

# Dignity

HOUSTON

November 1993

*We Are Many Parts; We Are All One Body*

---

## Taking Responsibility

In October a new encyclical was issued (*Veritas Splendor, In the Splendor of Truth*). Directed to all bishops, it is intended to help them in the search for moral truth and goodness in this world of excess and moral relativism. In my opinion the bishops and the authors of this letter deserve our prayers.

For, if I read the commentators correctly (at 179 pages, few will read the entire text!), this letter reinforces the negative, sex-phobic and ultimately compassionless image of Roman Catholicism in the modern world.

Proclaiming that homosexuality (as he understands it) excludes the possibility of a life experiencing love and sexuality. For some that is an easy proclamation. For most that is an outdated, outmoded, outrageous and inhuman (or worse) response to all lesbian, gay, and bisexual human beings. For us this letter will be used to add to the fear, hatred, distrust, envy and disgust stirred up by ancient, persistent and energized fear of human sexuality.

Challenging moral theologians to tow the line on this fear and shame based view of human sexual variety, it hopes to ignore the attempts by others to take another honest and compassionate look at the role of sexuality, pleasure and responsibility in our modern world.

I will end with the conclusion of an editorial in the *National Catholic Register* by Tom Fox:

"Where is the love?"

"This, no matter how one reads it, is a harsh, negative, rigid, authoritarian document. The Christian searches vainly for the positive, affirming, all-embracing, compassionate tone of the Christ in whose name the pope wrote his encyclical; the Christ who said to prostitutes and tax collectors and other rejects to come along and follow him, who was anything but absolute, putting up instead an umbrella big enough for everyone, and suggesting by his wholesome attitude that he respected the intelligence and conscience God had given to people in the first place.

"It is said that, 2,000 years later, the pope sees as the culmination of his pontificate the casting in cold concrete of the glad, liberating message of Jesus. One can't help feeling that one of them got it wrong."

God, grant me the serenity to live and let live. Help me to recover my own life out of the unhealthy relationships and confusing feelings of anger and resentment.

—George M. Wetzel

P.S. Unfortunately, the more I think about the possible impact of an encyclical for healing, empowerment and forgiveness in our troubled world might have been, I am disappointed at yet another missed opportunity to show the compassion, humanity and forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

Instead, rather than building bridges to women, lesbians, bisexuals, gay men and those who are divorced, practice responsibility with their sexual partners and those elements within the church yearning for refreshment and renewal, the pope and his chief moral cardinal have chosen to build bridges with C.U.F.F. (Catholics United for Freedom of the Faith), the Wanderer, Southern Baptists, evangelical literalists and other fundamentalist religious leaders to preach hatred and bad will and promote sexual ignorance, naiveté, and shame based guilt to solve the problems of our modern world.

Slowly, but surely, the people are awakening from their self-imposed sleep and ignorance to the effects of the sex negative morality of religion. If the sex negative morality is Christian, then it does not come from the words and teachings of Jesus Christ. It comes from fearful, frightened and hopefully ignorant individuals who thought, in their time, that they were doing the best they could do. That is not good enough any longer.

The Catholic hierarchy has painted itself into the corner of having all the answers (and for all times) on sex and sexual questions and now must act with increasingly dysfunctional responses to that position.

A large portion of the world laughs loudly at these impossible postures, positions and poses. In my view we are at a make or brake point — either we stand up and openly challenge the dishonesty, dysfunction and deceit as we see it or we become a part of the problem and will carry the dysfunction forward to later generations. We have seen and heard and suffered quite enough sexual abuse on physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological levels in our own lives to give testimony to the LIE. Only the truth will set all of us free.

— G. M. W.

## Good Stewards Use Gifts for Each Other

The reason "stewardship" is really a better term than "administration" is that in biblical times a steward was one who managed a household for a master. The steward did not own the household. If he was a good steward, he managed the household well.

Jesus used this image in several of His parables. The concept is that when you really think about it, we are not owners of our talents and treasures. Sure they are ours in a sense, but not ours to possess as entirely our own. They are really gifts from God. We are like stewards of those gifts. We are all held accountable on how well we manage those gifts and treasures for the sake of the household.

The household is the community of God's people. We are good stewards of those gifts when we can use them for each other. That's what the master who really owns them wants. Things go awry when we think we own them.

## New Board Officers

During its October meeting the Dignity Houston board elected its new officers for this year: Michael Parr, President; Helen Kreller, Vice-president; George Wetzal, Secretary, Phil DeMarco, Treasurer. Board Members are Mike Sheahan, Bob Singleton, and Jack Tweelings.

The new board has decided that they will meet regularly the second Tuesday of each month from seven to nine in the evening. All Dignity members are welcome and encouraged to attend board meetings.

Committee chairs were discussed and the following agreed to head committees: Helen Kreller, Liturgy; Jack Tweelings, Membership; Bob Singleton, Newsletter.

Phil DeMarco agreed to head Building and Grounds with a possible co-chair. Names were suggested for an Interfaith Coordinator, and it was announced that Stan Ford had agreed to work on the 20th Anniversary Celebration for this coming summer.

The board needs volunteers or suggestions for chairpersons for other areas of concern, among which is Communications.

Visiting the meeting was Debbie M.

## Leadership Retreat

The new board was to have had its leadership retreat October 16 & 17, but an emergency postponed the workshop until November 6 & 7. During this weekend, the board retreats literally from home, work and personal concerns to dedicate itself to formulating a vision and plan for Dignity Houston for the following year.

The board is intending to retire to our Center. The weekend will combine prayer, discussion, planning, and a closing board meeting to establish policy for the year.

Please keep the board in mind and in your prayers during this weekend. If you have special

concerns or ideas for the future of Dignity Houston, please present them to a board member before the first weekend in November.

