

Dignity

HOUSTON

July 1994

We Are Many Parts; We Are All One Body

May Perpetual Light Shine Upon Them

We are diminished again by the loss of two of our deeply loved members.

Most recently Cathy Lenahan passed into new life on Saturday, June 26, after a courageous battle with cancer. Her wake was on Friday, July 1 with a Funeral Mass held July 2 at St. Teresa's Church in Memorial Park. Cathy had been such a major supporter of Dignity for so long that it will be hard to imagine Dignity Houston without her guidance and support. Cathy had served as board member or committee chair of various committees and special projects during her entire membership. She was always involved and welcoming to everyone who walked in the door. She was personally responsible for bringing in many many members. We mourn her loss with Carolyn, her partner of many years, whom we also love dearly.

Two days before, during the early hours of Thursday, June 24, Bob Dieker passed through death into new life. Bob had been a more recent member of Dignity but during his time with us he made his presence felt, serving as a very active board member, singing in the choir, and very specifically helping to finish out our Dignity Community Center. Bob could not be uninvolved. He also was very active with Stone Soup and was responsible for our weekly collections of food during mass. Bob also sang with the Houston Gay Men's Chorus. We can imagine him now leading sectionals of the heavenly host. A memorial for Bob is planned for Thursday, July 12 at 7:30 at the Dignity Community Center.

Prayer For Protection

The Light of God surrounds me.

The Love of God enfolds me.

The Power of God protects me.

The Presence of God watches over me

Wherever I am, God is. Amen.

Taking Responsibility

*Kiss today goodbye, the sweetness and the sorrow.
Wish me luck. The same to you.
But I can't regret what I did for love,
What I did for love.*

*Look, my eyes are dry. The gift was ours to borrow.
It's as if we always knew.
And, I won't forget what I did for love,
What I did for love.*

*Gone? Love is never gone.
As we travel on, love's what we'll remember.*

*Kiss today goodbye, and point me toward tomorrow.
We did what we had to do.
Don't forget. Can't regret,
What I did for love.*

*Love is never gone. As we travel on.
Love's what we'll remember.*

*Kiss today goodbye, and point me toward tomorrow.
Point me toward tomorrow.
We did what we had to do.
Don't forget. Can't regret,
What I did for love.*

*"What I Did For Love" from A Chorus Line (1975).
Music by Marvin Hamlisch, lyrics by Edward Kleban*

The simplicity of this lyric can capture the essence of a lifetime of effort, a lifetime of service, a lifetime of struggle, and a lifetime of living, in a bittersweet farewell.

The lyricist points out how survivors need to give thanks for their blessings and thanks for their life and their loves and move on with their lives.

The world is filled with people who hate, fear and despise lesbians, bisexuals and gay people because they hate, fear and despise their own sexuality. They are seriously disturbed that others can and do take pride in

what they are refusing to swallow the prejudice, intimidation and guilt others spread. For many their fear, hatred and envy has even colored their view of God whom they have twisted and fashioned into their own image.

Let them go! Hatred, guilt, bitterness and fear will haunt many of them to their graves. Thank God you can live and love and relate with others without fear, hatred and guilt. Remember the love and forget the rest.

Enjoy! Don't forget, or regret what you did for love. [A *Chorus Line* will be at the Miller Outdoor Theatre in July.]

—George M. Wetzel

"Cafeteria Catholics," Who Are They?

In some circles it is popular to sit around and decry what are called "cafeteria Catholics." As I read the term it describes those Catholics who pick and choose from among the Church's teachings.

And, how did we come to such a state? Let me run a guess.

Once upon a time (as recently as the 50's and 60's in the US) the teachings, beliefs and doctrines were served up as a banquet where all invited, born or converted guests were served the same fare, reinforced by Latin liturgy and theology and fueled by an infallible belief infused with the Baltimore Catechism at the hands of religious nuns and brothers in parochial schools.

As those schools closed or were no longer infused with the spirit of religious orders, fewer details, less discipline, more rational and critical approaches were encouraged among young Catholics.

As some of the core issues surrounding sex and sexuality began to "melt down" in the face of enlightened views on human sexual behavior, divorce birth control, the role of women, abortion and the whole range of sexual behaviors some began to view the standard Catholic banquet as having toxic effects on their lives and the way they related to the world around them. And the church authorities began to squander their credibility with more people in the pews.

As Catholics no longer believed that they had to believe every teaching as absolute and final statements of truth they began to prioritize and select what worked and what did not work in their lives. They let go of the toxic built and shame long associated with every sexual sin and took more honest and human looks at their actions and thoughts as incarnate human beings. And watched patriarchal responses erode the social and justice issues in a true Christian tradition.

As scandal and disgrace fire volleys of criticism at a church unwilling to reexamine or reevaluate the role of women in the church; the true role of human sexuality in the lives of all of us; of responsible human

and joyous child bearing and limitation; the reality of divorce and remarriage; the sexual expression of responsible lesbian and gay relationships, the number of cafeteria Catholics is increasing and, in my view, it will continue to do so long as these issues are not dealt with in rational, honest, open and responsible dialogue and discussion but by a reactionary, dysfunctional and threatened patriarchy.

Welcome to the cafeteria line!

—G.M.W.

Papal Ban On Women's Ordination Stirs Debate

Pope John Paul II has made his final statement on the ordination of women. In a recent pronouncement he slammed the door of speculation and interest in this topic of special interest to Catholic women.

Siding with those in the most conservative interpretation of the Christian scripture, the Pope hopes to close this debate.

Nevertheless, the dilemma remains. How long can the Church continue to face the "priest shortage" while it refuses to allow one half of the population access to the priesthood? How long can the role of women be demeaned in scripture, in the sacramental life and in the administration of the Church? How long can the Church claim not to discriminate and continue to have credibility? How many women hold roles of authority and responsibility in the Church? How many administrators and policy makers are women?

I believe most thinking Catholics already know of many roles women are playing in priest-starved areas of their ministry. Thinking Catholics see the Church as yet again upholding inequality of opportunity, of access, and of options for roles of leadership.

The debate will not likely stop. It will moreover focus on just how the Church will continue to function into the 21st Century with discrimination as its hallmark of priesthood—against women, against married clergy, against gay and bisexual clergy. That debate will continue into the reign of the next pope who will have to face new challenges and opportunities in a Christian realistic and less dysfunctional atmosphere.

—G.M.W.

A Mote in One, A Beam in the Other

Recently a morning radio news story said the Holy Father had instructed his Cardinals to have courage and be willing to admit that the Church has acted shamefully in the past.

When I heard this on the National Public Radio, I stopped my morning preparation ritual and sat incredulously on the edge of my bed. I expected that in some miraculous way, the supreme Pontifex had had a turn of conscience and was willing to act with justice in those areas where the Church had hurt so many. But what a disappointment! Instead the Pope was

referring to the shameless way the Church dealt with Galileo at the end of the 16th Century and the scandalous excesses of the Spanish Inquisition! I was appalled that the Church's Cardinals needed such an admonition. I began to think that maybe there are patriarches of the Church who still can't accept that the earth is not at the center of the universe or that Christian leadership is called on to kill folks who don't believe official teachings.

I was even more scandalized by the thought that John Paul II had recently permitted his bishops to allow girls at the altar (note, he permits them to *exclude* them), but he kept the door sealed on any further explanation of the ministry of women beyond carrying cruets to and from the altar. And now he has to tell his, I hope, living, sentient, intelligent seconds-in-command to have courage to admit the church has made errors in the four hundred years ago!? What about the sinful injustices of today? Is the hierarchy blind? Does the pope deem it *dignus et justus* to wait four hundred year before saying it's ok to admit error? What about the injustices toward women the past 2000 years? What about the condemnation of men and women who have decided to accept God's gift of sexuality openly as a glorious gift to be used responsibly? Should women have to wait a further 600 years? Maybe another 1000? If this is so, will joyful sexuality ever be encouraged? I think I hear Christ crying out in agony again as he sees his what has been done to his simple God-teachings. No wonder so many Catholics are pulling away from the dysfunctional hierarchy.

