which were published in the July Newsletter.

Dignity/Philadelphia and several other organizations co-sponsored a Community Forum on the Philadelphia Domestic Partnership Initiative and the Philadelphia Multicultural Education Policy Mandate at Friends Center on Tuesday, May 25.

For the 20th Anniversary we held a gala dinner/dance at the Hilton Hotel and hosted several national officers for this special event. Kevin Calegari, President of Dignity/USA, was guest homilist and held a question and answer session for interested members. The 10th Anniversary time capsule was opened and pictures and letters were shown to all for several weeks at liturgy. Our current dove with olive branch logo was adopted at this time.

Following the Anniversary celebration we held a protest at the Cathedral on May 15 over Cardinal Bevilacqua’s letter condemning domestic partners legislation. Many members attended and walked out during the homily after words were expressed by one of our chaplains.

MONTHLY MUNCHIE

“I have decided to stick with love.
Hate is too great a burden to bear.”

– Martin Luther King, Jr.
Happy MLK Day of Service

At the New Orleans Convention in July, Dignity/USA presented our chapter with one of its President’s Awards for all our efforts in the 1992 “Call to Action” campaign.

Thank you, Gracias, Danka, Grazi, Merci Beaucoup, etc.

Three beautiful letters were sent to Dignity Philadelphia this past month, thanking us for our contributions made via the 50/50 donations. A big hug for all of you who help by purchasing 50/50 tickets after Mass every Sunday – kudos to us all!

- Received 12/3/12 – from the **Career Wardrobe**: they thanked us for our “recent gift of \$273” which was “critical to our ability to continue to help women with the clothing, job readiness training and self-confidence they need to succeed.”
- Dated 12/4/12 – from **Calcutta House**: they wanted to “acknowledge and thank Dignity/Philadelphia for its recent donation of \$130 to Calcutta House.” This gift will assist them in “providing housing and supportive services to vulnerable adults living with AIDS.”
- Also received in December was a very nice “thank you” note from **Dawn’s Place** for our contribution of \$138 which will be used for social services to help sexual trafficked women regain their lives.

And the Birthdays Keep Happening

We love celebrating birthdays of our members and friends with the great cakes from Acme made special each month. Join us on January 13 and February 10 as we again sing along to “Happy Birthday to You.”

Notes from the Liturgy Committee

1. There will be a special celebration February 3, in honor of St. Blaise, patron saint of throat illnesses.

Many Catholics might remember Saint Blaise’s feast day because of the Blessing of the Throats that took place on this day. Two candles are blessed, held slightly open, and pressed against the throat as the blessing is said. Saint Blaise’s protection of those with throat troubles apparently comes from a legend that a boy was brought to him who had a fishbone stuck in his throat. The boy was about to die when Saint Blaise healed him. (FYI, this was before the Heimlich maneuver was invented!)

Very few facts are known about Saint Blaise. It is believed he was a bishop of Sebastea in Armenia who was martyred under the reign of Licinius in the early fourth century.

The legend of his life that sprang up in the eighth century tells us that he was born in to a rich and noble family who raised him as a Christian. After becoming a bishop, a new persecution of Christians began. He received a message from God to go into the hills to escape persecution. Men hunting in the mountains discovered a cave surrounded by wild animals that were sick. Among them Blaise walked unafraid, curing them of their

illnesses. Recognizing Blaise as a bishop, they captured him to take him back for trial. On the way back, he talked a wolf into releasing a pig that belonged to a poor woman. When Blaise was sentenced to be starved to death, the woman, in gratitude, sneaked into the prison with food and candles. Finally Blaise was killed by the governor.

Blaise is the patron saint of wild animals because of his care for them and of those with throat maladies.

2) **Eucharistic Ministers Workshop:** The Eucharistic Ministers (EMs) Workshop will be conducted in February by David K. in the Tile Room at St. Luke's Church. FYI, EMs serve in various capacities, such as assisting in the distribution of the body and blood of Christ during the Sunday liturgies; when needed, EMs brings the sacrament to the sick in our community. All interested in serving our sisters and brothers in this life-giving ministry, please see Jim Clay or Dick O'Malley to sign up for this class.

3) Welcome to the **4 new Dignity Lectors**



Henry, Wayne, Charlie and Bob were commissioned 12/16/2012

40th Anniversary Panel Discussions

Dignity/Philadelphia will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary on Saturday, April 27, 2013 with a dinner/dance at the Mummies Museum. The 40th Anniversary Mass will be on Sunday, April 28, 2013 at 7pm.

To celebrate our 40 years, Dignity/Philadelphia is planning monthly events which began on Sunday, October 28, 2012 with a panel discussion concerning the bar scene in Philadelphia entitled "Sex in the City: Gay Life in the '70s." In November, Dignity/Philadelphia sponsored a table at Gay Bingo.