## Stewardship

In addition to needing regular sacrificial offerings in the collections at mass, Dignity needs individuals who will offer time and talent to the community.

Committees need members, some committees need to have a head. We need volunteers who can commit for a specified length of time. You set your limits. Currently we are in need of someone or a group to supervise communications and public relations between Dignity Houston and the rest of the community. Primarily this job means preparing and placing ads for Dignity in local media and coordinating with other organizations. It also means supervising the mailing of the monthly Dignity newsletter.

Do the unusual thing! Volunteer your time and talents.

## CONTENTMENT

*It is possible to be content even when we are not satisfied, for contentment is an ever-present feeling in the heart which comes from Christ's presence in us.*

*With this companionship it is possible to work hard to achieve God's doing with our talents and our time.*

## Dignity Camping

Friday afternoon, October 8, Bob and Joe hurried out of Houston out I10 before 4 pm trying to beat the fabled Friday evening traffic. Not far behind them were Phil and Joel. They were all headed for Wimberly trying to get there before nightfall. Michael Parr had told them how beautiful the scenery was coming into the Texas hill country town of Wimberly where they were all planning to spend the first night of their camping weekend in Michael's sister's home. Bob and Joe arrived first at the beautiful hilltop location. Within a few minutes Phil and Joel chugged up the hill and the four watched a brilliant hill country sunset as they waited for Michael and Alfredo to arrive. Shortly before nightfall, two more of Michael's friends arrived from Austin, a delightful lesbian couple who came prepared with chips and dips. We sat in the driveway, visiting by the light of Phil's Coleman lantern while we ate Sammi and Janet's food offerings. Not long thereafter Michael and Alfredo arrived, having experienced car trouble while leaving Houston.

We settled into the multi-level hillside home, and then all of us drove some twenty miles to the



famed Salt Lick near Dripping Springs for its barbecue served home style. All eight of us sat together at a big table, each jockeying to sit beside their cutie, and we turned a few eyes as we began our meal with grace — a good ol' Catholic custom, but strange to those who were watching the unusual pairing that had been taking place at the table. Our waiter, a fun-loving country boy, seemed quite happy to have been our server. We wondered why, m-m-m.

Stuffed, fat and sassy the boys returned to Wimberly. Sammi and Janet, having pets to take care of, returned to Austin from the Salt Lick. The next morning we enjoyed coffee and rolls on the veranda overlooking Wimberly valley and a panoramic expanse of hill country. Eventually we pulled ourselves free from the splendor, packed up and drove to New Braunfels where Phil and Joel, Bob and Joe set up their camping tents. Bob found a rainbow flag left over from the March on Washington in his car trunk, and he planted it proudly in a tree trunk in our camp. Now we were really set. It was only later that we noticed a small travel trailer parked near the bathrooms on the other side of the campground that had flying a large American flag beside an up-side-down, gutted carcass of a deer. Those campers, wooly bearded and tattooed, drove a big motorcycle. We wondered if our flags and other accoutrements were being read as we read their stuff.

A short drive up the river prepared us for a leisurely float down the somewhat low level river back to our camp. The sun was bright, the water chilly, our spirits high. Our most adventuresome moment was negotiating the dog-leg falls right in our camp. Some of us were knocked off the raft and the tubes, but nothing was hurt except our pride and dignity from being upended right at the end of our float.

Evening brought a roaring fire. The temperature had begun to fall decidedly. Hamburgers filled our bodies and camaraderie filled our hearts. We enjoyed each other's company and wished that more of us could have been there to share the bonding.

Morning brought even colder weather, but the remains of the previous night's fire revived with a few additional logs and we had breakfast basking in the smell of a wood fire. It was later that we had the opportunity to have a friendly chat with the biker campers on the other side of the camp. It was nice to realize that everything was cool. Breaking camp followed. Our flag was last to come down as we policed the campsite, slammed shut our car trunks and waved good-bye to our camper neighbors as we began our return to Houston.

## Loose Change Collections

The board has decided that during the liturgy of the fourth Saturday of every month, we take up a second collection, a "loose change" collection, earmarked for a Dignity/Houston retreat fund. Charge persons will try to remind the assembled of that collection before the start of the liturgy on the fourth Saturday.

## New York Sunday Times

The New York Sunday Times is an opportunity for Dignity members and their friends to get together on a Sunday morning (11 am to 2 pm) to talk, have coffee and munchies, read the Sunday papers, discuss what is up in the world, the goals of our community, chit-chat, or what-you-please.

Please ask at the Saturday liturgy who is hosting this month. The information was not available when the newsletter went to press.

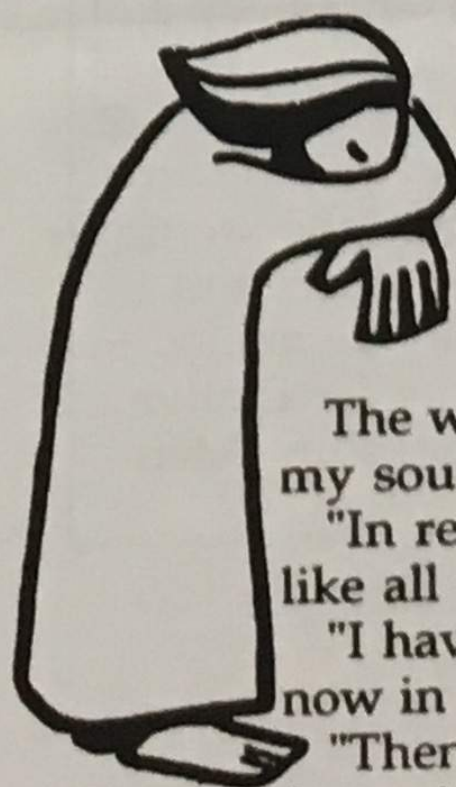
New, current and prospective members are heartily welcome. Do yourself a favor, check it out.

