

NOVEMBER 2011



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# The Independence

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

## **DIGNITY RETREAT - SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3**

*by Dick O'Malley*

Dignity/Philadelphia will be having an all-day retreat on Saturday, December 3, at the Church of St. Luke & the Epiphany, 330 S. 13<sup>th</sup> Street. The theme of the retreat is **“What Does God Mean to You? Finding God in Your Everyday Life.”**

The retreat leader will be Caryl Conroy Johnson who served for 15 years as Pastoral Associate at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Springfield, PA. More recently, she has been co-pastor of St. Mary Magdalene Intentional Catholic Community in Drexel Hill and, since 2007, a Spiritual Director. She has a M.A. in Religious Studies from St. Charles Seminary in 1992 and a M.S. in Spiritual Direction from Neumann University in 2009.

On the day of the retreat (Dec. 3), a continental breakfast will be served from 9:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. The retreat itself will begin at 10:a.m. with a break for lunch at 12 noon. The retreat will resume at 1:00 and conclude at 3:00 p.m. As in past retreats, the maitre'd will be our own Leo Chang.

Since space is limited, everyone is encouraged to register early before the day of the retreat. A registration fee of \$10 will help to cover the expenses of the retreat including the lunch (scholarships are available). For more information, please call Dick O'Malley at 215-878-5182

## **DIGNITY CHRISTMAS AT CALCUTTA HOUSE**

*by Jimmy Calnan*

This year Dignity/Philadelphia will celebrate our 18th annual gift giving to the residents at Calcutta House. Last year at the Holiday Party we presented the 1000th gift to a resident.

Prior to this annual party, a group of Dignettes visits Calcutta House to ask residents for their wish lists. So, on the evening of Monday, November 28, a group of us will leave St. Luke's in car pools at 7:00p.m. At Calcutta House we will speak with each of the residents to ask what she or he would like to receive as a special holiday gift. This list is then shared with members of Dignity at liturgy who agree to purchase and wrap one or two of the items.

As in past years, the Holiday Party arranged for Monday, December 19, begins at about 7:00p.m. with a short prayer service led by Father Ron Hoskins, one of our chaplains. This is followed by gift giving along with cake, ice cream and soda. Father Ron usually gets a carol or two going during this joyful time. Everyone who has ever attended, residents and chapter members alike, look forward to this party as a way of highlighting the Christmas season. The residents have already been talking about seeing us again.

All of this is made possible by the generosity of you, Dignity members, in this most wonderful season of giving and getting in return.

### **MONTHLY MUNCHIE**

**“We make a living by what we get;  
We make a life by what we give.”**

**– Winston Churchill**

**HAPPY THANKSGIVING**

## **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.

## **BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2**

During mass on Sunday, October 2, Father Ron Hoskins had a beautiful prayer meditation for those who have pets in their household. Pictured below is Eric with Beula and Henco with Parpar.



*left is Eric holding Beula and right Henco holding Parpar*

## **JOIN DIGNITY PHILADELPHIA FOR LITURGY SERVICE AND BRUNCH,**

*by Jim Clay, Liturgy Committee Co-Coordinator*

The Community of St. Mary Magdalene is where Eileen DiFranco, a Roman Catholic Womanpriest, who is one of our Presiders, presides at Mass on Sunday mornings.

Dignity Philadelphia is planning a visit to celebrate Mass with this community on November 6, 2011 at 9 a.m. A car pool is being

planned to leave St. Luke's at 8:10 a.m., or you could meet us there for this service. We will provide directions. This community celebrates Mass at

Drexel Hill United Methodist Church  
600 Burmount Rd.  
Drexel Hill, PA

Perhaps we might also want to do brunch afterwards. If you are interested in attending this service, please see Dolores Vera or yours truly.

Our 7 p.m. Sunday Mass at St. Luke's will be celebrated as usual.