—Bob Singleton

Games People Play

I often hear serious people saying, "They have been discriminated against so badly that they don't see how they themselves could discriminate against someone else." This thought is often expressed in the lesbian/gay community, but sadly often they do discriminate. But what truth is there in this cliché?

As I look, briefly, at the history of nations, religions, tribes, families, cults, etc., I see lots of discrimination going on all the time. This is the perfect out or scapegoat to explain failings, faults, oppression, ill health, catastrophes and war. Criminal behavior is sanctioned by courts that accept "diminished capacity" for those whose hatred, fear and loathing spills over into murderous rage against gays and lesbians, or Jews and Israelis, or Hindus and Moslems, or tribe A against tribe B depending on where and when and who is doing the judging.

Can we forget the fear, hatred and loathing? Are we civilized? Do we have religious principles and beliefs which address this issue? Do we learn how to take personal responsibility for our actions or do we go on blaming other groups, or religions, or gods or what have you. Do we really want to stop the madness or is

it all a clever game rigged, to be sure, by those who want to escape responsibility while retaining money and power over others?

—G.M.W.

Dignity's Electric Chair

The Dignity Community owes a debt of gratitude to all present and past officers, committee chairs, presiders, and active, supportive members for our successes and at times, even our very existence.

Is it true that lambdan—lesbian, bi, gay, or transgendered—organizations are permeated with a community dynamic different from that in straight organizations? I don't know for certain! Yet I have often heard that we lambdans are overachievers because vile, invidious prejudice denies us the ability or opportunity to express our varied talents. Dignity, on the other hand, should be church, community, family, friend to each of us! Our stated goal is to foster the self-acceptance of all lambdans to provide ourselves with a nurturing environment, and to promote our spiritual growth.

Why then does Dignity have an electric chair? How many of our past liturgists still share the Eucharist with us? Why is the Liturgy Chair a hot seat, wired with 20,000 volts?

Our weekly celebration of the Great Thanksgiving touches each of us deeply. For this reason, our liturgists diligently lead us through the one- and three-year cycles of Holy Mother Church's pilgrimage in the Faith.

There must be a solution to this challenge to realize the Faith as Liturgy—the work of the people for the people. Help us find the way!

—Keith Wright

Shut Up! Keep Quiet!

One sad and nearly universal characteristic of dysfunctional families is massive amounts of denial. A refusal to admit or discuss or explain the nature of the pain and confusion all are suffering.

Those who have experienced this type of denial know they could not talk about their feelings or reactions without serious repercussions. So we did what the vast majority do under such circumstances—we stifle! We shut up! We keep quite! And we contribute, however unwillingly, to the preservation of the Big Lie. Many of us sought addictions to cover up the pain of this denial of an abusive situation.

Sadly, it looks to me like we hare hearing a similar dysfunctional chorus from elements within the Church. Don't think or talk about the inequality of women in the the Church; nor the ordination of women; nor divorce and remarriage of Catholics; nor using birth control to responsibly limit family size and avoid abortion; nor the legitimacy of sexual relationships for lesbians and gay men; nor the hypocrisy of claiming to

"love" lesbians and gays while denying their equal civil rights.

Enough already! If I read the 12 step literature correctly, the only way to break the chain of mental, physical and psychological abuse is to face the denial—our own, our society's, our family's and our Church's. The one thing denial cannot stand is the truth. Mendacity is the touchstone of abusers.

We must continue to tell the honest, gut-wrenching truth about our lives, our loves, our hopes, and our dreams, our feelings and our emotions and create new relationships that are safe and non-abusive, where we are free to cry, be angry, be sad, in love, in lust, be filled with ideals or laugh at our humanness, where it will be safe to tell the truth.

Anything else is an invitation to continue the abuse for yet another generation, a sad state not only for ourselves but also for our families, our society and our Church.

—G.M.W

Retreat!

"Lord, teach us how to pray."

Prayer is an important part of our spiritual life. Prayer has as many temperaments as we men and women do. Prayer can express frustration, joy, sadness, anger, desire, compassion. Prayer can be either private and meditative or communal and vocal.

Prayer is the topic of our upcoming workshop and retreat on Friday, August 12 and Saturday August 13 at the Dignity Community Center. Facilitators will help us rediscover the ancient traditions of prayer in the church, traditions which recognize both motion and stillness, breath and silence, individual and community in fruitful praying. Did you know, for example, that "choir," "chorus," and choreography all come from the same roots: breath and movement?

Please plan to attend our retreat. Do as little or as much as you choose, even just sit back, close your eyes, and be moved to prayer by the music. As always Dignity/Houston activities strive to be inclusive. Participants with decreased mobility are welcome, and our community center is barrier free. Wear comfortable, loose clothes and bring a blanket or pillow and any fabric remnants you might want to use as streamers or drapes. Light meals and refreshments will be provided. The fee for the retreat is \$20 and scholarships are available.

Invite your friends outside of Dignity, men's or women's groups, friends in other parishes or churches, the elderly or infirm, members of the HIV community, or relatives to join us. There will be Evening Prayer with Light Service on Friday, and our regular Sunday Liturgy will conclude the retreat on Saturday evening.

For more information, call Keith at 520-7112.

—Keith Wright

Sunday Evening Mass?

Because we have at times had requests for Sunday evening masses and because we have a new presider who is available and willing to come Sunday early evenings, we will experiment with having a 5:30 pm Sunday Mass at the Dignity Community Center on July 10 and 17 and also August 14 and 21. These will NOT supplant the traditional Saturday evening Masses on those weekends.

Dan Helminiak visits Dignity Houston

During our special pot luck dinner and special liturgy in June, Dan Helminiak, author of *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality*, sold and signed thirty copies of his new book. He had to stop at thirty because that is all he brought with him.

It was a pleasure to have Dan among us. Dan lives in Austin where he has been an important member of the Austin Dignity chapter. We wish Dan great success with his book. We hope that it will make its way into the hands of every person who secretly in their heart wondered how the Bible, a book that teaches that God is Love, could be so hateful toward people like us. This short, imminently readable book should go a long way toward strengthening those who believe in goodness and love rather than damnation and hate.

Jack Tweelings new address in Dallas is 6461 Bordeaux, 75209 (214/904-9349). Also Mike Smith and John Compton are now living in Dallas at 4122 Rawlings, 75219.

Remember the Membership Special!

A special \$25.00 rate for new members is in effect through July 31, 1994, as part of a special campaign by our national officers to expand our membership.

Any new application with "Stonewall 25" written across the form will be processed for \$25.00 as opposed to the recent \$40.00 rate for renewals!

As we here in Dignity/Houston reach out to former members, women, and minorities in an effort to celebrate our 20th Anniversary, this is a perfect opportunity to recommend the reduced membership rate. For some this might be the difference between joining and not joining the oldest lesbian and gay organization in Houston working to ensure the full, honest, compassionate and responsible integration of lesbians, bisexuals and gay men.

Note, this special offer only lasts until the 31st of July. Perhaps you would like to give a gift membership-subscription to a friend or loved one.

—G. M. W.

Dignity Houston is the oldest continuing lesbian, gay and bisexual organization in the city of Houston.

SUNDAY

MONDAY








TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

						1	2 7:00pm Sacrament of Reconciliation. 7:30pm MASS at Dignity Center.  Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.
3 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Dignity Center.	4  Independence Day	5	6 * EARLY DEADLINE * DEADLINE for Calendar Entries in Aug. newsletter (call Center at 880-2872).	7	8	9  7:30pm MASS at Dignity Center. Sacrament of Healing and Anointing during Mass. Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.	10 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Dignity Center.
11	12 Memorial Service for Bob Dieker	13	14	15	16  7:30pm MASS at Dignity Center. General Membership Meeting after Mass. DEADLINE for Articles in the August newsletter.	17 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Dignity Center.	18
19  7:00pm BOARD MEETING at Dignity Center	20	21	22	23  7:30pm MASS at Dignity Center. 4th Sat "Loose Change Collection" for Retreat Fund Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.	24 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Dignity Center.	25	26
27	28	29	30  7:30pm MASS at Dignity Center. Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.	31 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Dignity Center.			

JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 - Ada L.
Jack T.
- 3 - Jose S.
- 5 - David P.
- 9 - Bob Heer
- 19 - Jeannine C.

- 24 - Linda M.
Fr. Matt O'C.
- Berry S.
- 26 - Jean-Louis A.
- Victor L.
- 27 - Nick C.

Pope's Letter on Ordination of Women Criticized

Dignity/USA recently expressed its extreme distress with the recent apostolic letter of Pope John Paul II, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*. According to Marianne Duddy, National President, "This document certainly seems to have been motivated by archly political rather than piously religious concerns. Clearly, the ordination of women represents no threat to the power of God, but it could offer a serious threat to the monopoly on temporal power enjoyed by the current male hierarchy. In ordering an end to all debate on the subject of the ordination of women, the current Pope has established a new standard of authoritarianism. Only an organization afraid of the truth would attempt to stifle discussion among its members. Undoubtedly, this doctrinaire position will drive more Catholics of conscience away from a Church which many already see as dangerously anachronistic.

Stonewall 25 Membership Challenge

Dignity/USA's membership challenge program, STONEWALL 25, continues through July 31.

Each new member who joins by that date will receive a \$10 discount off of the \$35 annual national membership dues!

This program has been made possible by the generosity of several members of the Midwest Region who will underwrite the \$10 for each new member.

Only an organization afraid of the truth would attempt to stifle discussion among its members. Undoubtedly, this doctrinaire position will drive more Catholics of conscience away from a Church which many already see as dangerously anachronistic.

"Both the content and the tone of this pronouncement are very disturbing," continued Marianne. "Through this denial of the possibility of ordaining women, the Pope claims to have a lock on the truth. He is denying one of the fundamental principles of the Gospel -- that the Spirit of God moves as She will, speaking through the powerless and through people who are seen by those in authority as unimportant or tainted in some way."

Marianne noted that Dignity/USA has long been a supporter of the Women's Ordination Conference, and stands in solidarity with all who are working to open the official ministry of the Church. "We believe that women and men, gay and straight, are called to ordination and that through baptism all of us share in

continued on back, 2nd column

New Ways Ministry Investigated by Vatican Commission

During the late spring, a special Commission of the Vatican's Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes began an ongoing investigation of the writings of Fr. Robert Nugent and Sr. Jeannine Gramick, the Co-Founders of New Ways Ministry. In response to this investigation, Marianne Duddy, President of Dignity/USA, issued a strong statement of support for Nugent and Gramick:

Dignity Calls Investigation of Robert Nugent and Jeannine Gramick "Sinful Waste of Time"

"The Commission's establishment and operation seem to be extraordinary and sinful wastes of Church time and resources. Additionally, the Commission's invasive activities are disrupting a ministry that has been incredibly effective in improving relationships between gay, lesbian, and bisexual Catholics and other members of our Church. Surely the work of these two religious is in the best tradition of pastoral service. They bring the light of reason and the warmth of Christian love and piety to an issue which has divided the Church in an extremely painful way. This redundant and punitive investigation can only serve to exacerbate a situation which is already of grave concern to many Catholics of conscience.

"We strongly support the work of New Ways Ministry, its founders and staff, and are grateful for the contributions they have made in the ministry's 17 years of service. New Ways Ministry's encouragement of dialogue and bridge-building is pastorally sound, and has been one of the few wellsprings of hope for many gay, lesbian, and bisexual Catholics, our families, and our friends. Their workshops, publications, and one-on-one support have assisted countless people struggling with issues of sexuality and ethics. We are proud to consider New Ways Ministry a partner in our mission."

News Notes from Across the Country

SAN DIEGO marked its 23rd Anniversary with a dinner and family reunion on June 10... CINCINNATI will serve as the proud host of the first biennial Midwest Regional Convention, *Building Bridges Throughout the Heartland* from August 4-7 in Covington, Kentucky... HOUSTON is hosting ongoing celebrations to mark the chapter's 20th year. Author Daniel Helminiak joined a June dinner party to discuss his recent book *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality* (1994, Alamo Square Press, \$9.95)... Jim and Evelyn Whitehead who many will remember from the 1991 Convention, recently visited the SAN FRANCISCO chapter... The Defenders of BOSTON held their first club night in May; all proceeds went to support Dignity/USA's sponsorship of World AIDS Day 1994. John Currier, club president, reports that guest bartender Marianne Duddy looked stunning in his leather baseball cap... During Pride celebrations in June, PHILADELPHIA members prepared and then sealed a time capsule of letters, photos, and memorabilia for the chapter's 30th Anniversary celebration in 2003... HONOLULU members and friends will enjoy an 18th Anniversary celebration during July.

Ordination of Women

continued from front

the Priesthood of Christ.

"The Pope's attempt to cut off debate is of deep concern," commented Marianne. "This issue is only one of many on which he has taken an unbending position and refused to listen to differing perspectives. Our Church should be fostering dialogue on issues which are of fundamental importance to how people of faith live out their lives. Instead, this Pope seems determined to create a Church in which a tiny group of Stepford wives submissively obey the all-knowing leader. This kind of action discourages the commitment of anyone who dares to question. I am very afraid for our future."

Next Membership Meeting and Board Meeting

The July meeting of the membership of Dignity Houston will be after mass the 16th. This is an opportunity for members to hear about plans from their officers and for the officers to hear ideas and comments from the membership. The monthly board meeting will follow on Tuesday, July 19, at 7:00 pm. at the Dignity Center. Dignity members are welcome to attend board meetings.

Stone Soup

Offerings of groceries may be placed in front of the altar at each Saturday Mass. Feminine hygiene items are very much in need as are toiletries of various kinds. Don't forget to save and keep bringing your old paper grocery bags. They are most desperately needed along with non-perishable food items. Thank you!

Loose Change Collections

During the liturgy of the fourth Saturday of every month, we will be taking up a second 'loose change' collection, earmarked for a Dignity/Houston retreat fund.

New York Sunday Times

The New York Sunday Times is an opportunity for Dignity members and their friends to get together to talk, have coffee and munchies, read the Sunday papers and other publications, discuss what is up in the world, the goals of our community, chit-chat, or what-you-please. Generally we have been meeting at our Dignity Community Center, 1307 Yale, but ask where it will be in July.

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

Membership Report

Every month from the many visitors we welcome at our liturgies we receive new members into Dignity. Our current membership stands at 108 members.

Official dues in Dignity are only \$40.00 which makes the individual a member of Dignity/USA and the local chapter. (However, see the article above about lowered special gay pride dues until July 31!) There are no extra dues for the Houston chapter, but we expect that members will support the chapter in an ongoing way through regular offerings in the liturgical collections.

In addition to our regular Saturday night liturgies, new members 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 fellow-

ship is always delightful. Plan to join us at more than just the liturgies.

Ask And Ye Shall Receive

Dignity/Houston is need of the following items in order of need:

1. recycling bins. (Our center is in a recycling area for the City of Houston and we are to separate our trash before putting it out for collection.)
2. a full size microwave with cart
3. a copier
4. kitchen cabinets

Regional Info

If you will be traveling in our Dignity Mountains/Plains Region, try visiting a sister chapter.

