

# WE ARE MOVING!

*Dignity*  
HOUSTON  
January  
1991

*We are many parts; we are all one body.*

## Dignity/Houston's New Home

After five years in its present location, Dignity/Houston is moving to a new meeting place. A series of on going events regarding the Dignity Center made it clear to the board of Dignity/Houston that the time had come to strike our tents (as Abraham did of old) and head out toward a brighter promise. There was no angel appearing in the night to board members with a message to leave, but rather there were careful, thoughtful, and prayerful reflections and deliberations by the board together with our lawyer. Given the need for a well thought out but quick decision, the Board did what it was elected to do, to make decisions for the benefit of all, and it announced that Dignity/Houston will meet in the New Year at 1505 Nevada at Commonwealth in the building which was formerly The Center for Positive Living, later a resale shop, and which is now called The Montrose Palace "A Neighborhood Meeting Place." 1505 Nevada is located at the intersection of Nevada and Commonwealth, three blocks south of West Gray and Waugh Drive. The liturgy time will remain 7:30 pm.

Dignity has rented from the new facility, which describes itself as "professionally managed, and sensitive to the unique needs of our community," its large meeting room and a "front office" which will house the Dignity office and warehouse much of our physical property. We will have the meeting space on Saturday evenings only, but we have access to the office at all times. Dignity will continue to meet there for the next several month while the Board and the membership work on finding our future permanent home. The new location has some off-the-road parking in front of the building, but we will also need to park on the nearby residential streets.

The physical move will begin at 1:00 pm., December 30, after the Sunday morning service of the

Houston Community Church which meets at the current Dignity Center. More information about the physical move follows.

## Moving Day

Many members of Dignity/Houston are needed at 1:00 pm, Sunday, December 30, at the Dignity/Center, to help move the Dignity/Houston property from the current Center to our new meeting place. We need trucks, dollies, and many willing hands to carry things. Please call Mike K. (988-8217) or Keith (520-7112) to let us know that we can count on you.

## Holy Is Your Name

Christianity, as an institution, revels in periods of amazing adaptability and pliancy, and yet intermittently stagnates in periods of intractability and intransigence. The Biblical book *Acts* conveys how the early church realistically dealt with the growing pains of incorporating Hellenic Jews and Gentiles. Can it be mere coincidence that from *Praxeis* (praxeis), the Greek name of this book, the words pragmatic and practical derive?

As the institutional church stabilized and assumed both spiritual and temporal powers in the fourth to eighth centuries, the pre-Christian cultures of the Romano-Hellenic world shed their threatening character. Christian scholars reclaimed many classical authors by attributing to them a prescience of Christ's message. Publius Vergilius Maro (70-19 BCE) received such a posthumous baptism.

Vergil is most renowned for the *Aeneid*, the Roman national epic; yet his pastoral poems reflect better the subtlety and grace of his wordcraft. The *Sixth Eclogue* contains a story of creation. The *Fourth Eclogue* sings of a new age and of the birth of a child who descends from heaven:

Ours is the crowning era foretold in prophesy.  
Born of Time, a great new cycle of centuries begins:  
A Young Woman appears, and the Golden Age returns.  
Her First-born comes down from heaven above.  
The Child causes hearts of iron to cease and hearts of gold to  
inherit the whole earth.  
A glorious age dawns, the march of its great months begins.  
Women and men shall be freed from fear,  
And past weakness will be cleansed away.  
The Child shall enter into the life of the gods  
And rule a world made peaceful by our virtuous acts.



(For a bilingual source see: *The Eclogues and Georgics of Virgil* (C. D. Lewis, trans.) Anchor Books, Garden City, N.Y. 1964).

Pax Christi Vobiscum.

-- J. Keith Wright

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## From the President

Several thoughts I have to share with you:

1. Membership: In October, with 89 members, the Board set a goal of twenty new members by Christmas. We now have 119 members, due in large part to the warmth you have shown our visitors. Please keep up the good work, so that we can rapidly beat our all-time high of 132 members, achieved on July 15, 1985.

2. Moving Day: At 1:00 pm, Sunday, Dec 30, Dignity needs your body to form a human chain to remove everything from Fannin street to our new storage facility. There's a job for everyone -- if you can't lift, you can pack. Please plan to help!

3. Scenario: What is your dream for Dignity? Mine is to purchase our own Dignity home. If you have the same dream, I ask you to vote with your sacrificial offerings. Presently, we average \$200 a week. If we triple our average we can put \$2000 monthly in the building fund. In five months we would have enough to make a down payment on our own space. For security purposes during this time of flux, so that our treasurer does not have to carry cash to the bank, I do ask that whatever you give, you do so by check.

4. If in town for Christmas: come to the Christmas eve Liturgy at 7:30 pm (7:00 pm for carols) and join in the progressive dinner on Christmas day. Wherever you are, happy and safe and holy holidays to you.

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## Catholic Think Tank?

Is that term an oxymoron? A great many people (myself at times) find it difficult to imagine whether anyone really knows or cares enough about the Roman Catholic Church to actually sit down, reflect, communicate with others, and reflect some more and then come up with thoughtful, honest, insightful, and compassionate lectures, speeches, retreats, books, plays, etc.

One first reaction would be, "of course the Church thinks about itself. Just refer all questions to the hierarchy." Somehow that sounds strikingly similar to those who would seek truth and honesty from paid political actions groups with PR, and lawyers and accountants looking over every statement, or from devoted followers of a cult or special interest group. In most instances those "on the inside track," who are paid and sworn to uphold "the faith" will defend and deflect real criticism from those who are "in charge."