## Choir Practice

Choir meets Wednesday nights at 7:00 at the Center to select music for our liturgies and to go over the singing. No special skills are required, only a desire to sing. Just show up and join the fun. On Saturdays the choir meets again at 6:30 to go over the music for that evening's liturgy. Don't hesitate to join us on Saturday either.

## Welcome, New Dignity Members!

Every month from the many visitors we welcome at our liturgies we receive new members into Dignity. Membership in the national organization is only \$40.00 We extend a hearty welcome to the several new members who have recently joined Dignity/Houston, our community! We are most happy to welcome the many women who have joined. In addition to our Saturday night liturgies, you are invited to join us also at a Sunday Times to get to know other of our members in a non-liturgical setting. Dignity members also informally go to dinner in groups to a variety of local restaurants after the Saturday liturgies. The conversation and fellowship is always delightful. Plan to join us at more than just the liturgies.



### TIMES ALONE

[Selected Poems of Antonio Machado.]

The wind, one brilliant day, called to my soul with an aroma of jasmine.

"In return for this jasmine odor, I'd like all the odor of your roses."

"I have no roses; I have no flowers left now in my garden . . . All are dead."

"Then I'll take the waters of the fountains, and the yellow leaves and the dried-up petals."

The wind left . . . I wept. I said to my soul, "What have you done with the garden entrusted to you?"

DIGNITY/HOUSTON OFFICERS  
(terms on board)

|                          |                |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| Michael Parr (92-94)     | President      |
| Helen Kreller (93-95)    | Vice President |
| George Wetzel (93-95)    | Secretary      |
| Phil DeMarco (93-95)     | Treasurer      |
| Mike Sheahan (92-94)     | Board Member   |
| Bob Singleton (92-94)    | Board Member   |
| Jack Tweelings (93-94*)  | Board Member   |
| * filling a vacated term |                |
| COMMITTEE CHAIRS         |                |
| Jack Tweelings           | Membership     |
| Helen Kreller            | Liturgy        |

Dignity Houston BBS  
(713) 988-8217

300-1200-2400 Baud. 640 MB of files. Messages. CD-ROM (17 disks). 176 Registered Doors. 479 Total Doors. Founded August 15, 1991.

This newsletter is an organ through which Dignity members can share their news items, thoughts, ideas, experiences, and feelings with each other. Opinions expressed are those of the individual writer and are not to be construed necessarily as those of the editor, Dignity/Houston, Dignity/USA, or of the Catholic Church. Submissions should be kept to less than a column and a half per month per person submitting. Depending on space availability, some articles may be edited.

Dignity/Houston  
meets Saturdays at 7:30 pm at  
1307 Yale, Suite H  
Houston, Texas 77008.  
(713) 880-2872

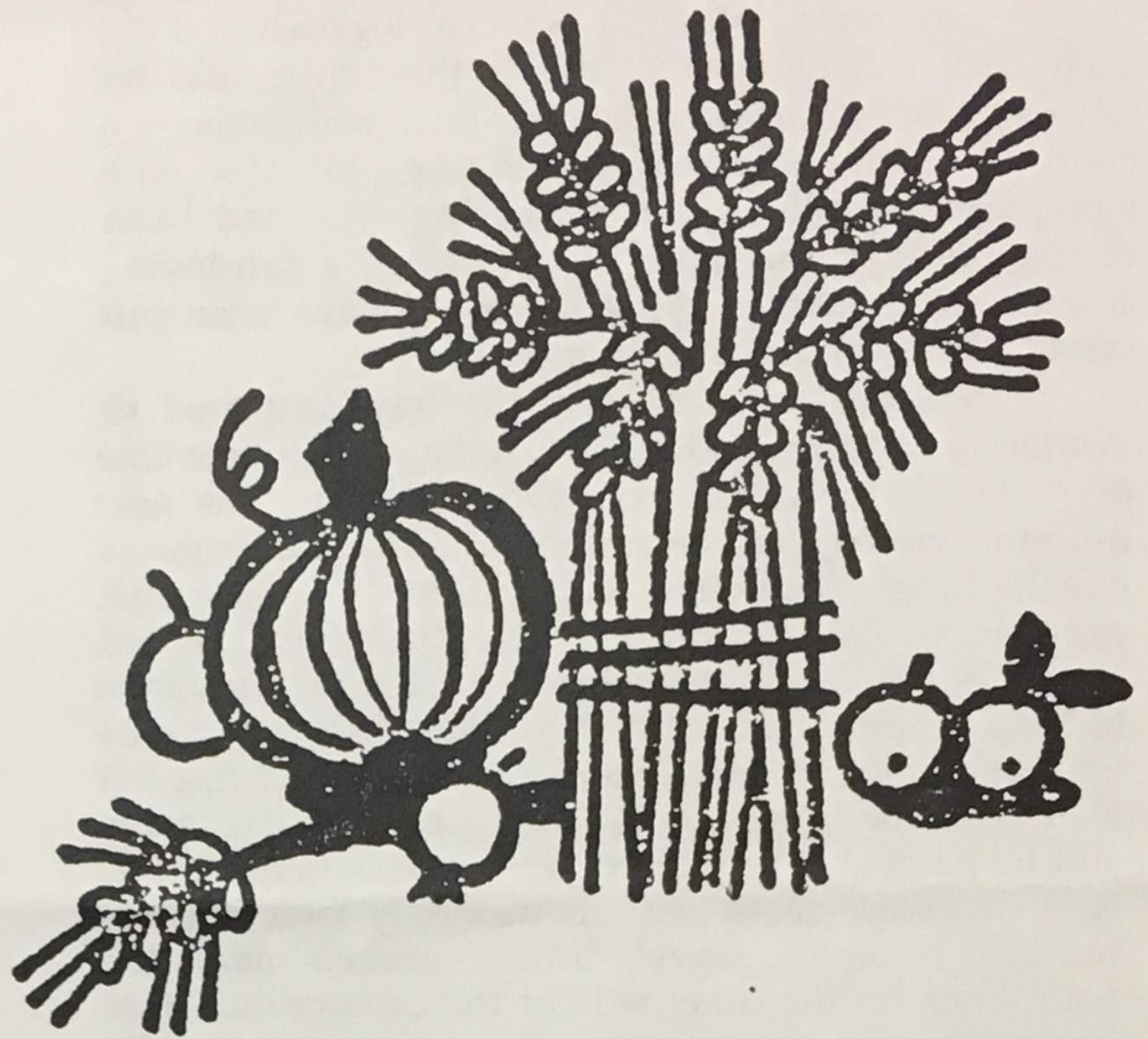
Mailing Address: Box 66821, Houston, TX 77266  
Newsletter Address: 1651 Northwood, Houston, TX 77009