Austin, (512) 467-7908, Box 2666, Austin TX 78768.
 Dallas, (no number), Box 190133, Dallas TX 75219-0133
 Denver, (303) 322-8485, Box 3072, Denver CO 80204-3072
 Ft. Worth, (817) 283-8588, 4503 Bridge St., Ft. Worth TX 76103
 New Mexico, (505) 880-9031, Box 27294, Albuquerque NM 87125
 Oklahoma City, (405) 636-4388, Box 25473, Oklahoma City OK 73125
 Phoenix, (602) 258-2556, Box 21091, Phoenix AZ 85036-0191
 San Antonio, (210) 738-3287, Box 12484, San Antonio TX 78212
 S. Colorado, (719) 635-5773, Box 1172, Colorado Springs CO 80901
 Tulsa, (918) 234-0315, Box 1271, Tulsa OK 74101-1271

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
John W. (93-94*)	Board Member

* filling a vacated term

COMMITTEE CHAIRS & LIAISONS

Kevin Kelly	Membership
Helen Kreller	Liturgy
	St. Stephen's
Phil DeMarco, liaison	Social
George Wetzel	Communications
Helen Kreller	C. for Women's Concerns
Bob Singleton, editor	Newsletter
Phil DeMarco	Buildings & Grounds
Michael Parr, liaison	Fund Raising
Bob Heer	Historian

Dignity Houston BBS

(713) 499-2002 (300-2400 baud) doors
 (713) 499-4828 (300-14.4K baud) everything else
 640 MB of files. Messages. CD-ROM (17 disks). 176
 Registered Doors. 479 Total Doors. Founded August 15, 1991.

This newsletter is a publication 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.

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(713) 880-2872

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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.

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**In Loving Memory Of Our Friends Who Left
This World For A Better Place In 1993-1994**

John Elliott • Bob Dieker • Robert Falletti • Tom
Jarzabek • Alton John • Mike Kaney • Cathy Lenahan
Lee Ruffino • Frank Silver



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Dignity

HOUSTON

August 1994

We Are Many Parts; We Are All One Body

Taking Responsibility

I often find my mind wandering and my judgmental mode kick in when I attend wakes and funerals. Recently, I took the occasion to ask myself what do I really experience at such times and what practical steps can I take to ensure a more positive and unique result?

Wakes and funerals are social occasions for the family and friends of a loved one to gather ritually for a farewell celebration. As we listen to the accomplishments and achievements of our fellow traveler, we learn a good deal more about them and about ourselves.

How do I stack up compared to this person? What will they be saying and doing at my wake or funeral and will anyone pay attention? How do my talents, personality, opportunity, etc., stack up against those of my fellow pilgrim? Will the pomp and circumstances be as fine, or as elaborate or as intricate?

If I stay stuck or mired in such thinking, I usually end up in a funky mood, putting myself down and thinking poorly of myself (and the self pity can get out of hand) as well as thinking poorly of others.

Yet, if I appreciate and acknowledge that path of thought and just look at it carefully, a far more positive outcome occurs.

In my own observation we like, enjoy and appreciate those who have found what they really like to do and then proceed to do it with joy and enthusiasm. It seems to me that it is our responsibility to take more direct control (as opposed to just "going along," or "going with the flow of what people are doing") of what we do, what we focus our energies on and how best we can make a positive contribution to this planet in our lifetime of experience.

Be willing and ready to focus awareness, energy and enthusiasm on those things which challenge, excite, intrigue and mystify you and the infectious spirit generated will be seen in your joy, enthusiasm, pleasure and sense of sharing and empowering.

— George M. Wetzel

What Do You Most Like To Do? What Really Makes You Happy?

For many of us a pop quiz on current events, politics, soap opera, fashion or gossip would be a breeze compared to answering the two questions posed in the title above.

And yet, if we are not acting on what makes us sing and dance and love, who is writing the scenario? Are we acting out someone else's idea of how we should face reality? Are we protecting family, friends, acquaintances from our real self? Do we truly know what we like to do or what makes us happy?

Perhaps it could begin with a list of "happy" things we enjoy. How long has it been since you asked yourself such a question? How honest or how thorough was the answer?

A lot of this has to do with re-acquainting yourself with what you enjoy. For some that is rarely a priority. For some the reflex is to do what "others" expect, require, insist, or demand. For some the very last priority seems to be their own basic requirements.

If you decide that you want to reassess your priorities and truly get in touch with what makes you sing and dance and love, then you might try a quiet meditative space with paper and pen (or keyboard and screen) to write out a list of personally rewarding experiences.

Confusion and frustration may creep in if this is new territory for you to be questioning. Sit with that. It won't overwhelm or swamp you. Just sit quietly and breathe and pray for help.

Take the time, effort and energy to get to know yourself better. Expand your personal awareness. It will pay direct dividends in not only the quantity but the quality of life you are now living and open you to greater opportunities for singing and dancing and loving in your future.

—G.M.W

What's Love Got To Do With It?

In my July comments which incorporated the lyric to "What I did for Love" from *Chorus Line*, I realize that I got a bit carried away and enthusiastic.

Of all the words in the English language I rather suspect "love" is one open to the widest range of meanings. And for good reason. For it is love that we eternally seek from parents, siblings, friends, neighbors, lovers, spouses, religion, government, etc.

And with all that yearning for love (and unconditional acceptance) is it surprising that human nature has tended to stretch, strain and nudge the real truth about love.

In the name of "love" of God, cultures have murdered, pillaged, raped, enslaved, stolen land and other possessions, imprisoned and otherwise degraded "inferior" or "alien," "pagan" cultures.

In the name of love (of the obsessive variety) rape, murder, mutilation, enslavement, lies, deception and dysfunctional behavior have been utilized to acquire what someone really wants.

I have no perfect solution to these trivializations of "love." It has been so for the span of human history (or at least the span of human language). The listener will have to beware of all bearers of love. Consider the source, consider the results and consider the real context.

Using the word more sparingly, selecting more accurate descriptions of what love means, we must challenge the abuse and the abusers to more honest and revealing communications.

Finally, while perhaps a bit obscure, my original intent was to highlight the activities, friends, adventures, commitments, etc., that are motivated by "love" in our lives. And opposing that view are those activities, adventures, friends, or commitments which are motivated by fear, guilt, shame or "conversion zeal." Yes, they are a part of our lives and reality. But alas, they spring from motives which not only debase others but which are debasing for the actors.

Spare us, from those who claim to love gay, lesbian or bisexual people and who haven't a clue to what really makes us live, breath, enjoy life and liberty and pursue those virtues.

—G. M. W.

Retreat!

Prayer is the topic of our upcoming workshop and retreat on Friday, August 12 and Saturday August 13 at the Dignity Community Center. Facilitators will help us rediscover the ancient traditions of prayer in the church, traditions which recognize both motion and stillness, breath and silence, individual and community in fruitful praying.

Prayer is an important part of our spiritual life. Prayer has as many temperaments as we men and women do. Prayer can express frustration, joy, sadness,

anger, desire, compassion. Prayer can be either private and meditative or communal and vocal.

Please plan to attend our retreat. Do as little or as much as you choose, even just sit back, close your eyes, and be moved to prayer by the music. As always Dignity/Houston activities strive to be inclusive. Participants with decreased mobility are welcome, and our community center is barrier free. Wear comfortable, loose clothes and bring a blanket or pillow and any fabric remnants you might want to use as streamers or drapes. Light meals and refreshments will be provided. The fee for the retreat is \$20 and scholarships are available.

Invite your friends outside of Dignity, men's or women's groups, friends in other parishes or churches, the elderly or infirm, members of the HIV community, or relatives to join us. There will be Evening Prayer with Light Service on Friday, and our regular Sunday Liturgy will conclude the retreat on Saturday evening.

For more information, call Keith at 520-7112.

—Keith Wright

Work Party

Our Dignity Community Center is a living place and as such is in need of regular fix-me-ups and spruce-ups. In addition to minor repairs, there is some painting to be finished, touch ups, adding chair railings to keep our walls in better repair, etc.

The work party is scheduled for Sunday, September 11. Please keep that date open to lend a hand in touching-up our center. Although the word "work" may be off-putting for some, we dignitarians usually turn any "work" into a "party." Even if you may not wish to raise a hammer or a paintbrush, please join us to pass out refreshments and provide lively conversation for those who like laboring. To make this a true party, Dignity will provide lunch to the participants.

In order to help pay for the costs of the "do," we will hold special "building completion" collections on the previous two Saturdays, September 3 and 10.

Sunday Evening Mass?

Because we have at times had requests for Sunday evening masses and because we have a new presider who is available and willing to come Sunday early evenings, we are experimenting with having a 5:30 pm Sunday Mass at the Dignity Community Center. The next Sunday Masses at 5:30 pm are August 14 and 21. Please note: these will NOT supplant the traditional Saturday evening Masses on those weekends.