Catholic Universities? Well, in recent months the independent thinking of faculty members at "catholic" universities has been subject to "Roman Review." Does that sound like an atmosphere of seeking truth, and honest investigation of the "here and now?" The irony here is that some protestant universities (Baylor) are clearly moving in the opposite direction and away from sectarian control, interference, and approval.

I am just thinking out loud about the combined experience, pain, joys, and sadness of a great many lives lived as "Catholic" in this century.

We have seen two world wars and various less than world wars which produced the slaughter of lives and resources on scales never before seen in history. We saw the attempted extinction of the sons and daughters of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by one of the most cultivated, sophisticated, and educated Catholic countries in Europe.

We are about to celebrate in 1992 the five hundredth anniversary of the "discovery" of the North American continent by Christopher Columbus. (We don't even ask how a land with an indigenous population can be "discovered.") A period of Spanish and Portuguese expansion and growth participated in by the Roman Catholic Church and filled with the echoes of the Inquisition, slavery, church rivalry, witch hunts, torture, imprisonment, etc. as never before seen on this broad stage of ours.

In a November article, I raised the question about the value of declaring an end to the Protestant Reformation and moving on to the 21st Century with that "baggage" behind us. This seems like another area for investigation, research, and curiosity.

Are there enough people with enough love for this Church to *really* take a good long look at where it is right now in this good ol' U.S. of A. and see just where it is headed? Do enough people "in the pews" really care? Or is this whole "religion" business just another opiate many select to shield and protect themselves from "reality," from "feeling," from being "really alive," from feeling the real "human condition?"

Bureaucracies rarely are able to criticize themselves honestly. There are too many sacred cows, special interests, financial concerns, etc. for truth and honesty and compassion to really get a hearing. That is *not* an indictment, just an observation on how bureaucracies usually work. And they do some things quite well. But self-criticism and honest, open and public discussion of "problems," "controversies" or "special issues" is not one of its characteristics.

Any fool can sit down and write speculations on how to change or improve an organization or institution. I am suggesting that it is *possible* to envision a Catholic Think Tank that devotes its time and effort and energies to a careful study of and hold open and honest dialogue with *all segments* of the Roman Catholic Church in the U.S. of A., a think tank that does not rule out one half of the human race in its

# LITANY OF MARY OF NAZARETH

Glory to you, God our Creator . . . Breathe into us new life, new meaning.  
Glory to you, God our Savior . . . Lead us in the way of peace and justice.  
Glory to you, healing Spirit . . . Transform us to empower others.

Mary, wellspring of peace . . . Be our guide.

Model of strength  
Model of gentleness  
Model of trust  
Model of courage  
Model of patience  
Model of risk  
Model of openness  
Model of perseverance

Mother of the liberator . . . Pray for us.

Mother of the homeless,  
Mother of the dying  
Mother of the nonviolent  
Widowed mother  
Unwed mother  
Mother of a political prisoner  
Mother of the condemned  
Mother of the executed criminal

Oppressed woman . . . Lead us to life.

Liberator of the oppressed  
Marginalized woman  
Comforter of the afflicted  
Cause of our joy  
Sign of contradiction  
Breaker of bondage  
Political refugee  
Seeker of sanctuary  
First disciple  
Sharer in Christ's ministry  
Participant in Christ's passion  
Seeker of God's will  
Witness to Christ's resurrection

LIGHT IN ALL  
DARKNESS



Woman of mercy . . . Empower us.

Woman of faith  
Woman of contemplation  
Woman of vision  
Woman of wisdom and understanding  
Woman of grace and truth  
Woman, pregnant with hope  
Woman, centered in God

## Closing Prayer

Mary, Queen of Peace,  
we entrust our lives to you.  
Shelter us from war, hatred  
and oppression.

Teach us  
to live in peace,  
to educate ourselves for peace.

Inspire us to act justly,  
to revere all God has made.

Root peace firmly in our hearts  
and in our world.

Amen.

membership, that does not impose celibacy as a job requirement, that does not require university degrees for admission to "the club," that honors human experience and compassion, and that does its "thinking" and "praying" and "celebrating" in an open environment.

Finally, dear reader, I have an apocalyptic "vision" of the world we know know and live in. We got ourselves in bad shape ecologically, socially, religiously, economically, and in so many other ways with the support and cooperation of organized religion. We will only get ourselves out of this mess either with their cooperation or with the creation of new institutions that will supersede them. The choice is clearly ours. What we choose to do and how we choose to do it will be up to us. I do not anticipate that religion like politics will reform itself from within. It will have to flow from the bottom up to the top.

Where do you vote? How do your vote?  
Welcome to the 90's!

—George M. Wetzel

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### On the Road – Key West

This was not my first journey by car to Key West, but it was my first meeting with Andrew Ramer. It was my first meeting with a "person" I carry around inside (and whom I am learning to know and love) named Azalea Cook Wetzel. It was my first meeting with "angels" and spirits on this planet and from others. It was my first opportunity to "dance" rather than wrestle with Andrew Ramer and Joseph Kramer and an ever growing list of Sacred Brothers and Sacred Sisters. And it was an opportunity to laugh and cry and visualize and dream and LIVE in the now.

Finally, I became (for the length of a guided meditation) an innocent child of six who was with his mother and grandmother and who shared the experience of being led "to the showers" at a concentration camp in Germany. That child could have been me. That child faced death with an attitude that will be "teaching" me for some time. That child inspires me to empower others in their spiritual development and growth.

