

# The Independence

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

## A CHEERY NOTE FOR 2019

*By Michael J. Rocks, President*

The Independence newsletter editor asked me to write a “cheery note” for the newsletter. Dolores suggested that I talk about all the graces and blessings, and even some of our losses during the past year. There are many such things to talk about – our grand celebration of our 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; welcoming a new priest presider who was once the President of the chapter; the blessings brought to us by our married priests and our RomanCatholicWomenPriests. Dignity Philadelphia is blessed with an array of homilists at our Sunday Masses who preach with honesty, wisdom and holiness. Although we are on the fringes of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, we have been blessed by the Holy Spirit with the most wonderful and awesome Spirit of holiness and have been blessed with a true Catholic Community.

Still, when I think of “cheery” at the beginning of 2019, my thoughts go to the replacement of the Archbishop of Philadelphia on September 26, 2019. Bishops must tender their resignations to the Pope on their 75<sup>th</sup> birthday and the Pope decides if the bishop continues as Shepherd of the Diocese, or if the resignation is accepted and a new bishop appointed.

There is no doubt in my mind that Pope Francis will graciously accept the resignation of the Archbishop of Philadelphia and will appoint a new Archbishop immediately. We have suffered through several generations of oppressive Archbishops in Philadelphia and it is now time for a brand new approach to leading over a million Roman Catholics in the Philadelphia area.

My qualifications for the new Archbishop include: being comfortable talking to and listening to LGBT Roman Catholics in the parishes and in Dignity itself; supporting the movement started by Pope Francis to welcome all “sinners” into the Church’s daily life where, although we, and they already know the oppressive sexual teaching of the Roman Church, still respect the conscientious dissent to which LGBT Catholics in Dignity have been called to and have faithfully upheld for a half a century; being respectful to all Catholics who have been called to witness minority Catholic beliefs developed on many years by faithful and conscientious Roman Catholics who have either been forced to the fringes by former Archbishops, or who have had to run to the edges in order to save their holy souls; and finally a holy and prayerful man who embraces the teaching of Pope Francis in the Pope’s attempt to reform the Roman Church and to reaffirm the teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

There will still be much that will separate Dignity from true union with the institutional Church, for example, RomanCatholicWomanPriests presiding at our Eucharist; male married priests and priests with “irregular” status presiding at Mass; and our witness to the belief that LGBT persons have been called by God and created to be who they are and can only truly serve God for the sake of their own salvation as authentic, holy and faithful LGBT Roman Catholics.

In closing, I say to Pope Francis----Send us a true Shepherd who will care for and protect all the sheep with love, and take away the present Shepherd who wears “wolf’s clothing” and uses his staff to block the door or to punish the “wayward” sheep.

## CHRISTIAN UNITY SUNDAY AT DIGNITY PHILADELPHIA

At least once a year, Christians are reminded of Jesus’ prayer for his disciples that “they may be one so that the world may believe” (see John 17.21). Hearts are touched and Christians come together to pray for their unity. Congregations and parishes all

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over the world exchange preachers, or arrange special ecumenical celebrations and prayer services. The event that touches off this special experience is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity began in 1908 as the Octave of Christian Unity, and focused on prayer for church unity. The dates of the week were proposed by Father Paul Wattson, cofounder of the Graymoor Franciscan Friars. He conceived of the week of prayer be celebrated between 18-25 January, between the feasts of St Peter and St Paul.

Dignity Philadelphia will celebrate Christian Unity Sunday on January 20, 2019, and Rev. Rodger Broadley, from St. Luke and the Epiphany, will give the homily. The theme for 2019 is "Justice and only justice you shall pursue". We hope you, and your friends and family, will join us for this event.

## COMMUNITY EMERGENCY FUND

Dignity/Philadelphia has an Emergency Fund for members who find themselves in financial need - especially when it comes to groceries. Members can access this fund one time annually, and it is handled confidentially. The requesting member will be provided with a \$50.00 debit card to the supermarket of their choice. Please talk to Jimmy Calnan with your confidential request or for more information.