Official Notice of Annual Membership Meeting

Saturday, September 17, at 7:30 pm at Dignity Community Center, 1307 Yale, Dignity Houston will hold its Annual Membership Meeting for the purpose of

electing members to its Board of Trustees and any other business as may properly come before the meeting.

Because this is an even year, we will be electing four two-year positions to the board. Members whose terms expire this September are Michael Parr, Mike Sheahan, Bob Singleton, and John W. (who is finishing Jack Tweeling's term). The three members whose terms expire in 1995, Phil DeMarco, Helen Kreller, and George Wetzel, will continue another year.

Next Membership Meeting and Board Meeting

The July meeting of the membership of Dignity Houston will be after mass August 20. This is an opportunity for members to hear about plans from their officers and for the officers to hear ideas and comments from the membership. There will be a "pre-finance" board meeting on the previous Tuesday, August 16, at 7:00 pm. at the Dignity Center. Dignity members are always welcome to attend board meetings.

Share the Good News!

Gospel means Good News. Christ preached the gospel by telling the good news of God's Reign, and eventually a "Bible" was organized to spread that good news to those who could not get it by word of mouth.

We Dignity members have discovered the Good News that membership in Dignity offers. We have been told, we have heard, and we believe that a loving God embraces us *as we are*, lesbians and gay men, loving others of our own sex, and expressing that love joyously and in union with God's own creative love for us.

But there are so many who have not heard the Good News that we in Dignity speak, who hear only words of division and hate, of guilt and shame. As members of Dignity, and as members of Christ's mystical body, we are called to live our Truth by sharing it with other.

Organizationally, Dignity Houston will be conducting a multi-media advertising campaign between August 15 and September 24 to "proclaim our Gospel" to those who have not hear of Dignity or have not heard the joy it offers. Our ads will appear in a variety of publications, Spanish and English, during that four week period.

You can help spread the news by looking for the ads, pointing them out to others, carrying our Dignity business cards and sharing them with others. This is a chance to help a soul from pain into joy.

Stone Soup

Offerings of groceries may be placed in front of the altar at each Saturday Mass. Feminine hygiene items are very much in need as are toiletries of various kinds. Don't forget to save and keep bringing your old paper grocery bags. They are most desperately needed along with non-perishable food items. Thank you!

Loose Change Collections

During the liturgy of the fourth Saturday of every month, we will be taking up a second "loose change" collection, earmarked for a Dignity/Houston retreat fund.

New York Sunday Times

The New York Sunday Times is an opportunity for Dignity members and their friends to get together to talk, have coffee and munchies, read the Sunday papers and other publications, discuss what is up in the world, the goals of our community, chit-chat, or what-you-please. We have generally been meeting from 11 am to 2 pm at our Dignity Community Center on Yale; however, sometimes members will host the Times at their home. Ask at a Saturday night liturgy where August Times will meet. Please bring breakfast goodies to share.

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

New Members

In addition to our regular Saturday night liturgies, new members 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.

From The Internet

El Paso, TX (June 26, 1994) What some have called "a huge victory for queer equality and inclusion in mainstream media," the El Paso Times, a member of the Gannett Group, has begun including same-sex couples alongside heterosexuals in their wedding announcements. The Times is believed to be one of only a handful of daily papers in the nation to do so.

In a commentary section, the paper's editor said, "The El Paso Times' editorial policy is built on the principle that we are all equal, and we should all enjoy the same privileges. Each day, our staff works diligently to make that happen. As we produce the Times, we strive to be fair and inclusive to people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability, age, or economic standing. On most days we succeed."

Supportive calls and letter to the newspaper are URGENTLY needed to help offset negative reactions to their new non-discrimination policy. It is very important that the paper receive positive comments right away. You may call toll-free (1-800-351-1677) or write Dionicio "Don" Flores, Publisher & Editor, El Paso Times, Box 20, El Paso TX 79999, or fax 915/546-6415.

New Newsletter Address

Please send items for newsletters to the editor's new address: Bob Singleton, 4520 Stanford Ct., Houston, TX 77041-8840. He has been moving slowly from the Northwood address and his computer has now arrived at Stanford Ct.

Ask And Ye Shall Receive

Dignity/Houston is need of the following items in order of need:

1. recycling bins. (Our center is in a recycling area for the City of Houston and we are to separate our trash before putting it out for collection.)
2. a full size microwave with cart
3. a copier
4. kitchen cabinets

Regional Info

If you will be traveling in our Dignity Mountains/Plains Region, consider visiting a sister chapter.

Austin, (512) 467-7908, Box 2666, Austin TX 78768.
 Dallas, (no number), Box 190133, Dallas TX 75219-0133
 Denver, (303) 322-8485, Box 3072, Denver CO 80204-3072
 Ft. Worth, (817) 283-8588, 4503 Bridge St., Ft. Worth TX 76103
 New Mexico, (505) 880-9031, Box 27294, Albuquerque NM 87125
 Oklahoma City, (405) 636-4388, Box 25473, Oklahoma City OK 73125
 Phoenix, (602) 258-2556, Box 21091, Phoenix AZ 85036-0191
 San Antonio, (210) 738-3287, Box 12484, San Antonio TX 78212
 S. Colorado, (719) 635-5773, Box 1172, Colorado Springs CO 80901
 Tulsa, (918) 234-0315, Box 1271, Tulsa OK 74101-1271

Joe Sinico, our Mountains/Plains Regional Co-Coordinator, has announced that the next Regional gathering will be President's Day Weekend, 1995, in Colorado Springs, with the theme of "Religious Oppression." Also, the region is encouraging creative members to develop a logo for the making of a banner for the '95 convention in Los Angeles. If interested, contact Paul Schamburger, 4130 Wycliff #106, Dallas TX 75219.

Congratulations to Dignity-Denver which is celebrating its 20th Anniversary the weekend of September 25. If you are interested in joining them for their festivities, call 303/322-8485.

Dignity Houston BBS

(713) 499-2002 (300-2400 baud) doors

(713) 499-4828 (300-14.4K baud) everything else

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

This newsletter is a publication 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 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
John W. (93-94*)	Board Member

* filling a vacated term

COMMITTEE CHAIRS & LIAISONS

Kevin Kelly	Membership
Helen Kreller	Liturgy
	St. Stephen's
	Social
Phil DeMarco, liaison	Communications
George Wetzel	C. for Women's Concerns
Helen Kreller	Newsletter
Bob Singleton, editor	Buildings & Grounds
Phil DeMarco	Fund Raising
Michael Parr, liaison	Historian
Bob Heer	

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: 4520 Stanford Ct., Houston, TX 77041-8840

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.



ROBERT J. HUGOS
ATTORNEY, CPA

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In Loving Memory Of Our Friends Who Left This World For A Better Place In 1993-1994

John Elliott • Robert Falletti • Tom Jarzabek • Alton
 John • Lee Ruffino • Frank Silver



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Dignity

HOUSTON

September 1994

We Are Many Parts; We Are All One Body

Taking Responsibility

As I read yet another story of a gay man picked up in my neighborhood, robbed and then beaten to death by teenagers, I wonder just where this fear of homosexuality is leading this society.

Powerful forces in our society are committed to promoting fear and loathing toward homosexuals and few are willing or able to speak out about it. At least that is the way it looks to me.

Religion, government and the military unite in their fear and hatred to continue to tell lies and encourage violence against our tribe because they are afraid of us.

Yes, fear drives this vice as surely as it drives most. To those caught in its grip Michael Burzinski was not just a human being, but a human being who was less than human because of his sexual orientation. And as less it is OK to promote fear, distrust, loathing, hatred and most of all ignorance about homosexuality, what it is, what it means, and how it factors into the picture of human development and choice. Fear constantly remind us of the bad things from the Past and projects them into the future. Fear constructs layer upon layer of deceptions to rationalize hatred, envy and ignorance of a class of people.