Shalom. May the 90's be a decade of Joy and Happiness and a decade of learning to grow and develop in an understanding and appreciation of Joy rather than Sorrow, Suffering, Pain, and Passion.

— George M. Wetzel

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### January New York Times

During January Jeff Bohanski (953-9722) is hosting the Sunday New York Times group at his apartment (#167) at 7203 Bellerive Drive, from 11am to 2pm on Sundays. Come to share the coffee, donuts, etc. and warm and hearty exchange of ideas, conversation, and camaraderie. To get there take 59 south and exit at Hillcroft. Cross Hillcroft, stay on the feeder, and take

a right at Bellerive (between Papa's Seafood and Merchandise Service Center). The Stone Gate Apartments are the second complex on the left. From the gate call apartment #167.

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### Friday Night at the Movies

During January Jim Grix will be hosting the Friday night movie get together. The dates are Friday, Jan 12 and 26, at 8:00 pm. Jim lives at 10440 South Drive, apartment #2020. To get there, go out 59 south, exit at Bissonett and take a right on Bissonett. At Wilcrest turn left and head south for about two blocks. South Drive is on the left (with a Stop and Go on the corner). After turning left onto South Drive, take the second entrance into the apartment complex on the left. Go to the end of the drive and turn right. Jim is in building #20. Jim says he has a wide selection of over 100 movies to choose from. Jim's telephone number is 495-8580.

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### January Board Meeting

Dignity will hold its next board meeting on Thursday, Jan 10, at 7:00 pm. We will meet at our new facility at 1505 Nevada at Commonwealth, three blocks south of West Gray and Waugh. All the Dignity/Houston board meetings are open, and any Dignity member is invited to attend.

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### Lectures of Interest at the Jung Center

The C. G. Jung Center, 5200 Montrose (524-8253), is offering lectures which are of interest to the lesbian and gay community. On Friday, Jan 25, R. Hopcke will talk on "Jung, Jungians, and Homosexuality: An Overview." The lecture starts at 7:30 pm and costs \$12.00. Hopcke will lead a workshop on Sat. Jan 25, entitled "Men's Dreams, Men's Healing – A Chance for Dialog." The second half of the day-long session will deal with gay issues. The cost is \$40.00. On Friday, March 1, a lecture, "The Return of the Goddess," will be held at 7:30 pm; the cost is \$12.00. On Friday, May 9, at 10:30 am, E. Lorentz will deliver a free lecture "Redemption of the Feminine." Contact the Jung Center for details and registration.

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### Approaches to a Conversation with The Healer Within

On Sunday evenings in January from 7 to 9 pm, and beginning on January 6, George Wetzel will hold discussion classes in his apartment at 2507 Montrose, #12 (522-1603) on The Healer Within.

One foundational text will be *AIDS and the Healer Within* by Nick Bamforth (Amethyst Books,

N.Y., 1987, \$6.95.) Other texts may be suggested or shared.

George will facilitate the discussion and will encourage participants to reflect on their own unique experiences and to share them with the group. One "path" that will be discussed is the approach to the Healer Within by means of self loving. A facilitator "can only take you so far, and, in the end, you have to find your own way by listening to the voice within."

-- G.M.W.

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## Solloving -- The Last Frontier?

In American (USA) history the frontier was a place that drew pioneers and adventurers and the truly daring to come and prove themselves and experience life "on the edge" of wilderness, of chaos, of civilization, of order.

Readers of *Touching Body and Spirit* are no strangers, nor is most of the rest of the world, to the pleasures and satisfactions, relaxations and sharings which accompany most self loving activities. I am going to see if it is an appropriate time to take self loving one step further -- to look at and evaluate, to reflect, pray, and divine whether solloving can and truly should be raised to the level of religious/spiritual ritual.

From brief conversations with Joseph Kramer and Annie Sprinkle I have the distinct impression that Annie has already covered this ground personally and is sharing it with others, even in public forums. She will one day be honored as a pioneer who helped the rest of us catch up with her efforts.

Solloving can be done with or in the presence of others, but I suspect it provides its maximum benefit when it is done alone -- as scary as that is for many of us.

Ritualizing involves looking at the context of an activity and creating a comfortable, enlightened, delightful, colorful, and sensual environment. The elements of that environment will depend on you: your creativity, your sense of color, light, sound, scent, and touch. It will vary with time, context, circumstances, and attitudes.

For those who want to transform their solloving into a conversation with the Divine Spirit Within, a unique and very personal set of conditions will be established. Conversations with the Divine Spirit in these circumstances will not be trivialized or romanticized but rather, be an open, honest, and truthful awareness of being present, being honest, being available to communications from the Divine Spirit Within. Be prepared for dialogue. Be prepared for emotions, for anger, for loneliness, for separateness, for joy, for peace, for laughter, and for tears.

But the fundamental, rock bottom, basic "beginning" must be total presence: presence to yourself, presence to your body with all its warts, fat, wrinkles,

smells, and signs of ageing; presence to your heart as the pump of the blood which circulates throughout your body; presence to your lungs which extract from your breath the air and spirit which is infused into every drop of blood in your system. Presence to your environment which you have created to celebrate this moment of dialogue. Presence to the specific intention you have for this dialogue or to the general intention of letting the conversation "go where it will" and to hang in there with it.

A note of caution: remember that the presence is to dialogue with the Spirit Within, not with the externals. If they help to prepare or "set up" the ritual, they are welcome, but if they distract and add dissonance to the primary dialogue, they they become a hindrance. Music and mirrors can be very powerful tools to center and focus your energy and your mind, yet they must ultimately fade away as means to that dialogue, not as ends in themselves.