Dignity/Houston is dedicated to the welfare of gay and lesbian Catholics and their friends. Articles published in this newsletter are not necessarily the opinion of the board of Dignity/Houston or the editor. Publication of names and/or organizations in this newsletter should not be construed as indication of sexual orientation. Newsletter items may be mailed to the editor at the address above. Deadline for receiving articles is the 16th of the previous month. Membership: \$40.00 a year.

STEWARDSHIP OF EXAMPLE

*The best way to lead is by example. As leaders, our responsibility is to set a positive example for others.*

*When we put Christ at the center of our lives, that witness draws others to service and support of our community's God-given mission.*



*The earth has yielded  
its fruits  
God our God  
has blessed us*

Are you really needed?

Xvxn though my typxwritxr is an old modxl, it works wxll xxcxpt for onx of thx kxys. I'vx wishxd many timxs that it workxd pxrfixtly. Trux, thxrx arx 42 kxys that function, but onx kxy not working makxs thx diffxrxncx.

Somxtimxs, it sxxms to mx that our congrxgation is somxwhat likx my typxwritxr--not all thx pxoplx arx working propxrlly. You might say, "Wxll, I'm only onx pxrson. It won't makx much diffxrxncx." But you sxx, a congrxgation, to bx wholx, nxxds thx activx participation of xvxy pxrson. Thx nxxt timx you think your xfforts arxn't nxxdxd, rxmxxmbxr my typxwritxr, and say to yoursxlf, "I am a kxy pxrson and thxy nxxd mx vxry much."

# Dignity

HOUSTON

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

SEPTEMBER 1993

## Taking Responsibility

At the recent Dignity USA House of Delegates Meeting in New Orleans a great deal of time was spent discussing, arguing, wrestling and sharing just what Dignity is all about. What are the reasons for Dignity, for national officers, for a national organization? What is our purpose and what are our goals as an organization?

When all the words were finished, when the last hearing was heard and the last dispute was discussed, we collectively, and with a sense of consensus never before attempted by our organization, decided not to decide! We concluded that a great deal more work needs to be done at the grass roots level on purpose and position before we do any major restructuring of Dignity USA.

And, while this decision was reached with a collective sigh of relief, we were all aware how important the next two years are before the 25th anniversary meeting in Los Angeles in June of 1995 when we will conclude the important revision and re-envisioning of our Statement of Position and Purpose.

We, those who care enough about this organization to speak up for their positions,

convictions and sense of individual purpose, will have the challenge to discuss and debate these issues more completely and to listen, pray and work with other alive, involved and animated individuals in shaping this organization.

With new regional boundaries and divisions [Texas is part of the new Mountains and Plains Region which includes states to the north of us all the way to Canada] we will have new chapters to meet and greet and share with. With new means of communication we will need to read, to think, to pray and to act on our beliefs and convictions and not wait for others to ask us to move.

And all this reorganizing, rethinking and refurbishing of Dignity will require a greater commitment from all of us, a commitment of our time, our talents and our treasure. The House of Delegates voted to increase the annual dues to Dignity USA from \$20 to \$35 effective October 1, 1993 [with a \$5.00 fee added for the region, the national total is \$40.00]. We know this will be a hardship for some and we will work that out. We know that we will be asking for more commitment from each of you who truly believe that we are temples of the Holy Spirit, that we are lesbians and gays, and that we are church. Also we will need input, pa-

tience, prayer, reflective silence and dreaming as we move closer to that goal.

— George M. Wetzel

## Impressions of a National Convention

Joe Kramer and Annie Sprinkle showing us new and exciting ways to meet, see and interface with people we had never met. Breathing and feeling truly emotionally alive and present to another human being and letting them look into our souls and looking into theirs. Remembering how truly joyful it is to be alive, aware and present with other people who are just like ourselves. Blending music and breath work, movement and intention into a dance of emotional awareness, sharing and loving and being. Strangers coming together and not being strange, sharing commonalities, emotions and feelings and being totally present. Awareness of the body and how the body is the way we see the world and the world sees us. Sharing and feeling and being and so much more. Thank you.

Bob Goss, *Jesus Acted Up*, telling his story of Christ often at odds with the ruling power structure over worship, morals, propriety and true spirituality. Telling tales of living with a lover in St. Louis and committing themselves to an AIDS ministry as part of their love for each other and for all creation. And the pain and humanity which he experiences as his lover slowly died from AIDS complications. Delightful insight into Jesuit spirituality, power and influence. Thank you.

Carter Heyward, pioneer Episcopal priest, author, lesbian, theology professor and nature lover. Sharing insights and experiences of the important role women have in worship and spirituality and in preserving, protecting and promoting life, harmony and protection on this planet. Thank you.