Look very carefully at this fear and how some are more addicted to its promotion than others. Yes, I believe this fear of homosexuality is as addictive as many other substitutes for what we really want.

Yes, if we look into ourselves, we will find moments, even periods in our lives when we were gripped by this addiction. And, praise God, we were able to gather our strength and overcome the loathing and hatred and get on with living a full, joyous, choice-filled and vibrant existence.

Further, if we look at what is at stake we can see the last stages of decay of a morality based on patriarchal values and constructs. As it fails, the shrill voices will shout more forcefully as their fear/guilt/shame-based morality cracks and breaks to reveal a next stage of human development.

— George M. Wetzel

Stewardship Envelopes

Please continue to use stewardship envelopes so that we can provide you at year's end an accounting of your contributions for tax purposes.

The Pitfalls of Victimhood and the Power of Individual Participation

[Reprint of Nadine Smith's article from the Houston Voice, August 5, 1994. Nadine Smith is executive director of the Human Rights Task Force of Florida and a member of the Democratic National Committee.]

"No Victims, Only Volunteers." I noticed that slogan in a newsletter recently. It caused me to examine how often our efforts are derailed because we are too busy being victims to become volunteers.

A victim mentality is so pervasive in our community that we do the bigot's work. We censor our language, devalue our relationships, construct our own closets and create a host of excuses for not doing the work that has to be done.

We know that we are oppressed. Gay bashing is increasing, children are being taken from lesbian mothers. We are losing our jobs, our families and our lives. Those are the facts. being oppressed is what others have done to us, but being a victim is what we do to ourselves. It is the excuse we use for not taking responsibility for ending the oppression.

The victim mentality damages the work we do in our organizations at every level. We use in-fighting, disagreements in strategy and ego battles among the leadership as an excuse for not getting involved or being ineffective.

I know the victim mentality well. It came up for me when I ran for City Council in Tampa. At first, I searched for every reason not to run. The victim mentality says there is no use running for office because "They" won't let a woman, lesbian, African-American (fill in the blank) succeed.

I lost the election in a runoff and learned one of the most valuable lessons in organizing. A woman I barely knew donated \$5 to my campaign. She apologized at length for having so little. Her friends weren't rich, she said but she promised to ask everyone she knew to

donate what they could. I thanked her and went back to my list of big-dollar donors to tap for support.

Then, envelopes began showing up in my mailbox almost nightly filled with checks for \$5, \$10, or \$15. By the end of the campaign, this woman, who constantly apologized for not being able to do more, had become the largest fund raiser for my campaign. All of the major contributors combined couldn't match what she was bringing in. She inspired others on my team to do the same.

The fact that my money was coming from lots of small contributors and not just the usual moneyed crowd caught the media's attention. Reporters began mentioning me not as a long shot but as a contender, and I ended up with the most votes in the primary. One person, making a contribution that seemed so small, made it possible.

Many of the conversations about the direction of our movement center around the belief that we are lacking the one charismatic leader, our own Martin Luther King, to lead us to the promised land. This again is part of being the victim. Believing that the specialists, the ones with the longest list of credentials will deliver us, means giving up our personal power and believing that we as individuals are not qualified or don't have the skill to make a difference. There are not requirements for standing up for yourself and your community. Rosa Parks didn't need a long list of credentials to spark the bus boycotts in Birmingham, just a pair of tired feet and a great deal of self-respect.

It is not the national, state or local organizations that lead this movement. It is the people who take a stand—whether at Cracker Barrel, Camp Sister Spirit or the U.S. military—who give the organizations an issue to rally around that moves us forward.

You make a difference. Not just you as part of a community, but you as the unique collection of talents, abilities and experiences you bring to this fight for equality. By coming out, you influence the people in your life in a way that no education campaign, march or organization could have done.

If you are the grandson of Barry Goldwater and your openness inspires this arch-conservative to take a pro-gay stand, the effect is obvious. But the ripple effects each of us create are just as powerful even if they can't be so easily measured. This was brought home to me once again recently when a fundamentalist anti-gay relative of mine stepped in to stop a gay man being threatened by a group of teenagers. He called me almost in tears with the realization that it could have been me.

As we gear up yet again to battle the far right, it is imperative that we each understand that our individual participation may mean the difference between success and failure.

Dignity Houston is the oldest continuing lesbian, gay and bisexual organization in the city of Houston.

Prayer Retreat

Dignity Houston held a prayer retreat Friday, August 12 and Saturday August 13 at the Dignity Community Center. Facilitators helped the participants rediscover ancient traditions of prayer which honor both motion and stillness, breath and silence, individual and community in fruitful praying.

The Saturday evening liturgy that followed the retreat featured robes and several types of prayer movements. If you would like to see more of this type of prayer in our liturgies, please contact Keith Wright (520-7112) or a board member to record your interest.

Thank you to the organizers of this retreat, George Wetzell, Jim LeBlanc, Keith Wright and Sister Kitty.

¿ Lee Usted Español?

Dignity Houston quisiera que durante la misa se hicieran las lecturas regularmente in español y en inglés. Pero se necesitan voluntarios para asistir en la preparación de las lecturas in para leerlas durante las misas. Si Usted tiene interés, por favor llame a Keith Wright (520-7112). Este trabajo no requiere que se le dedique mucho tiempo.

Work Party

A work party to spruce up our center is scheduled for Sunday, September 11. Please come to lend a hand in touching-up our social and worship space. We will balance "work" and "party." Even if you may not wish to raise a hammer or a paintbrush, please join us to pass out refreshments and provide lively conversation for those who like laboring. Dignity will provide lunch to the participants.

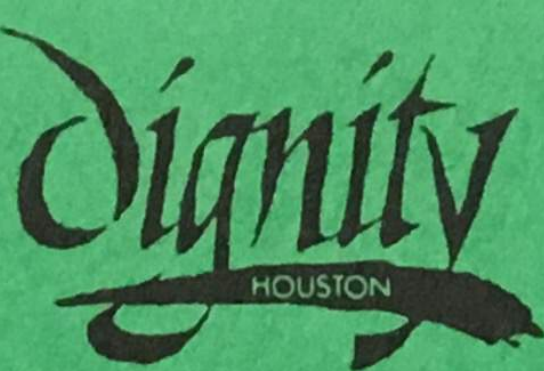
In order to help pay for the costs of the "do," we will hold special "building completion" collections on the previous two Saturdays, September 3 and 10.

Sunday Evening Liturgies

During July and August we experimented with having a 5:30 pm Sunday Mass at the Dignity Community Center. There was a little confusion toward the end of the two month period due to unclear communications, but there is continuing interest in Sunday evening liturgies and prayers on the second and third Sunday of each month at 5:30 pm. If you would liked to assist, please contact Keith Wright (520-7112).

Annual Membership Meeting and Absentee Ballots

Official announcement was made in the last newsletter of the Dignity Houston Annual Membership meeting to be held Saturday, September 17, at 7:30 pm at Dignity Community Center, 1307 Yale, for the purpose of electing members to its Board of Trustees and



1307 Yale, Suite H
P.O. Box 66821
Houston, Texas 77266
(713) 880-2872

E L E C T I O N 1994

ABSENTEE BALLOT

Vote for ONLY FOUR (4) new members of the Board

() Steve R.

() Lynn S.

() John W.

() Joel A.

() Mike C.

() _____

() _____

Placed unsigned ballot in envelop, seal, and sign the outside.
Mail ballot to arrive by Friday, September 16, 1994.

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY



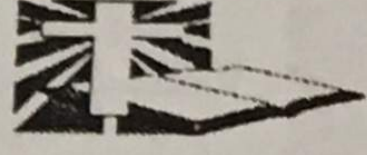
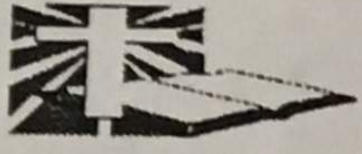


FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

3 - Juan DeL.
5 - Luis O.
6 - John H.
7 - Patrick T.

13 - Michael P.
21 - Pam Y.
24 - Keith W.
26 - Lynn H.