And what if, with all your careful preparations, and ritualizing and concentration very little happens? What if you're so tired and sleepless and fretful and concerned with how you look and feel that you "just can't get into" it?

Breathe.

This is not failure you are facing. This is part of being human, of accepting the human condition. It may never be your experience, or it may happen the very first time. Don't beat yourself up; just acknowledge your efforts, your energy invested, and your intentions. For some solloving is not an easy task. It will be a trial and error experience. It will involve a lot of "letting go" of blocks, negativity, pain, anger, sadness, and wrath.

You will let go of it because you are committed to the dialogue with the Spirit Within. You will continue because, deep down, you know that, if you truly love yourself, you will be a "better" person. You will be more in touch with the Divine Spark that has always inspired your most sacred moments. You will be more alive to the Spirit in yourself, in others, in nature, in the whole universe. You will be more in touch with your Sacred Brothers and Sisters in those moments than when you are in the same room with them. You will be in touch with all your relations in this life, in your past lives, and in your future lives, for it is the Divine within you that connects us all. It is that Divine Spark that is always there for you and for all human beings on this planet. And, I believe, it is by doing this "work," by sharing our experiences, frustrations, failures, joys, and ecstasies that we will help to remove the "last frontier" distancing ourselves from each other.

Know your message! Know your truth! Know your wisdom and power and healing! Listen to your body, to your breathing, to your solloving. Listen to the Divine within yourself, and learn how to mentor others in this loving and holy dialogue. Listen very carefully, and I believe you will hear the encouragement, the cheering, and the joy of those who have gone before us,

# January 1991

## Dignity/Houston

SUNDAY

MONDAY




TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

		<p><b>1</b> New Year's Day Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (Holyday of Obligation)  OPEN HOUSE at Gene R.'s 2612 Yupon, call 529-3268 for time and details</p>	<p><b>2</b> 6pm KTRU 91.7 FM "Women's Music Hour"</p>		<p><b>4</b> 8am KPFT 90.1 FM "Breakthrough"</p>	<p><b>5</b> 7:30pm DIGNITY MASS at Montrose Palace - 1505 Nevada (at Commonwealth)</p>
<p><b>6</b>  Epiphany 12 - 4am KPFT 90.1 FM "After Hours" 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Jeff B.'s and Kevin M.'s 7203 Bellerive Apt. 167 (953-9722)</p>	<p><b>7</b> 9pm KPFT 90.1 FM "Wilde 'n' Stein"</p>	<p><b>8</b> 9pm KPFT 90.1 FM "A Woman's Place"</p>	<p><b>9</b> 6pm KTRU 91.7 FM "Women's Music Hour"</p>	<p><b>10</b> 7:00pm DIGNITY BOARD MEETING Location to be announced.</p>	<p><b>11</b> 8am KPFT 90.1 FM "Breakthrough"</p>	<p><b>12</b> "AGAPE SATURDAY" 7:30pm DIGNITY MASS at Montrose Palace - 1505 Nevada (at Commonwealth) After Mass, TOWN MEETING and POTLUCK SUPPER.</p>
<p><b>13</b>  Baptism of the Lord 12 - 4am KPFT 90.1 FM "After Hours" 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Jeff B.'s and Kevin M.'s 7203 Bellerive Apt. 167 (953-9722)</p>	<p><b>14</b> 9pm KPFT 90.1 FM "Wilde 'n' Stein"</p>	<p><b>15</b> 9pm KPFT 90.1 FM "A Woman's Place"</p>	<p><b>16</b> 6pm KTRU 91.7 FM "Women's Music Hour" DEADLINE for articles in the February newsletter; for calendar entries call B. J. A. at 864-4120.</p>		<p><b>18</b> 8am KPFT 90.1 FM "Breakthrough"</p>	<p><b>19</b> 7:30pm DIGNITY MASS at Montrose Palace - 1505 Nevada (at Commonwealth)</p>
<p><b>20</b> 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time 12 - 4am KPFT 90.1 FM "After Hours" 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Jeff B.'s and Kevin M.'s 7203 Bellerive Apt. 167 (953-9722)</p>	<p><b>21</b> Martin Luther King, Jr. 9pm KPFT 90.1 FM "Wilde 'n' Stein"</p>	<p><b>22</b> 9pm KPFT 90.1 FM "A Woman's Place"</p>	<p><b>23</b> 6pm KTRU 91.7 FM "Women's Music Hour"</p>		<p><b>25</b> 8am KPFT 90.1 FM "Breakthrough"</p>	<p><b>26</b> 7:30pm DIGNITY MASS at Montrose Palace - 1505 Nevada (at Commonwealth)</p>
<p><b>27</b> 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time 12 - 4am KPFT 90.1 FM "After Hours" 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Jeff B.'s and Kevin M.'s 7203 Bellerive Apt. 167 (953-9722)</p>	<p><b>28</b> 9pm KPFT 90.1 FM "Wilde 'n' Stein"</p>	<p><b>29</b> 9pm KPFT 90.1 FM "A Woman's Place"</p>	<p><b>30</b> 6pm KTRU 91.7 FM "Women's Music Hour"</p>	<p><b>31</b></p>	<p><b>JANUARY BIRTHDAYS</b> -----  <b>1 - Paula E.</b>  <b>- David H.</b>  <b>17 - Marlon B.</b>  <b>23 - Kevin K.</b>  <b>- Raymond R.</b>  <b>27 - Jeff B.</b></p>	

who are urging us to bring the message of truth and spirituality so sorely missing in today's world.