## MOTIONS FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors met November 5 and December 2, 2018, and the following motions came out of these two meetings:

**Motion 18-11-01:** Made by Kevin Davies; seconded by Michael Rocks. Be it moved that D/P donate \$300 in support and unity for the 9-8-18 witness "Times up: Catholics Demand Truth." Check to be made out to CTA Philadelphia Region. Passed unanimously.

Motion made to approve the October financial report.

**Motion 18-12-01 made by Kevin Davies; seconded by Erin McMenamain.** Be it moved that the 50/50 for February be designated to SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests) local chapter. Passed unanimously.

**Motion 18-12-02 made by Mike Rocks; seconded by Kevin Davies.** Be it moved that D/P donate \$500 to the DUSA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Jubilee Celebration. Passed unanimously.

**Motion 18-12-03 made by Kevin Davies; seconded by Rob Baker.** Be it moved that the Board of Directors accept the audit report for the period 9/1/17 – 8/1/18 as presented and thank the committee (Mike V., Mark S. and Rob B.) for their work. Passed unanimously.

**Motion 18-12-04 made by Erin McMenamain; seconded by Kevin Davies.** Be it moved that D/P transfer \$10,000 from our checking account to the ING Money Market Account. Passed unanimously.

**FYI, for January the 50/50 was**

**Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd** (in honor of Joe Byers): The Congregation of the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd, (LBGS) is a Roman Catholic pontifical institute of religious Brothers whose members work in a variety of social service and health care related ministries to the poor and needy throughout the United States, Canada, England, Ireland and Haiti. Money collected will be designated for Haiti, at Mary Byers request.

## 50/50 FOR FEBRUARY

The **Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests**, known as **SNAP**, established in 1989, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization support group of survivors of clergy sexual abuse and their supporters in the United States. SNAP's mission is to protect those who are vulnerable to child sexual abuse, to heal those who have been wounded, and to prevent future abuse. It exposes predators and those who shield them, helps members share stories so they are empowered, and educates communities about the impact of abuse.



## A CELEBRATION OF ST. BLAISE

St. Blaise was a medical doctor and throat specialist. He was also appointed a Bishop of Sebastea in historical Armenia. A very devout and holy man, St. Blaise performed numerous miracles in his lifetime. In 316 he was arrested, beaten and beheaded for refusing to renounce his Christian beliefs and practices. As he was being led to his martyrdom he saved the life of a young boy who was choking to death, caused by a fish bone in his throat. St. Blaise remains very popular and throat blessings are a common practice. The Feast of St. Blaise is February 3rd, which is when Dignity will celebrate the blessing of throats at Sunday service.

**UPCOMING DATES – PLEASE NOTE ON YOUR BRAND-NEW 2019 CALENDAR**

Broad Street continues to function successfully as a result of Dignity Philadelphia. Okay, this a little exaggeration, but I did get your attention! As various faithful and loyal members know, we meet every first Wednesday of the month. FYI, Broad Street Ministry will be serving lunch – with our help - on March 6 and April 3, 2019. There is always room for more Dignity volunteers, so let Jimmy Calnan know of your availability.

Birthday cake will take place January 20 and February 17, 2019. Help us celebrate someone’s birthday – even celebrities get our attention when it is their birthday month! Two members visiting from St. Luke even joined John G. for the December celebration. Cake is cake (chocolate and vanilla) and non-fattening. Okay, this is the second exaggeration in this article. But who cares? We all love cake! And speaking of cake and birthdays,

**NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS**



Color coordinated Michelle and Dick

**DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**



Three handsome men, two from St. Luke’s, and Dignity’s own John G.

**WANTED: M OR F**

...who wishes to return to college

No, Dignity will not be giving out scholarships for you to finish your degree or pay for your graduate work! We are seeking a Dignity volunteer, or more than one, to represent us **proudly** at local colleges and universities. We very much want this energetic person to help us recruit Catholic (gay or non-gay) students to come and join us for Sunday service. We are pretty confident that once they see how progressive, accepting and open-minded we are, they will want to continue worshipping with us – and who knows, they might even join Dignity Philadelphia!