Brian McNaught, whose history mixed with mine long ago in Dayton, Ohio, and whom I have watched develop, grow and glow and change and deal openly and honestly with the life and time in which he

finds himself. And who now considers himself a "recovering Catholic" and more comfortable and at home with 12-step rites and rituals and affirmations than those of his childhood.

Virginia Hoffman, *Birthing a Living Church*, author and theme maker for this convention! Quiet, slowly building a strong, powerful, honest message that we are all church and we need to get on with our growth, development and creation — yet being careful not to model the worst aspects of those who choose to oppress us. A challenge and a study in growth and development of these themes to our group. Kudos. Thank you.












— G. M. W.

## Dignity Convention in New Orleans

George Wetzel and Jack Tweelings went to New Orleans a week early to be our chapter's representatives at the biennial Dignity USA Convention. Their schedule was very full, attending meetings and group discussions for nearly four days before the Convention itself kicked off on Wednesday evening. Attending from Houston along with George and Jack were Helen K., Mary Jo, Joe Boyd, Bob Singleton, and Mike Kaney.

Because of New Orleans, the convention sported a flamboyant Mardi Gras theme with each day having a different theme color. Daily green, gold, and purple beads were everywhere. The Fairmont Hotel, treated us well and as the week progressed and other convention groups arrived, veterans, Elks etc., the milling in the convention center hallways became more and more fascinating.

The many meals that were included in the convention fee were stupendous. It was fun watching the wait staff as they served several hundred gays and lesbians gathered together all in one room. Some wait persons were terribly professional and distant, others — one could tell — were happy to be among their own. The big dinner and dance the last night outdid itself by bringing in dessert, huge platters of a flaming Baked Alaska, in a

| SUNDAY  | MONDAY   | TUESDAY                  | WEDNESDAY   | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY                   | SATURDAY  |
|---|--|--------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|---|
| <p align="center"><b>SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS</b></p> <hr/> <p>2 - Chris M.                      22 - Loren L.<br/>           3 - Juan DeL.                    24 - Keith W.<br/>           5 - Luis O.                        26 - Fr. Tim F.<br/>           6 - John H.                        - Lynn H.<br/>           7 - Patrick T.                    29 - Kenneth M.<br/>           13 - Michael P.</p> |  |                          | <p align="center">1</p>  <p align="center">7:00pm CHOIR PRACTICE<br/>at Dignity Center.</p>    | <p align="center">2</p>   | <p align="center">3</p>  | <p align="center">4</p>  <p align="center">7:30pm<br/>MASS<br/>at Dignity<br/>Center.<br/><br/>Please bring canned goods for<br/>Stone Soup.</p>   |
| <p align="center">5</p> <p><i>23rd Sunday in Ordinary<br/>Time</i><br/>11am - 2pm "SUNDAY<br/>NEW YORK TIMES"<br/>at George W.'s - 2507<br/>Montrose #12 (522-1603).</p>  | <p align="center">6</p>  <p align="center"><i>Labor Day</i></p>                                       | <p align="center">7</p>  | <p align="center">8</p>  <p align="center">7:00pm CHOIR PRACTICE<br/>at Dignity Center.</p>    | <p align="center">9</p>   | <p align="center">10</p> | <p align="center">11</p>  <p align="center">7:30pm<br/>MASS<br/>at Dignity<br/>Center.<br/><br/>Please bring canned goods for<br/>Stone Soup.</p>  |
| <p align="center">12</p> <p><i>24th Sunday in Ordinary<br/>Time</i><br/>11am - 2pm "SUNDAY<br/>NEW YORK TIMES"<br/>at George W.'s - 2507<br/>Montrose #12 (522-1603).</p>   | <p align="center">13</p>   | <p align="center">14</p> | <p align="center">15</p>  <p align="center">7:00pm CHOIR PRACTICE<br/>at Dignity Center.</p> | <p align="center">16</p> <p>DEADLINE for<br/>Articles in the<br/>October newsletter.</p>                                    | <p align="center">17</p> | <p align="center">18</p>  <p align="center">7:30pm<br/>MASS<br/>at Dignity<br/>Center.<br/><br/>Dignity Elections after Mass.<br/>Please bring canned goods for<br/>Stone Soup.</p>                      |
| <p align="center">19</p> <p><i>25th Sunday in Ordinary Time</i><br/>11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK<br/>TIMES"<br/>at George W.'s - 2507 Montrose #12 (522-<br/>1603).<br/>4:00pm COVERED DISH SUPPER<br/>at Joe B.'s 4520 Stanford Court (937-3310)<br/>or call Bob S. at 862-1662.</p>  | <p align="center">20</p>   | <p align="center">21</p> | <p align="center">22</p>  <p align="center">7:00pm CHOIR PRACTICE<br/>at Dignity Center.</p> | <p align="center">23</p> <p>DEADLINE for<br/>Calendar Entries<br/>in Oct. newsletter<br/>(call Ed G. at 862-<br/>8065).</p> | <p align="center">24</p> | <p align="center">25</p>  <p align="center">7:30pm MASS<br/>at Dignity Center.<br/>4th Sat "Loose<br/>Change<br/>Collection" for<br/>Retreat Fund<br/><br/>Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.</p> |
| <p align="center">26</p> <p><i>26th Sunday in Ordinary<br/>Time</i><br/>11am - 2pm "SUNDAY<br/>NEW YORK TIMES"<br/>at George W.'s - 2507<br/>Montrose #12 (522-1603).</p>   | <p align="center">27</p>  <p align="center">7:45pm<br/>BOARD<br/>MEETING<br/>at Dignity Center.</p> | <p align="center">28</p> | <p align="center">29</p>  <p align="center">7:00pm CHOIR PRACTICE<br/>at Dignity Center.</p> | <p align="center">30</p>  |                          |   |

## Absentee Ballot

Three members of Dignity/Houston will be elected to two-year terms on the Board of Directors and one member will be elected to serve the remaining year of the vacant position on the Board of Directors at the annual meeting on Saturday, September 18, 1993, after the 7:30 p.m. liturgy. If you are eligible to vote but cannot attend the meeting, please return this absentee ballot by September 11. Print your name in the return address on the envelope so we can determine who has voted. To be eligible, you must have joined Dignity/Houston prior to August 19, 1993, and your membership dues must be paid in full--unless your renewal month is September.