## **STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

*by Kevin Davies*

Everyone should have received a mailing concerning Dignity/Philadelphia's Stewardship Program. If you didn't please let me know and I will send you the letter and brochure. Thank you.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD**

Anna Crusis Women's Choir is the oldest feminist choir in the country. It has worked tirelessly to effect social change by performing and empowering audiences throughout our area. They sing to make positive changes for women, youth, and people who face adversity due to prejudice. Anna Crusis mission statement doesn't just talk about diversity. They model it with their membership, their audience, and their music selection. They believe that they can teach respect of others by demonstrating and showing by example. We are honored to give Anna Crusis our Community Service Award. We thank them for their years of work for peace and equality.



*Anjeannette, Jennifer Cain (with award), Joanne Collins*

# 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. 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. 1973 was reported in May, 1974 in June, 1975 in July, 1976 in August, 1977 in September and 1978 in October.

## 1979

Our chapter saw the re-election of Ann. B. (by acclamation), monthly Charismatic liturgies, seven priests and one nun serving the organization and the institution of the Dignity Community Organization Service Awards given to New Ways Ministry and Rev. John McNeil, S.J. The theme for the year was "This Far with the Spirit." This was also the logo of our 6th anniversary celebrations - all of it culminating in Dignity Week April, 1979. Among the educational and social events of this festive week was Fr. McNeil speaking to the community and regional conference for women.

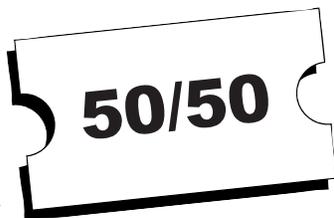
National attention focused on our Archdiocese after its Communications Director, Leo McKenzie was arrested in a bookstore in New Orleans. Our chapter responded to Cardinal Krol with a letter asking for Christian charity concerning any ecclesiastical action to be taken against Fr. McKenzie.

Another media event in town that year was the visit of Pope John Paul II to our city. Dignity members met His Holiness at Broad and Spruce Sts. and it was reported that Philadelphia's finest chose to block one of our welcoming banners just as the motorcade bearing the Holy Father whisked by. Fr. Vincent Inghilterra, of the Diocese of Trenton NJ was appointed as liaison to the sexual minority community - the first such appointment by a bishop of a Catholic diocese in the country. Many Dignity members across the country got the chance to meet again when so many of them participated in the huge Gay and Lesbian March on Washington, D.C.

## 50/50 FOR NOVEMBER – CALCUTTA HOUSE

The following is from their website:

Calcutta House, founded over two decades ago by Mother Teresa's Brothers of Charity in a rented, five bedroom row home in the University City area of West Philadelphia, originally provided a clean, comfortable, accepting and supportive place for ostracized individuals with end-stage AIDS to spend their final months in peace and comfort.



When Calcutta House was founded, the AIDS epidemic was in its sixth year, its public face being white, gay men, some of whom were personalities in entertainment and the arts. At the time, no effective AIDS treatments were available, and resources were very scarce for helping those with this little understood disease. Typically, AIDS led to death within a year of diagnosis.

When the Brothers left Philadelphia, they entrusted the mission of Calcutta House to a group of volunteers who organized a Board of Directors, sought and received appropriate legal recognition as a 501c3 non-profit, and began to expand services to more individuals. The Brothers' compassionate care - a hallmark of Calcutta House - continues today under lay administration and oversight.

Within a short time, the Board of Directors directed the construction of a new, larger, facility specifically designed and suited to the more skilled care needs of the acutely ill population who required such care. This facility, later to be known as Independence Place, opened in 1996 and included four adjacent, but separate, apartments for people who were beginning to respond to new drug therapies, and able to live independently without direct care. In 1999, Calcutta House expanded again, this time to an adjoining property, adding 6 more beds, creating a total of 18 private rooms, as well as space for nursing stations and behavioral and rehabilitative care.

As HIV began to affect new, significantly poorer individuals, many with a history of homelessness, significant substance abuse and mental health issues, Calcutta House received referrals long after their initial infection developed. These residents were unable to benefit from the new drug regimes and needed the type of nursing and hospice care originally provided by Calcutta House. To meet this new challenge, the Board moved to create a new facility to address the special needs of people in the end stage of AIDS; named Serenity Court, the 9-bed facility opened in 2004.