*Heavenly Mother/Father, teach us how to pray. Teach us how to communicate with the Divine Spark you have implanted within each one of us. Teach us how to humbly listen to your message, and give us the strength to follow your will. Amen.*

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## A Dignity Christmas

Our observation of the Feast of the Nativity of Jesus commences Dec 24, with carols at 7:00 pm at the Dignity Center, 3217 Fannin, followed by Mass at 7:30 pm.

On Christmas Day there will be a progressive dinner: appetizers start at 3:00 pm at Mary D.'s, 3604 Lake (524-5901). Dinner follows at 5:00 pm at Gene's, 2612 Yupon, (529-3268). Dessert and a movie at 8:00 pm conclude the celebration at Keith's, 2646 Persa, (520-7112). Please notify one of the hosts in advance to facilitate planning.

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## New Year's Open House

Gene Rollins is hosting a New Year's open house for Dignity/Houston members during the 13th to the 18th hour of the new year (Jan 1, 12 noon to 4/5 pm). Come and enjoy beer waffles with country sausage and holiday beverages as well as coffee and companionship. Inquire of Gene at 529-3268.

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## Refreshment volunteers

When the list of voluntary ministers for January was being put together, Dignity/Houston was still planning on meet at the YWCA where it was not practical to serve refreshments, so therefore no volunteers to bring refreshments for the month of January were recruited. Now that we will meet at the Montrose Palace which has a kitchen, we will need volunteers to bring refreshments for each of the Saturdays in January. Something to munch and something to drink, and ice, that is all you will need to bring. Some members spend time baking and concocting special beverages, but most of us drop by the local grocery on the way to Dignity and pick up pre-packaged cookies and bottled tropical fruit punch. Please call Paul S. (869-8148) or Jeff Bohanski (953-9722) to volunteer.

## Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, Part 1

*Virginia Ramey Mollenkott is a powerful--and empowered--woman. She has written several books. Raised in the tradition of a small conservative Christian denomination, she has come a long way from traditions which forbade women to even sing hymns in church for the sake of remaining silent. She was part of*

*the team which worked on the National Council of Church's inclusive-language lectionary. She is the author of Is the Homosexual Your Neighbor? Her guts to tackle some unpopular issues has put her on the cutting edge of Christian feminist thought. The following is the first part of an interview with Ms Mollenkott by Kathleen Hayes reprinted from the "Faces of Faith" issue of The Other Side magazine.*

**What brought you from your conservative Christian upbringing to where you are today?**

I was always oriented toward justice. I made an early commitment to Christ. I was about four years old when I climbed into my mother's lap and said that I wanted to accept Jesus into my heart. It was all very simple.

Nobody taught me that the word righteousness in the Hebrew Scriptures had anything to do with justice. But as I grew older, I instinctively knew that the bottom line had to be justice.

Changes have always been gradual for me. I first had to understand the theoretical and biblical underpinnings. For instance, very early on I knew that my marriage was a disaster, but I couldn't even think about divorce. It was not an option I could consider because God did not permit divorce. Yet I also understood that my situation was not fair from a human perspective. Had I really been divinely created to pick up my husband's socks and underwear and wash them and return them to his drawer, neat and clean? Did he, just because he was created another sex, not even have the responsibility to put them in the wash basket?

I knew that was not fair, but we were Christians--and I had to stop right there. I couldn't let my mind go to the next step: that for Christians there is therefore less justice than for non-Christians. I knew I better not think too much about it, because who would I be without Jesus? I knew where my thoughts were going to take me. So I repressed them.

Several things jarred me into facing these questions directly. One of them was a woman who now teaches female subordination. She and I were very close at one time. Back then she really rocked me on the subject of universal redemption. She asked me, for instance, if I knew that the Greeks didn't have a word for eternal. I was stunned. It was like the earth moved under my feet. Everything I thought was solid, shifted. That certainly got me reading the Bible again.

I remember one morning when I had to face the fact that my attempts toward reconciliation in marriage were never being met. I was being squeezed to give up more of what I believed in and what I was. I thought, "There's a name for this; it's suicide. I am committing psychological suicide. Does God really want me to commit suicide? Take all my gifts and let them go?" Thoughts like that would surface, and I would push them back.

Eventually I came across four divorce tracts written from a biblical perspective by John Milton. And I began thinking in terms of divorce. Theoretically the way was open, and it became a matter of whether divorce was right for me. Another significant event occurred when I was reading one of the early feminist works. The author said there were two versions of creation in the book of Genesis, and I ran for my Bible because I didn't believe it. Surely I would know that, as many times as I had read the Bible. And I looked it up, and sure enough.

I thought to myself, "Virginia, you have a Ph.D. in literature. How is it possible for you to read this sloppily?" I knew that it was because I read the Bible through a grid that said there were no contradictions anywhere in the Bible. Consequently, I couldn't see them because the grid said they weren't there. And yet I could plainly see that Genesis pre-

sented two plots. Anybody with a modicum of reading ability could see the two plots. In Genesis 1 Adam and Eve were created together on the sixth day, and in Genesis 2 Adam was created first, and then all the animals, and then Eve. Well, that was a terrific intellectual shock. I thought, "Now I am responsible to read the Bible as carefully as I read Milton or Dante or anybody else. I've got to take this grid down."

And I did. That's when I began to see one thing after another.

The third shock I can think of was reading Mary Daly's *Beyond God the Father*. That was another time when the earth moved under me. I saw she was asking all the right questions. I leathed the conclusions to which she came, but she was asking all the right questions, and I did not have answers to them. So I went to work. I got out my spade. From that day on I really began to work. (to be continued in February.)