The three candidates receiving the largest numbers of votes will fill the three two-year terms. The candidate receiving the fourth-largest number of votes will fill the remaining year of the vacant board position.

Choose **four** candidates for the Dignity/Houston Board:

\_\_\_ Phil DeMarco

\_\_\_ Virgenmina Garcia

\_\_\_ Helen K. Kreller

\_\_\_ Jim LeBlanc

\_\_\_ Ada Lopez

\_\_\_ Steve Spaniol

\_\_\_ Jack Tweelings

\_\_\_ George Wetzel

\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ (for write-in candidate)

\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ (for write-in candidate)

\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ (for write-in candidate)

Mail by September 11, 1993, to:

ELECTION  
DIGNITY/HOUSTON  
P O BOX 66821  
HOUSTON TX 77266

*Reminder: Print your name in the return address on the envelope.*

mardi gras parade complete with a marching jazz band and flaming torches headed up by two of New Orleans' finest riding their police motorcycles, sirens blowing and lights flashing, around and through the banquet hall and dance floor.

But it was the sessions and the speakers that provided the real nourishment of this great banquet. It took very little time to feel that what we were doing was important and soul nourishing. Joe Kramer, assisted by Annie Sprinkle (who later gave the women a special awakening in their women-only session), got the entire group to breathe and experience a special joy as we went around the room, looking into other's eyes, hugging, and feeling more and more whole and complete. What a joy! What a way to start a convention that was filled with such electricity.

— Bob Singleton

## New Developments in Dignity

Several major developments came out of the national Board of Directors meeting during the recent 1993 national convention as well as the national House of Delegates meeting. Among these are:

1. Elections of new national officers: Marianne Duddy, president; Terry Mischel, vice president; Ben Boerkoel, secretary; and Bob Mialovich who will continue to be treasurer.

2. An increase of national dues to \$40.00. (Dignity Houston will not collect an additional \$5.00 so that the dues will be \$40.00 for our members.)

3. The realignment of Dignity regions. (Texas will be part of the Mountain/Plains Region.)

4. A resolution to hold gender awareness programs with a commitment to promoting inclusive language and the possible publishing of an inclusive language hymnal.

5. A two-year reexamination of our national Statement of Position and Purpose.

6. Approval of a national budget for 93-94 which holds the line on expenses and eliminates debt.

7. Approval of Boston as the site of the Dignity 1997 National Convention. (Los Angeles will host the 1995 convention.)

8. Asking each chapter to examine what vision Dignity shares collectively for its future and to report that vision. (The Ben Boerkoel article, "Sharing the Vision" forms a basis for this examination. Copies of it are available on the publications table at Dignity Center.)

## Mixed Fabrics Should be Nixed

[The following letter was addressed to the Rev. Earl W. Jackson, and is reprinted from the Sept '88 Integrity/Houston newsletter.]

I am writing to thank you and congratulate you for your diligent work that helped defeat the 1987 Massachusetts Gay Rights Bill. People like gay men who break laws casually mentioned somewhere in The Bible should not be given civil rights protections. More Christians should be as dedicated as you to fighting basic civil rights and human dignity. Good work, Reverend.

However, I am concerned that many people break other laws mentioned in The Bible and yet do not suffer just discrimination for their mere existence. I am specifically concerned about people who break the law outlined in Leviticus Chapter 19, Verse 19: "Neither shall a garment mingled of different fabrics come upon thee."

Yet you can see people out on the streets every day shamelessly wearing flannel shirts with wool sweaters, acrylic blended with cotton, and all manner of other sinful combinations one could imagine in a nightmare. This sort of disrespect for the Laws of God is leading to the moral decay of our society.

And what's even worse: they flaunt their perverse mixed fabrics in front of children. (I've even heard that some of them like to dress children in mixed fabrics, but this sin is just too perverse for further

elaboration...and of course, ALL people who wear mixed fabrics have a secret or overt desire to dress children the same way.)

If a mixed-fabric wearer wanted to become a foster parent, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts would allow it. There are no questions on the application referring to this sin. No one asks if the child will be exposed to mixed fabrics or might even be forced to wear them. We should spend some tax dollars to study the effects of mixed fabrics on children, though I am sure it has a negative impact.

Furthermore there are people who eat bacon for breakfast, which is outlawed in Leviticus 11:17, and Deuteronomy 14:8; rare steak for supper, which is outlawed in Leviticus 17:10-14, and cheeseburgers for lunch, which is outlawed in Exodus 23:19, Exodus 34:26, and Deuteronomy 14:21. (This must mean that cheeseburgers are three times as sinful as gay sex since the former is mentioned thrice.)

Now there are so-called Christians who want to liberally "interpret" the Word of God or leave out certain parts of it. They say that Jesus came to fulfill the law (Matthew 5:18) and that His message of love is far more important (Matthew 19:19, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27, and I Corinthians 13:13) than mixed fabrics or cheeseburgers. I point out that there is a curse on anyone who completely leaves out any part of it (Revelations 22:18). Besides, it's all right to call yourself Christian, just don't try to be TOO MUCH like Jesus. After all, look where it got Him.