During the school sessions, and always at the beginning of the school year, colleges have welcoming events, or get-to-gathers, to introduce the students to community groups that may be of interest to their Student Body. We periodically hear of these events, but do not have a pool of Dignity volunteers who can participate. We are hoping that once you read this ‘want ad’ you can say, “I can do this.” The times are usually during the day, no experience necessary, and we will give you literature to either 1) make a short presentation, or 2) staff a table, and answer questions regarding our wonderful Dignity community!

We need volunteers to help us ‘sell’ Dignity to students, and certainly teachers and counselors, who do not know about us. They know about the “gayborhood” and may even have come down to 13<sup>th</sup> Street for gay events or for the night life this area offers. And once they hear from you – Dignity Recruiter- about our worship service, they may want to ‘try us out’.

But we need you to make this recruitment possible! Do you meet the basic qualifications (a member and Catholic), and you have a couple of hours to spare? We want to hear from you since we are pretty sure that YOU – a Proud Dignette - can do this! And we quote Susan B. Anthony: Failure is Impossible!

Please see anyone on the Board of Directors, and let’s go back to school together (and for a good cause!).

**Double Munchie**

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is ‘What are you doing for others?’”

-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**HAPPY MLK DAY OF SERVICE**

Laundry is the only thing that should be separated by color.

~Author Unknown

**HAPPY BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS - JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND A LITTLE BIT OF MARCH OF 2019

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

## January is Stalking Awareness Month

- Sun., Jan. 13 Mass at 7 pm, Commemoration Mass for MLK, Jr. Liturgy Committee Meeting, 4:30 pm
- Sun., Jan. 20 Mass at 7 pm, Mass for Christian Unity Sun. Rosary Group Meeting, 6 pm Birthday Cake Sun.
- Mon., Jan. 21 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Community Service
- Sun., Jan. 27 Mass at 7 pm

## February is Black History Month

- Fri., Feb. 1 Prayer Around the Cross, St. Luke's upstairs, 7 pm
- Sun., Feb. 3 Mass at 7 pm, Feast of St. Blaise, Blessing of the Throats Board of Directors Meeting, 4:30 pm
- Sun., Feb. 10 Mass at 7 pm Liturgy Committee Meeting, 4:30 pm
- Thurs., Feb. 14 St. Valentine's Day

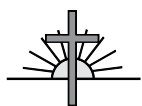
## February (continued)

- Sun., Feb. 17 Mass at 7 pm Rosary Group Meeting, 6 pm Birthday Cake Sun.
- Sun., Feb. 24 Mass at 7 pm

## March is National Women's History Month

- Fri., March 1 Prayer Around the Cross, St. Luke's upstairs, 7 pm
- Sun., March 3 Mass at 7 pm - Celebration 1st year Memorial Mass for Bill Clossey Board of Directors Meeting, 4:30 pm
- Wed., March 6 Broad Street Ministry, 10:30 am Ash Wednesday
- Sun., March 10 Mass at 7 pm, 1st Sun. of Lent Liturgy Committee Meeting, 4:30 pm Day of Fast and Prayer for AIDS
- Sun., March 17 Mass at 7 pm, 2nd Sun. of Lent & St. Patrick's Day Rosary Group Meeting, 6 pm

## 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 submission for the March/April 2019 newsletter is Feb. 12, 2019**

*Articles published in the Dignity/Philadelphia newsletter, The Independence, are not necessarily the opinions of the Board of Directors of Dignity/Philadelphia, or of the Communications Co-chairs. Publication of names, organizations, and/or photographs in The Independence is not to be construed as any indication of the sexual orientation of such persons, employees, and/or members of organizations.*

**Board of Directors**

- Michael Rocks – Director/President of the Board
- Rob Baker – Director (Membership)
- Kevin Davies – Director (Record Keeping)
- Erin McMenamin – Director (Finances)
- Joe Orr – Director (At Large)
- Jim Clay/Dick O'Malley – Liturgy Service Group Co-ordinators
- Michelle Perrone/Dolores Vera – Communications Service Group
- Rev. Ron Hoskins – Chaplain on leave of absence



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## 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 available for Dignity/Philadelphia and DignityUSA memberships. Contact the Dignity/Philadelphia Director of Membership for more information.

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

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

**Electronic payment at [razoo.com/story/Dignity-Philadelphia](http://razoo.com/story/Dignity-Philadelphia)**

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

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