### January Voluntary Ministers

These are the appointments for the month of January. The Community of Dignity/Houston congratulate those chosen. In the event of an emergency, we rely upon you to get a substitute for yourself. Won't you be a volunteer for February? Give your name to Paul S. (869-8148) or Jeff Bohanski (953-9733). Please read the article above about volunteers for refreshments.

	Jan 5	Jan 12	Jan 19	Jan 26
President	Father Don	Father Hubert	Father Aleuin	Father Aleuin
Introducer	Mike DeMastry	Maureen FitzPatrick	Cathy Lenahan	Gene Rollins
Musicians	Mike C.	BJA & Mike DeM.	Steve Jelen	W. C. W.
Lector #1	Bob Singleton	Berry S.	Keith Wright	Brent Romero
Lector #2	Gene Rollins	Bob Rogers	Rudy Arroyo	Jeff Bohanski
Usher #1	Keith Wright	Phil DeMarco	David Duet	Bernard Podrasa
Usher #2	Jesus A.	W. A. B.	Bill Long	Jon Bancroft
Euch Min #1	Miguel S.	Bob Singleton	Maureen FitzPatrick	Keith Wright
Euch Min #2	James M.	Jim Gris	Mary Duffy	Jim Gris
Refreshments	volunteers???	volunteers???	volunteers???	volunteers???

#### A NOTE TO OUR READERS

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#### Dignity/Houston

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Houston, Texas  
(713) 928-0111

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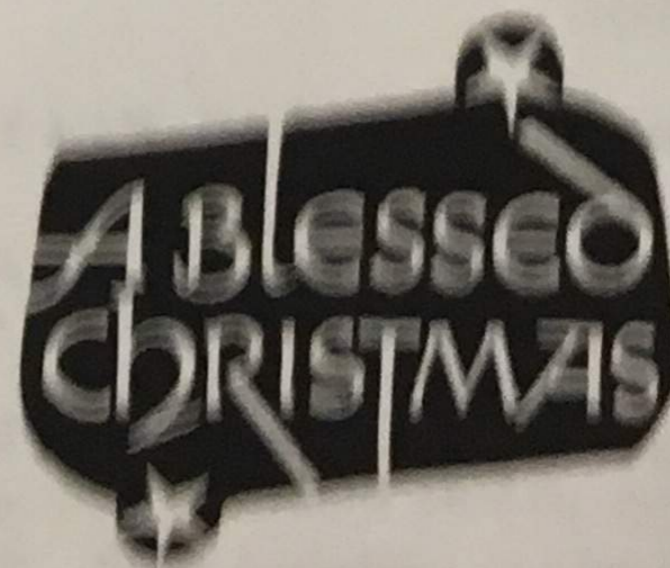
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# Dignity

HOUSTON  
October  
1991

*We are many parts; we are all one body.*

**SATURDAY, OCT 26, 7:30  
PM, THE REGULAR  
DIGNITY MASS WILL  
MEET AT 4805 CALHOUN (U  
of H Neumann Center) as part of the Dignity  
Region VII Meeting/Retreat. There will be no  
regular liturgy at 1505 Nevada.**

## New Dignity/Houston Officers

Dignity/Houston held elections for its board of officers yearly in mid September. Following are the results of that election. Congratulations to:

President: Bob Hergenroeder  
Vice President: Mike DeMastry  
Secretary: Paul Sumrall  
Treasurer: Gene Rollins  
Board Members: Jeff Bohanski  
Lee Ruffino  
Bob Singleton

Many thanks to the outgoing officers for their outstanding leadership in the past year. Please keep the new board in your prayers and ask wisdom for them in their deliberations this year.

## From Our Past President

This past year, it was my honor to serve as your President. Working together we realized three very important goals for Dignity/Houston. Together we added three new priests, increased our savings by a third, and almost doubled our membership.

I wish Bob and his team all the success that we members deserve and want. May it be another good year for Dignity!

--Mike Kaney

Mud thrown is ground lost.

## Jesus Christ: Superstar

*Lord, have mercy.*

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

We members of the lesbian and gay community are familiar with words of oppression, the words that hurt. For this reason, we think twice about the words we use, even the words of worship. Dignity believes that patriarchal, shepherding nomads have not had the last word in religious matters.

Our family of faith has made great progress: we have many beautiful canons, we hear the Word in Spanish, we use an inclusive lectionary. When our nongay sisters and brothers decide to become equal partners in the liturgy, they will tread the path we have already blazed.

In spite of our progress, we are about to make a *faux pas*. Dropping in *God* for every use of *Lord* is a mistake. *Lord* is an ambiguous title, *God* is not. *Lord* embodies the uncertainty of the early Christian community in their relationship with this special person Jesus, in whom they and faith.

Who was Jesus? Who is he now? What did this person do? What did he leave us?

Faith only has meaning in the face of uncertainty. Knowledge - cold facts - requires none. *Lord*, or some other word we must find, is a word of faith where Jesus is concerned, not a word of certainty. Let us walk into that world of uncertainty that was first century Christianity by reading an excerpt from Paul:

Though subsisting in the form of God, Messiah Jesus did not consider likeness to God a misappropriation, yet he emptied himself, accepting the form of a servant.... Therefore God raised him high and presented him a name high above every name so that in the name of Jesus the knees of heavenly, earthly, and subterranean beings should bend and every tongue should press Lord (κύριος) Jesus Messiah to the glory of Mother Father God. (Phil 2:6,11)

This is one of the Christic Hymns (Col 1:15-20; Eph 2:14-16; 1Tim 3:16; 1Cor 8:6; Rm 8:31-39; Heb 1:3; Jn 1:1-18; 1Pet 3:18-22). These are beautiful songs composed the generation after Jesus' death; perhaps they formed part of the earliest Christian liturgy.