As Calcutta House is currently constituted, its two separate, but mutually supporting, facilities reflect the complex and differing needs of people who suffer from a life-threatening disease. Calcutta House continues to adapt in whatever way necessary to meet the needs of society's most vulnerable people suffering from HIV/AIDS and, in so doing, maintains its mission, unique among AIDS service providers.

## INDEPENDENCE PLACE

Opened in 1996, this 18 private bedroom facility with space for nursing, rehabilitative and behavioral care includes four adjacent apartments for individuals with AIDS who are able to live independently, but wishing to remain part of the Calcutta House community.

Carefully and purposely designed to avoid an institutional feeling, Independence Place adds to the quality of long-term resident life with a warm, home-like feeling. The three above ground floors are connected by a central sky-lit atrium stairwell, which brings daylight down through the center of the building. All levels of the house are wheelchair accessible, and served by an elevator. The main entrance has a walled concrete wheelchair ramp, eliminating any obstruction to freedom of movement for mobility impaired residents.

The main level of Independence Place contains the dining, community and quiet rooms and administrative offices. Meals are served family style around a long dining room table to provide residents the opportunity to be together as a community. Residents moving toward more independent living arrangements may work with the kitchen staff to acquire or improve basic kitchen skills.

- The Community Room is the central gathering space for resident meetings, volunteer led activities, holiday parties and general socializing. There is a large screen TV equipped with a VCR, reading lamps and comfortable furniture.
- The Quiet Room is used for private meetings by residents and staff, and as a place for services to residents requiring privacy, such as massage therapy.
- The two upper floors have private resident bedrooms and two nursing stations. Resident rooms have a bed, bed table, comfortable chair, private bathroom with a toilet, shower and sink.
- The finished basement has a large fitness and recreation room equipped with weights and exercise equipment used in occupational and physical therapy. There are a pool table and dart board for informal games.
- A wonderful amenity of Independence Place is the large wooden deck, with deck chairs and shaded tables, attached to the rear of the house that overlooks a beautiful, protected landscaped garden. Accessed through large double doors from the dining room, the deck is an invaluable extension of the living space of the house.

External programs are a part of the daily lives of most Independence Place residents. The Social Services staff and Activities Coordinator encourage residents to enroll in programs sponsored by outside organizations that meet their personal, educational and health goals. These include drug treatment and mental health day programs, and G.E.D. classes. Internal programs conducted by Calcutta House Inc. staff include addiction recovery support groups, individual counseling, AIDS education, literacy tutoring and general meetings where residents can bring up issues affecting their lives.

The spiritual aspects of life are important to many residents. Volunteer religious leaders of different faiths and denominations offer spiritual guidance and counseling to residents who desire this. Those who wish to attend religious services are assisted in doing so.

## **SERENITY COURT**

Opened in 2004, Serenity Court is specifically designed to meet the special needs of those very ill and dying due to AIDS. The need for a quiet, restful environment was a primary concern of Calcutta House leadership.

- Each resident room has a window that faces onto the garden courtyard, permitting a connection to nature and the passage of time. This interior, landscaped courtyard

is designed to enhance the daily lives of the residents and staff by integrating daylight and landscaping into common spaces and resident rooms.

- A spacious Common Room provides a place to go that is easily accessible to those who are wheelchair bound or have impaired mobility, but have the will to remain active and engaged in life.
- Each private resident room has a separate bath, toilet and sink. Shared spaces include shower and laundry facilities, kitchen, dining, common and meditation rooms. Features such as counter height, locations of switches, turning space and access to storage areas are tailored to the physical challenges of people confined to wheelchairs.

## **NOVEMBER IS ALL SOUL'S MONTH**

Our Book of Remembrance will be available each Sunday during November. It is a way of commemorating those who have died, especially during the past year. Please list their names in this book. Our Prayer Intention Book (which is available every Sunday of the year) will also be included in the Presentation of the Gifts.

## **DIGNITY/PHILADELPHIA REVISED MEMBERSHIP FORM BEGAN JANUARY 1, 2011**

### **NOVEMBER 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.

# MOTIONS FROM THE OCTOBER STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

**Motion 10-09-01:** Be it moved that the November 2011 50/50 be designated for Calcutta House. Passed unanimously



*Father Ron Hoskins celebrating his birthday with Joe and John.*



*Joanne and David at the Outfest Block Party*

## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

*by Kevin Davies*

The following quote is by Mark Matson, Outgoing President, DignityUSA, from his September 2011 Dateline article: "Bottom line: DignityUSA is alive, healthy, vibrant even."