For the sake of Christianity and the children, Earl, I want you to join me in restoring some morality to government. Together we can take away the civil rights of homosexuals, mixed-fabric wearers, and unclean meat-eaters. Next we can persecute barbers (haircuts are outlawed in Leviticus 19:27) and veterinarians (outlawed in Leviticus 22:24)

Then we can enforce all the Biblical laws and directives! I can't wait until we will be able to apply the death penalty for adultery as Leviticus 20:10 mandates. Because you

have never committed adultery, Earl, and lived without sin among us, you should be the one to cast the first stone (John 8:7).

Sister Polly Ester, Christian Coalition  
Against Mixed Fabrics.

## Gene Rollins, "THANK YOU!"

Dignity Houston owes Gene Rollins a huge THANK YOU. He has faithfully collected our mail and brought it to the center, sorting it into individual boxes and taken care of our common mail. He has received bundles of the Texas Triangle at his home and has brought them to the center for distribution. He has always been there when work needed to be done and was always ready to get involved. What few know is that weekly as an act of charity he also vacuumed, cleaned and tidied up our center, bathrooms, kitchen and all, and carried the trash home for disposal.

However as of June, because of changes in his schedule, he has asked that others take care of the responsibilities of cleaning the center and taking care of the mail. Gene, receive a collective big warm hug from all of us and our heartfelt thanks.

## Announcement of Annual Membership Meeting

The Annual Membership Meeting of Dignity/Houston will be held Saturday, September 18, for the purpose of electing new board members. Three new persons will be elected for terms of two years to replace Kevin Kelly, Bob Dieker and Aeren who are going off the board at the end of September; one new person will be elected to finish the remaining one year term of Ed Gumnick who due to recent changes in his professional responsibilities and other personal considerations will resign from the board at the end of this years term.

Members who still have another year to serve on the board are Mike Parr, Mike Shehan, and Bob Singleton. Once the three new board members are elected in

September, the board of seven will organize itself and select new officers from among itself.

Board members are elected for two year terms. In even numbered years four new members will be elected to the board, in odd numbered years three new members will be elected.

## Candidate For the Board

These members have agreed to serve on the board of directors of Dignity Houston if they are elected: Phil DeMarco, Virgenmina Garcia, Helen Kreller, Jim LeBlanc, Ada Lopez, Steve Spaniol, Jack Tweelings, and George Wetzel

## Our Family Values

The Dallas chapter has told the Region of they would like to fund a full page ad for our Texas chapters in This Week In Texas. Consequently the region has created a professionally-produced ad promoting OUR family values will appear in the Sept. 17 issue of TWIT. Other Texas chapters have been asked if they would like to contribute to a second insertion. Dignity Houston will participate.

## New Regional Teleconference

The new Mountain/Plains Region to which Texas now belongs met during the recent convention and has decided to create an ad hoc committee to recommend new bylaws for the new region. A teleconference will be held Saturday, Sept 25, at 11:00 am to vote on this business and to elect a slate of officers. Materials and instructions are being sent Texas and Oklahoma chapters.

## A Note From Cathy

[Cathy Lenahan sent us the following note mid August.]

Thanks so much to all of you for your prayers and encouragement as I battle lung

cancer. On Monday, I start both chemo and radiation with chemo once a week and radiation five times a week for seven weeks.

I have a request for those who smoke. Presently I cannot access the Center without being subjected to the smoke. Also, our smokers are very loving people and often hug me as I am trying to enter or exit the building. I need no encouragement to cough and being in the smoke can cause me to have a coughing jag.

So, my request is to restrict smoking to the sidewalk by the curb. Also, let me approach you for a greeting while you are smoking.

I trust my suggestion will be accepted within the spirit in which it is offered. I do not want to oppress anyone. Rather, I want to be able to worship with you.

With my treatments I am in for a struggle, but I am uplifted by the knowledge that you join me on my journey and keep Carolyn and me in your prayers.

Thanks, Cathy Lenahan.

## Loose Change Collections

The board has decided that during the liturgy of the fourth Saturday of every month, we will take up a second collection, a "loose change" collection, earmarked for a Dignity/Houston retreat fund. Charge persons will try to remind the assembled of that collection before the start of the liturgy on the fourth Saturday.

## Pot Luck

Joe Boyd and Bob Singleton are hosting a pot luck dinner at Joe's home, 4520 Stanford Ct, (937-3310) on Sunday, September 26, at 4:00 pm. Please sign up for dishes and other contributions at the center. A brisket will be provided.

There are two ways to get there from central Houston: go out Hwy 290, exit 43rd and head west (under the freeway). As you travel west 43rd becomes Clay Rd when you cross Hempstead Hwy. Continue until you cross Gessner, then take a right at the next light. Next take the second right, go to the end of the street, and turn left onto Stanford Ct. Joe's house is on the right a few houses down. OR you can go out I10, exit Gessner and go north (right) until you get to the intersection of Clay Rd (there is a golf course to the right). Turn left onto Clay, and then right at the next light, then take the second right, go to the end of the

street, and turn left onto Stanford Ct. Joe's house is a few houses down on the right.

## Our A/C Saviors

Twice this last month we ended up celebrating our Eucharist in the open air because our air conditioning was not working properly, but the outdoors added a special dimension to the notion of the sacramentality of coming out. It was good to proclaim the word of God and thanks for our intrinsic holiness as lesbians and gays right in our neighbor's back yards.

However, creature comforts are important too, and to that end, a very special thanks to Mike Sheahan and Phil DeMarco who put in much personal time to resolve the air conditioning problem without it costing us an arm and a leg. With the installation of a replacement compressor at a very good price we expect to be able to cool the center comfortably.