Because there is no punctuation in the text, we do not know whether these beings profess that "Lord Jesus is Messiah" or the Lord is Jesus Messiah." But this is not the greatest uncertainty in the New Testament concerning Jesus of Nazareth.

There is no direct proof of the divinity of Christ in the New Testament. In fact, in many places authors take care to distinguish between God and the Christ. Citations from Jn 1:1, 1:18, 20:28 and Rm 9:5, which supposedly establish Jesus' godhood, turn out to be poor translations or corrupt texts. At the second great

council of the church, at Nicaia in 325, the hierarchy solemnly declared Jesus God. There was finally certainty after three centuries--but only after all the eye-witnesses of Jesus' ministry were gone and after deviating texts had been expunged from the canon of the New Testament.

In the next newsletter we will discover who the Lord was.

--J. Keith Wright

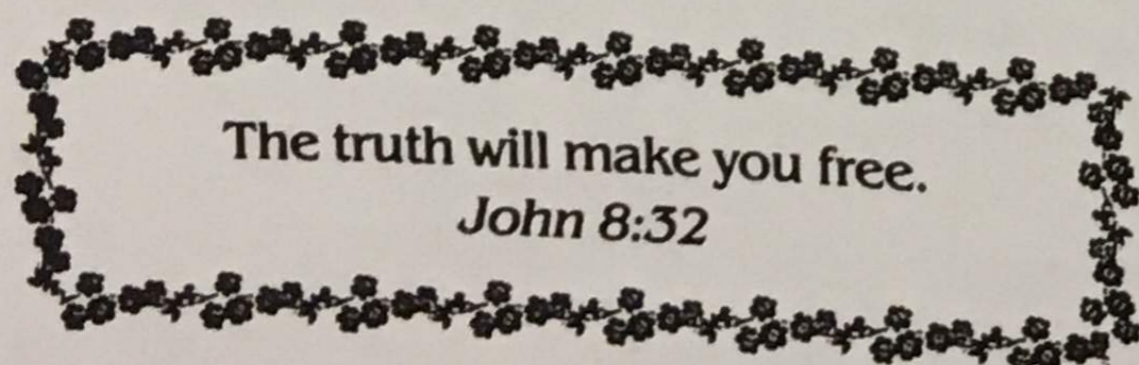
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## Taking Responsibility

This month has become a time to reflect on, honor, and celebrate the process of *coming out*. It is a time to acknowledge the courage and honesty and openness of those who have looked deep into their hearts and decided that a life of dishonesty and deceit and dishonor is not worth living. It is a time to look back and reflect on our own progress and process in the important step in self-awareness, self honesty, self acknowledgment and ultimately self-love.

Awareness of who and what we truly are has not come easy for some. There are still powerful and influential elements and institutions in this country of our which value and reward those who lie about their sexual orientation. Many find it financially a burden to explain just how they differ from the norm in our society. Many find it upsets or disturbs or discomforts others to learn this piece of information about someone they have always assumed to be roughly identical to them. Many find that it simply does not square with the image of God they have created for themselves and for their children. Many find it too threatening to honestly accept the fact that their long held traditions of sexual repression and disdain for the notion of human sexual pleasure may be in a sad and sorry state of development and understanding and compassion.

In a column I wrote here last December I referred to *coming out* as a form of sacrament. And I see in our culture a shift toward greater honesty and levels of compassion in relationships. As people grow more aware and honest about their sexual orientation (and how they do not view it as a handicap and a question of shame and repulsion) they share that with those who are important to them. As people become aware of other aspects in their lives hitherto unacknowledged and repressed (e.g. abuse, additions, incest, familial and institutional, deceptions, etc.) they realize that it is healthy and healing process to share that with significant others.



Take some time then, gentle Reader, to value the steps you have taken in your own coming out process and to thank your creator for a wonderful gift and blessing (even though there have been times when it did not quite seem like that!) You have in your unique orientation. Honor the courage and strength and passion you have shown in your multi-faceted comings out and quietly pray for those who prefer mendacity.

--George Wetzel

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## Dennis Raymond Powers

Bob Heer recently sent the editor a letter announcing that in the September 6-12, 1991, issue of *This Week In Texas* there was an obituary for Dennis Raymond Powers, 3/12/43-8/17/91. Dennis was our first chapter president after we were chartered by National in 1974.

In the letter Bob says, "I never met Dennis although I am told he was a good friend of Fr. Mark Barron. Through Mark I was able to trace him in the late 1970's, after he moved to San Diego, in order to forward his mail. The postal box we now use was originally in his name."

Neither Bob nor the editor have any more biographical data on him. Perhaps other long time Dignity members or our 10th anniversary booklet might remember him.

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## Stone Soup Collections

Please remember to bring non perishable foods, toiletries and cleaning supplies to Dignity to place before the altar at our weekly liturgies. They will be taken to Stone Soup weekly by Paul Sumrall.

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## Baudy, Baudy, Baudy

Remember, those of you with computers with modems, that Dignity/Houston has its own bulletin board. Call 988-8217 to access the goodies.

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## Fall Retreat and Regional Meeting

Dignity/Houston will host the Region VII Dignity meeting which will also be the Dignity/Houston fall retreat the weekend of October 25-27. Friday night at 7:00 will be registration followed by Evening Prayer at 1505 Nevada. Saturday 9:00 am marks the beginning of the retreat and meeting at the U. of H. Neumann Center, 4805 Calhoun. Mass will be at 7:30 at the Neumann Center. There will be no regular Dignity Mass at 1505 Nevada. Sunday the 27th from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm will be the Region VII Business Meeting at the Neumann Center.