Can the members of Dignity/Philadelphia express the same sentiments about our chapter?

Attendance at mass is low and has been for a few years, Community Life, Communications and Education Committees are dormant with no coordinators, the same people being recycled for the Steering Committee, our Anniversary Potluck Dinner was an embarrassment, people attend potlucks empty-handed, weekly offerings are not covering the rental of our worship space, and our Seminannual Business meeting failed to have a quorum (15 members needed).

Announcements after mass, requests for help in the Newsletter and personal invitations to help in some way are mostly ignored. Our community meeting was well-attended but we need to follow through with the suggestions. Here is the list. Can you see ONE thing you would like to try? Let me or another Steering Committee member know.

### Brainstorming Social and Spiritual Activities

#### Social on-going

Games night  
outside groups visit  
newcomers reception  
potlucks  
Experts' Group  
directory  
movie night  
classes  
develop tag line  
D/P in New Jersey

#### Social event

bbq/picnic  
theatre  
holiday party/dance  
cabaret  
Social Tea  
bowling  
dinner out  
sports events  
select group to represent D/P  
visits to colleges  
benchmark successful group

#### Spiritual liturgical

Penance  
Blessing of Animals  
parents/children mass  
taize  
lay-led prayer services  
vespers

#### Spiritual non-liturgical

weekend retreat  
day retreat  
spiritual gathering  
Good Samaritan Ministry  
World AIDS Day at William Way  
visit Beth Ahavah, MCC, St. Luke's

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

## November is All Souls Month

Tuesday, Nov 1	Mass for All Saints Day at 7:30pm	Thursday, Dec 1	World AIDS Day
Wed, Nov 2	All Souls Day – NO MASS	Friday, Dec 2	Prayer Around The Cross at 7pm
Friday, Nov 4	Prayer Around The Cross at 7pm	Saturday, Dec 3	Day of Retreat at 9:30am
Sunday, Nov 6	Visit to Eileen DiFranco’s church (see article) Steering Committee Meeting at 4:30pm <b>Eucharistic Liturgy at 7pm</b>	Sunday, Dec 4	Steering Committee Meeting at 4:30pm <b>Eucharistic Liturgy at 7pm</b>
Friday, Nov 11	Veterans Day	Wed, Dec 7	Immaculate Conception Vigil Mass at 7:30pm
Sunday, Nov 13	Liturgy Committee Meeting at 4:30pm <b>Eucharistic Liturgy at 7pm</b>	Sunday, Dec 11	Liturgy Committee Meeting at 4:30pm <b>Eucharistic Liturgy at 7pm</b>
Sunday, Nov 20	Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner at 4:30pm <b>Eucharistic Liturgy at 7pm</b>	Monday, Dec 12	Feast of Guadalupe
Wed, Nov 23	Mass for Eve of Thanksgiving Day at 7:30pm	Sunday, Dec 18	<b>Eucharistic Liturgy at 7pm</b>
Thur, Nov 24	Thanksgiving Day	Monday, Dec 19	Calcutta House Christmas Party at 7pm
Sunday, Nov 27	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent World AIDS Day Mass at 7pm	Saturday, Dec 24	<b>Christmas Eve Mass at 10:30pm</b>
Monday, Nov 28	Visit Calcutta House for gift requests	Sunday, Dec 25	Christmas Day – NO MASS
		Saturday, Dec 31	New Year’s Eve Mass at 6pm (Tentative)
		Sunday, January 1	<b>New Year’s Day Eucharistic Liturgy at 7pm (Tentative)</b>



## 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 November newsletter is November 20, 2011.**

**Steering Committee**  
**Joanne Collins** – President  
**Jimmy Calnan** – Vice President  
**Kevin Davies** – Secretary  
**Linda Barrett** – Treasurer  
**Jim Clay/Dick O’Malley** - Liturgy Committee Co-Coordinators  
**Vacant** – 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**