<p>1</p>							<p>2</p>							<p>3</p> <p>7:00pm Sacrament of Reconciliation.  7:30pm MASS at Dignity Center. Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.</p>																																		
<p>4</p> <p>23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Dignity Center.</p>							<p>5</p>  <p>Labor Day</p>							<p>6</p>							<p>7</p>							<p>8</p>							<p>9</p>							<p>10</p>  <p>7:30pm MASS at Dignity Center. Sacrament of Healing and Anointing during Mass. Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.</p>						
<p>11</p> <p>24th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Dignity Center.</p>							<p>12</p>							<p>13</p>							<p>14</p>							<p>15</p>							<p>16</p> <p>DEADLINE for Articles in the October newsletter.</p>							<p>17</p>  <p>7:30pm MASS at Dignity Center. General Membership Meeting after Mass, with Election of Board Members. Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.</p>						
<p>18</p> <p>25th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Dignity Center.</p>							<p>19</p>							<p>20</p>  <p>7:00pm BOARD MEETING at Dignity Center</p>							<p>21</p>							<p>22</p>							<p>23</p> <p>Autumn begins DEADLINE for Calendar Entries in Oct. newsletter (call Center at 880-2872).</p>							<p>24</p>  <p>7:30pm MASS at Dignity Center. 4th Sat "Loose Change Collection" for Retreat Fund. Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.</p>						
<p>25</p> <p>26th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Dignity Center.</p>							<p>26</p>							<p>27</p>							<p>28</p>							<p>29</p>							<p>30</p>													

any other business as may properly come before the meeting.

Because this is an even year, we will be electing four two-year positions to the board. Members whose terms expire this September are Michael Parr, Mike Sheahan, Bob Singleton, and John W. (who is finishing Jack Tweeling's term). The three members whose terms expire in 1995, Phil DeMarco, Helen Kreller, and George Wetzell, will continue another year.

Enclosed with this newsletter are absentee ballots to be used by members in the event they cannot come to the meeting. Mark your absentee ballot, put it in an envelope marked "vote" and write your name on the *outside* of the envelope in order to corroborate membership. Mailed in absentee ballots must be received in our post office box 66821, Houston, TX 77266, by Friday, September 16. Hand carried ballots must be received by the beginning of the election, September 17.

Next Board Meeting

In September the board will meet on Tuesday the 20th at 7:00 pm. Any Dignity member is always welcome to attend board meetings.

Sharing the Good News!

Dignity Houston has started a multi-media advertising campaign between August 15 and September 24 to "proclaim our Gospel" to those who have not heard of Dignity or have not heard the joy it offers. Our ads will appear in a variety of publications, Spanish and English, during that four week period.

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Thanks, Don Flores

Have you yet thanked and encouraged Mr. Dionicio Flores, publisher and editor of the El Paso Times for his courageous decision to include same sex union announcements in his paper? You may call toll-free (1-800-351-1677) or write Dionicio "Don" Flores, Publisher & Editor, El Paso Times, Box 20, El Paso TX 79999, or fax 915/546-6415. Remember, those who despise his decision are making their sentiments known to him.

New Newsletter Editor Address

Please send items for newsletters to the editor's new address: Bob Singleton, 4520 Stanford Ct., Houston, TX 77041-8840. Articles and submissions from the members are always welcome. You may mail news items or put them on the recorder at 937-3310.

Prayer of Protection

The light of God surrounds me. The love of God enfolds me. The power of God protects me. The presence of God watches over me. Wherever I am, God is.

—Amen

Ask And Ye Shall Receive

Dignity/Houston is need of the following items in order of need:

1. recycling bins. (Our center is in a recycling area for the City of Houston and we are to separate our trash before putting it out for collection.)
2. a full size microwave with cart
3. a copier
4. kitchen cabinets

Loose Change Collections

During the liturgy of the fourth Saturday of every month, we will be taking up a second "loose change" collection, earmarked for a Dignity/Houston retreat fund.

Regional Info

If you will be traveling in our Dignity Mountains/Plains Region, consider visiting a sister chapter.

Austin, (512) 467-7908, Box 2666, Austin TX 78768.
 Dallas, (no number), Box 190133, Dallas TX 75219-0133
 Denver, (303) 322-8485, Box 3072, Denver CO 80204-3072
 Ft. Worth, (817) 283-8588, 4503 Bridge St., Ft. Worth TX 76103
 New Mexico, (505) 880-9031, Box 27294, Albuquerque NM 87125
 Oklahoma City, (405) 636-4388, Box 25473, Oklahoma City OK 73125
 Phoenix, (602) 258-2556, Box 21091, Phoenix AZ 85036-0191
 San Antonio, (210) 738-3287, Box 12484, San Antonio TX 78212
 S. Colorado, (719) 635-5773, Box 1172, Colorado Springs CO 80901
 Tulsa, (918) 234-0315, Box 1271, Tulsa OK 74101-1271

Joe Sinico, our Mountains/Plains Regional Co-Coordinator, has announced that the next Regional gathering will be President's Day Weekend, 1995, in Colorado Springs, with the theme of "Religious Oppression." Also, the region is encouraging creative members to develop a logo for the making of a banner for the '95 convention in Los Angeles. If interested, contact Paul Schamburger, 4130 Wycliff #106, Dallas TX 75219.

Congratulations to Dignity-Denver which is celebrating its 20th Anniversary the weekend of September 25. If you are interested in joining them for their festivities, call 303/322-8485.

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
John W. (93-94*)	Board Member

* filling a vacated term

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Helen Kreller	Liturgy
	St. Stephen's
Phil DeMarco, liaison	Social
George Wetzel	Communications
Helen Kreller	C. for Women's Concerns
Bob Singleton, editor	Newsletter
Phil DeMarco	Buildings & Grounds
Michael Parr, liaison	Fund Raising
Bob Heer	Historian

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Dignity

HOUSTON

December 1994

We Are Many Parts; We Are All One Body

Taking Responsibility

Well, the mid-term elections of 1994 are over. A Democratic majority in the House and Senate is now firmly in the hands of the Republican Party and its "Christian Right" camp followers.

Without belaboring the Democrat's problems, I would note that they became unwilling and unable to police the corrupt, venal, and arrogant elements of their party, and they took a very heavy hit for that failure. And, if the Republicans do likewise, they may also live to see their own comeuppance.

It seems to me that the real test will be to watch the tone and temper of the "new majority," and, most definitely, to watch the ever-burning anger, envy and meanness of those Christians who hate minorities, the poor, and those who are different than they are.

Will the new majority be characterized by manipulation, smoke and mirror decision-making, scapegoating minorities to cover their difficult decision-making, or statesman/woman-like concerns for this nation, its people, its problems and its diversity to forge a new, more open, honest and practical alliance for government?

Will the Christian radicals force their agenda on public schools, public funding and all manner of legislation to attempt to drive this tribe back into closets of denial, despair, darkness and depression? Will the mention of anything positive about lesbians and gays be proscribed by new *thought police* who will make "politically correct" seem like a child's game? Will the women of America be denied choice of action and information about abortion because of the fear and loathing so many have cultivated and encouraged about human sexuality? Will the teaching of sex education be reduced to mantras of "just say no" in the face of ignorance about sexuality, sexual preference and sexual responsibility?

Will the Catholic Church be quick to align with the Christian radicals in imposing their views on

abortion and birth control on the public, ignoring the majority of Catholics who already have serious doubt about the Church's teaching?

There will undoubtedly be more to speculate about as the months go by. Stay tuned for developments but don't lose sight of whatever big picture you have of your life. It does go on. We will survive. We will continue to assail the lies, intimidations, deceits and manipulations of those who fear, hate, loath and distrust us and who would be only too happy to see us considered by all as "intrinsically disordered" in the words of the largest, oldest, dysfunctional church in the twentieth century.

As the Advent season unfolds into Christmas, let us remember why people hate, distrust and despise us so much and let us pray and do whatever we can to lessen that reaction. If that is not the Spirits of Christmas—to spread love, light, honesty and responsibility to a frightened, cowering and increasingly polarized world—then we are all on the wrong track.