## Finances July

|                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| offertory       | \$1372.00        |
| membership      | \$30.00          |
| donations       | 148.00           |
| other           | 14.00            |
| <b>INCOME</b>   | <b>\$1565.00</b> |
| administrative  | \$200.00         |
| advertisement   | 99.00            |
| maintenance     | 258.00           |
| rent            | 600.00           |
| utilities       | 181.00           |
| other           | 175.00           |
| <b>EXPENSES</b> | <b>\$1513.00</b> |

## New York Sunday Times

The New York Sunday Times is an opportunity for Dignity members and their friends to get together on a Sunday morning (11 am to 2 pm) to talk, have coffee and munchies, read the Sunday papers, discuss what is up in the world, the goals of our community, chit-chat, or what-you-please. George Wetzel (2507 Montrose #12, 522-1603) will be hosting in September and John Wehr will host in October. New, current and prospective members are heartily welcome. Do yourself a favor, check it out.

## Choir Practice

Choir meetings have been moved to Wednesday nights at 7:00 at the Center to select music for our litur-

gies and to go over the singing. No special skills are required, only a desire to sing. Just show up and join the fun. On Saturdays the choir meets again at 6:30 to go over the music for that evening's liturgy. Don't hesitate to join us on Saturday either.

## Welcome, New Dignity Members!

Every month from the many visitors we welcome at our liturgies we receive new members into Dignity. Membership in the national organization is only \$40.00 We extend a hearty welcome to the several new members who have recently joined Dignity/Houston, our community! We are most happy to welcome the many women who have joined. In addition to our Saturday night liturgies, you are invited to join us also at a Sunday Times to get to know other of our members in a non-liturgical setting. Dignity members also informally go to dinner in groups to a variety of local restaurants after the Saturday liturgies. The conversation and fellowship is always delightful. Plan to join us at more than just the liturgies.

This newsletter is an organ through which Dignity members can share their news items, thoughts, ideas, experiences, and feelings with each other. Opinions expressed are those of the individual writer and are not to be construed necessarily as those of the editor, Dignity/Houston, Dignity/USA, or of the Catholic Church. Submissions should be kept to less than a column and a half per month per person submitting. Depending on space availability, some articles may be edited.

**Dignity/Houston**  
meets Saturdays at 7:30 pm at  
1307 Yale, Suite H  
Houston, Texas 77008.  
(713) 880-2872

Mailing Address: Box 66821, Houston, TX 77266  
Newsletter Address: 1651 Northwood, Houston, TX 77009

Dignity/Houston is dedicated to the welfare of gay and lesbian Catholics and their friends. Articles published in this newsletter are not necessarily the opinion of the board of Dignity/Houston or the editor. Publication of names and/or organizations in this newsletter should not be construed as indication of sexual orientation. Newsletter items may be mailed to the editor at the address above. Deadline for receiving articles is the 16th of the previous month. Membership: \$40.00 a year.

**Many people fail to recognize opportunity because it's disguised as hard work  
Failure is not defeat until you stop trying.**

1. A BBS is a computer that other computers call to read Bulletins, read/leave Messages, get or send files, and be interactive in Doors. Subscription services (e.g. America On Line) include more.
2. August 15, 1991 Dignity/Houston BBS was up and running 24 hours daily.
3. Bulletins Available  
Dedication of Board, History of Our BBS, DIGNITY USA NET  
Morning Prayers, Daytime Prayers, Night Prayers (Breviary)  
Last 10 Callers, Top Users, Stats Last 30 Days, Graph Users' Calls  
Today In History, Today's Horoscope, Drug Information  
Gay/Lesbian Bibliography, Gay/Lesbian Resources, Our Pool Team  
Door Usage, Month's New Doors, Monthly Contest Door  
Welcome Screens, Our CD-ROM, CD-ROM This Week
4. The Files Area Includes Dignity, AIDS, Bible, Communications, Doors, Food/Health/Diet, Games, GIFs, Humor, Politics, Spitfire, Terminals for some Doors, Utilities, Utilities-PC Magazine, VOC, Windows
5. The Message Area: One for everyone; Second only for Dignity Members. After tonight, I hope you will start leaving Messages.
6. The Doors Area contains 482 programs; 178 are registered! These are mostly games; but there are 2 I composed: AIDS and Gays in Military.
7. I include Bulletin #1, so that you might remind me of someone missed:  
Eddie Abshire, Joe Aquilar  
Allan Benner, Russell Bevelacqua, Andrew Boyd, Glen Branda, David Burchardt  
Tony Cirillo, Rusty Cragg  
Michael Daugherty, David Decker, Lee Dimmit  
Ramon Flores  
Art Gagne, Thomas John Grieve, Jim Grix  
James Haga  
Tom Jarzabek, Steve Jelen, Ken Jensen, Wayne Jones  
Roger Koehnlein, Mike Kolodraz  
John Marth, Steve Mountz, Richie Mullen  
Bill Napoli, Bob Nehiley, Nellie Nesterlegen, Pat Nugent  
Tom Olsen, Randy Ovenden  
Abel Perez, Harold Piwonka, Joe Porro, Dennis Powers, Fr Ron Poythress  
Jim Regan, Steve Rheinecker, Randy Rhulmann, Alex Rodriguez  
Ken Sadler Jr, Hernan Salinas, Bill Salmon, Russell Scarborough,  
John Scott, John Standard, Walt Stovall  
Bay Traweek  
Robert Williams, John Wittington  
Jay Young
8. For awhile, we had Sex Files and Doors; they were eliminated..

9. [ SPITFIRE BBS CALLER STATISTICS ]

Started 10-16-93

Stopped 01-13-94

There were 1301 callers.  
There was an average of 23 callers per day.  
There were 681 files downloaded.  
The average amount of downloads per day was 7.  
There were 23 files uploaded.  
There were 84 comments left.  
There were 19 messages left.  
Bulletins were read 619 times.  
There were 164 new users added.