On Sunday, December 9, the panel discussion was "History of GLBT religious groups." Guest panelists were Michael Rocks (Dignity/Philadelphia), Jerry Silverman (Beth Ahavah), Rev. Rodger Broadly (Integrity) and Charlie Horn (Lutherans Concerned, but now known as ReconcilingWorks).

Rodger said of his experience on the panel, "Hearing the various isolated memories and names coalesced for me into a renewed experience of how exciting, challenging, moving and fun those early days were."

From Jerry, "It was great seeing old friends and reminiscing. Additionally, I was asked to be on a similar panel for the Mornings Out group at the WWCC this week, so I am well-prepared for that!"

January's discussion will be "History of the glbt Community Center in Philadelphia." Mr. Bob Skiba from the William Way Community Center has been asked to be the sole presenter. There will be plenty of time for audience questions, comments and memories. The date of this discussion will be January 13, 2013 or January 20, 2013 at 330 S. 13th Street, between Pine and Spruce Streets in Philadelphia.



From left to right are Michael Rocks (D/P), Jerry Silverman (Beth Ahavah), Rev. Rodger Broadly (Integrity) and Charlie Horn (Reconciling Works - previously known as Lutherans Concerned)

History of the LGBT Community Center in Philadelphia

We invite you all to attend the next in our on-going series of workshops about events and issues in Philadelphia over the past 40 years. This is being sponsored in conjunction with our 40th Anniversary celebration in April 2013 (see article above).

On Sunday, January 20, at 4:30 we will present a History of the LGBT Community Center in Philadelphia. Most of us are familiar with the William Way Community Center on Spruce Street. But, do you remember Penguin Place on Camac Street? Our presenter is Bob Skiba, Archivist at William Way, who is truly a wealth of historical information about our community. Bob will bring along a display that was shown last year at William Way about the Center and include an oral interpretation.

If you bring photos of any of the Centers that you can part with, Bob would love to add them to the Archives.

Calcutta House Holiday Party – December 17, 2012

Dignity members (aka elves), who participated at the Calcutta House party, prior to the distribution of the many gifts bought by Dignity members – thank you all very much. A special thanks to Fr. Ron for yet another memorable service. Not pictured, but also in attendance were Michelle P., and Michael Flynn.



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

January 2013 - Financial Wellness Month

- | | | | |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|---|
| Tuesday, Jan. 1 | New Year's Day | Sunday, Jan. 20 | Eucharistic Liturgy, 7 p.m.;
MLK, Jr. Commemoration
Panel Discussion at 4:30 p.m. on
History of Community Center - see article |
| Friday, Jan. 7 | Prayer Around the Cross, St. Luke's,
7 p.m. upstairs | Monday, Jan. 21 | Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration
Community Day of Service |
| Sunday, Jan. 6 | Eucharistic Liturgy, 7 p.m.
Steering Committee Meeting at 4:30 p.m. | Sunday, Jan. 27 | Eucharistic Liturgy, 7 p.m.
Christian Unity Sunday |
| Sunday, Jan. 13 | Eucharistic Liturgy, 7 p.m.
Birthday Cake Sunday
Liturgy Committee Meeting at 4:30 p.m. | | |

February is Black History Month

- | | | | |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|---|
| Friday, Feb. 1 | Prayer Around the Cross, St. Luke's at
7 p.m. upstairs | Wed., Feb. 13 | Ash Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. distribution of ashes |
| Sunday, Feb. 3 | Eucharistic Liturgy, 7 p.m.
Feast of St. Blaise (see article in newsletter)
Steering Committee at 4:30 p.m. | Thurs., Feb. 14 | Valentine's Day |
| Sunday, Feb. 10 | Eucharistic Liturgy, 7 p.m. (Healing Mass)
Liturgy Committee meeting at 4:30 p.m. | Sunday, Feb. 17 | Eucharistic Liturgy, 7 p.m.
1 st Sunday in Lent
Fast and Prayer for AIDS |
| | | Monday, Feb. 18 | Presidents Day |
| | | Sunday, Feb. 24 | Eucharistic Liturgy, 7 p.m. |

PRAYER INTENTIONS



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

The deadline date for submissions for the February Newsletter is Jan. 20, 2013.

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Steering Committee

- Joanne Collins – President
- Linda Barrett – Vice President
- Kevin Davies – Secretary
- Vacant – Treasurer
- Jim Clay/Dick O'Malley – Liturgy Committee Co-coordinators
- Jimmy Calnan/Melissa Hrinko – Community Life Committee Co-coordinators
- Michelle Perrone/Dolores Vera – Communications Co-coordinators
- Dave K. and Joe T. – Education Committee Co-coordinators
- Chaplains: Barbara Gindhart and 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.

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

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

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