For additional information or to volunteer assistance with the out of town guests please call Keith Wright.

## Dignity/Houston

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

		<b>1</b> 8:00pm DIGNITY POOL TEAM at Briar Patch	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Retreat for new officers and board members. Time and location to be announced	<b>5</b> 7:30pm DIGNITY MASS 1505 Nevada at Commonwealth. Please bring canned goods for STONE SOUP.
					DIGNITY LEADERSHIP RETREAT	
<b>6</b> 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" Location to be announced.	<b>7</b> 9:00pm DIGNITY BOWLING TEAM at Fair Lanes 8180 S. Gessner	<b>8</b> 8:00pm DIGNITY POOL TEAM at E.J.'s	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 7:30pm DIGNITY MASS 1505 Nevada at Commonwealth. Please bring canned goods for STONE SOUP.
<b>13</b> 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" Location to be announced.	<b>14</b> Columbus Day (Observed) 9:00pm DIGNITY BOWLING TEAM at Fair Lanes 8180 S. Gessner	<b>15</b> 8:00pm DIGNITY POOL TEAM at Lazy J	<b>16</b> DEADLINE for articles in the November newsletter; for calendar entries call B.J. A. at 864-4120.	<b>17</b> 7:00pm DIGNITY BOARD MEETING Location to be announced.	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 7:30pm DIGNITY MASS 1505 Nevada at Commonwealth. Please bring canned goods for STONE SOUP. Special Collection for Guadalupe Social Service Center
<b>20</b> 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" Location to be announced.	<b>21</b> 9:00pm DIGNITY BOWLING TEAM at Fair Lanes 8180 S. Gessner	<b>22</b> 8:00pm DIGNITY POOL TEAM at BRB	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 7:00pm Registration followed by Evening Prayer Location: 1505 Nevada	<b>26</b> 9:00am MEETING/RETREAT begins at 4805 Calhoun (U of H). 7:30pm DIGNITY MASS at 4805 Calhoun (U of H).
					DIGNITY REGION VII MEETING & FALL RETREAT	
<b>27</b> Daylight Savings--set back 1 hour 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time 9:00am - 1:00pm DIGNITY REGION VII Business Meeting (no later than 1pm) at 4805 Calhoun (U of H)	<b>28</b> 9:00pm DIGNITY BOWLING TEAM at Fair Lanes 8180 S. Gessner	<b>29</b> 8:00pm DIGNITY POOL TEAM at Gentry's	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Halloween	<b>OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS</b> ----- 10 - Jim S. - George W. 15 - Miguel E. - Jon G. 18 - Bob R. 23 - Mike D. - Patrick S. 24 - Christopher Q. 30 - Mary D.	

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## The New York Sunday Times

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Please ask at a Dignity meeting where it will be held. As of press day, this information was not available.

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### Welcome, New Dignity Members!

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As of publication time there was no new membership report, however there have been several new members join since last newsletter. A hearty welcome to our community!

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### Membership Renewals

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According to the editor's records the following have memberships which will be expiring in October, David D., Jon G., Scott H., Bill L., James McG., Bernard P., Gary S., Jose S. Please take this reminder to renew now. We are looking forward to continue counting you among our community.

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### Leadership Retreat

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The new board of Dignity/Houston will hold its annual leadership retreat Friday evening and Saturday, October 4 & 5. If you have special ideas or desires for Dignity/Houston for this coming year, please talk to one of the new board members before then. If you are willing to assist with any of the many ministries and projects, please see one of the officers. It is the membership that makes Dignity. Your leaders need your ideas and support.

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### From THE COLOR OF LIGHT

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*I sin if I submit to the indignities that are hurled at me. I am a guardian of the divine dignity and it is my duty to defend it.*

—Chief Albert Luthuli

Many of us are learning to feel empowered and to express our newfound self-esteem. In the past, we were more likely to feel shameful and unworthy than proud and dignified. When we did act assured, we were often trying to cover up our true insecurity.

Somewhere along the line, probably when we were young, we decided against ourselves. Now we can change and decide for ourselves. Because the truth is we are very special people. We are how God is expressed on earth.

So when we stand up for ourselves and say it's not okay to treat me badly, we become filled with more spirit. When we recognize and reject insult coming at us or at our sisters and brothers, we make ourselves stronger.

Affirmation: *I honor and respect myself. I honor and respect everyone I meet. I expect and receive honor in return.*

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### Every Person's Bill of Rights

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1. The Right to be treated with respect.
2. The Right to have and express your own feelings.
3. The Right to say "No" and not feel guilty.
4. The Right to change your mind.
5. The Right to say "I don't know."
6. The Right to feel and express anger.
7. The Right to feel and express a healthy competitiveness and achievement drive.
8. The Right to be treated as a capable human being and not to be patronized.
9. The Right to have your needs be as important as the needs of other people.
10. The Right to make mistakes.
11. The Right to do things that others may not approve of.
12. The Right to do less than you are humanly capable of.
13. The Right to ask "Why?"
14. The Right to ask for help or assistance.
15. The Right to have and express you own opinions.
16. The Right to be yourself.

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#### WANTED:

*Franciscan Friar who takes seriously both the vow of poverty and physical fitness wants a bicycle. Contact Cathy Lenahan (523-4505) for more information.*



Francis of Assisi

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