— George M. Wetzel

A Thanksgiving, Year-end Gift of Life

Although Dignity/Houston, Carolyn Collins and Cathy's family mourned deeply Cathy Lenahan's death earlier this year, Carolyn has gladdened us with the joyous news of the birth of Cathy's first grandchild, Alicia Catherine Browning, born to Cathy's daughter Marcie and her husband Jim on November 18. Congratulations can be sent to the happy couple, Marcie and Jim Browning, at 8209 S. 86th St. #6, LaVista, NE 68128



The Spirit of Advent

"The spirit of Advent" is key to enjoying the richness of this liturgical season. It is key to experiencing the special graces the season offers. In the realities of a commercialized and secularized world where Church and Catholic Christians live, survival that is foundational to an effective openness to grace frequently hinges on "the spirit" of central issues. Today, the celebration of the advent season is such a forum. Normally and naturally, little support from the social context of the world can be expected. This unsupportive environment includes the atmosphere of most institutions where TCCC staff are called to minister.

To come to "The spirit of Advent," definition for "Advent" is helpful. In the liturgical calendar and usage of the Roman Catholic Church, Advent is the pre-season to the celebration of the Mystery of the Incarnation. In feasts' names, this celebration begins with the Vigil of Christmas and concludes with the Epiphany of the Lord. Advent is preparatory to the annual celebration of this mystery of the incarnation made present in the celebration of Christmas thru Epiphany. To this end, Advent is not a "little Lent." Advent is not a preparation to celebrate Christmas, when Christmas is viewed as the principal feast of salvation of the Incarnation. Advent is the focusing of believing and practicing Catholics upon the Light-In-The-East-Who-Is-Christ made manifest in human form more than the celebrated affirmation of sinners who repent.

Several emphases fall out from this focus for Advent. Externally, "Advent purple" has more red to it than does "Lenten purple," which is noticeably bluer in comparison. Attitudinally, the practicing Catholic is humbled by an active and grace-filling sense of already being the benefactor of Christ Incarnate's price-paying death in the Paschal Mystery.

For would-be informed contemporary Catholics, a focused meaning of Advent can begin with the comments in the *Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium)*. "Within the cycle of a year, ... [the Church] unfolds the whole mystery of Christ, ... his incarnation and birth ... so that ... the faithful are enabled to lay hold of ... (these mysteries) ... and become filled with saving grace." [102] In the beginning of the liturgical year, Advent is the first 'season' Catholics encounter as they move to the fresh experience of the mysteries of Christ coupled with the newness of the present. Never before or never after this time can the mystery be so encountered.

The 'rightness' of the serious keeping of Advent by way of "the spirit of Advent" is fostered by the season's origin. Advent arose from the piety of the earlier Christians. The rationale went something like this: If Lent is manifestly preparatory to the keeping and celebration of the Paschal Mystery of the Death and

Resurrection of Christ, how much is the parallel keeping of the time before the celebration of the Incarnation, Birth, and Manifestation of Christ the Redeemed part of the redeemed human pilgrimage. Of course, central to the salvation drama are the actions of the death and resurrection of Christ with their introductory and dispositive activities (e.g., Lent and the Triduum).

The Roman Calendar says most explicitly: "Advent has a twofold character: as a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ's first coming to us is remembered; as a season when the remembrances direct the mind and heart to await Christ's Second Coming at the end of time" [*Calendarium romanum*, 1969, n. 39]. The fourth and third weeks of Advent place a rich focus on the birth of the Lord in Bethlehem including both the announcement to Joseph and the call to prepare the way as called for by John the Baptist. The second and first Sundays call to the broader understanding for the coming of the Lord for which Christians still wait and for which they prepare in patience, prayer, and peace (a wonderful three-P prioritized formula). Prophetic oracles offer vision of the Lord coming both in time (the celebration now) and for eternity (the greeting in the last moments of life). This double perspective guides the celebration of the first and second Sundays and the third and forth Sundays in this season.

The Fathers of the Church present the mystery celebrated in Advent very clearly and very well. Attention to them in the offerings given in the season's Office of Readings (the second reading in a day) has its own special insights.

To pull this together: "The beginning of the liturgical year plunges us immediately into the dynamics of the mystery—the sacrament—of time, set forth season by season throughout the uninterrupted days of the Lord." [*Days of the Lord: The Liturgical Year*, Vol. 1, p. 30.]

—Cycle C: Advent—

To you, my God, I lift my soul, I trust in you; . . .

No one who waits for you is ever put to shame.

First Sunday of Advent - C: To appear before the Son of Man

Second Sunday of Advent - C: God speaks anew (Theme: preparation)

Third Sunday of advent - C: Good news, rejoicing, and song (Theme: baptism)

Fourth Sunday of Advent - C: Fulfillment of the Promises (Theme: anointing)

—Alcuin Greenberg



Some Further Reflections On The Republican Stampede of '94

Most especially in the eyes of the Religious Righteous, gays and lesbians are the most despised group on the face of the earth. This is a position I do not support or encourage but I know that to ignore it will get us into even worse shape.

In spite of all the progress we have made, all the institutions we support, organizations we have started from scratch, in spite of the dedication and hard work we have managed to muster for a wide variety of causes, convictions and companies, we are still the minority it is OK to hate distrust, manipulate and despise.

Hating minorities is nothing new to western civilization. Until this century, women, Jews, blacks, and a variety of ethnic minorities were routinely blamed for all sorts of trouble, be they economic, social, political, etc. And, while not always accepted, it was generally winked at by religions and government.

In this country, mostly following the end of World War II, we have eliminated the *legal* structures behind and reinforcing most of these prejudices. But the ones remaining against lesbians, and gay men are still clung to by people bewildered, confused and disturbed about the world they live in.

And the politicians and Religious Righteous enjoy preying on the ignorance, insecurity, and fear of the mass of people. However, we are not helpless in all this. Yet it may often feel like we have to keep running but seldom get ahead. Two steps forward and one back.

We accommodate, compromise, struggle, labor long and hard and the work of a decade or two is overturned by a surprisingly heavy vote by straight white males. Surprised?

Angry and looking for folks to blame, they bought, hook, line and sinker, the propaganda of the Republicans who painted Democrats in general and Bill Clinton in particular as a diabolical fiend deliberately leading this country to economic, social and moral ruin.

The shoes are now on the other feet. 1995 will bring a lot of new faces to power and prominence in state capitals and Washington, DC. Pay little attention (I know, it will be difficult) to the *words*—but follow carefully the *actions* of these newly benighted representatives of ours.

Stay tuned for further reflections.

—G. M. W.

Catholic Church Confesses Its Sexism!

If I read it correctly, not only the bishops gathered in Washington, D.C., but also the Pope are preparing statements confessing the Church's sexism over the years. An interesting admission for an institution which claims infallibility.

We shall see, fellow church members, whether this is an admission based on P.R. premises, an awareness that generations of women are no longer taking the Church seriously, or a real soul-searching awareness that will take practical and obvious steps not only to put sexism behind it but also address the need to "catch up" for these institutional lapses. Watch carefully at what they do rather than what they *say*. Stay tuned. Perhaps we will be soon reading about the Church's sexophobia as they attempt to grow in awareness and compassion. May this trend increase!

—G. M. W.

Teams

We, as a new board, are committed to working as part of the community. One of our goals is to replace committees with teams. Committees represent hierarchy with someone in charge. Teams reemphasize equal sharing and implementation of ideas. To propel this new direction, we have five teams with a board member designated as a contact person. They are not in charge of the team. The teams are Worship and Hospitality (John Wehr), Membership (Phil De Marco), Education (Joel Avery), Outreach (Steve Ruimveld), Social (J. Victor Lamas). We encourage Dignity members to get involved and make a difference. You determine your level of involvement. Just sign up on the poster as you walk in the entrance or contact any team member. Let's work together for a stronger and better community.

—John Wehr, vice-president

Stewardship Envelopes

Please continue to use stewardship envelopes so that we can provide you at year's end an accounting of your contributions for tax purposes.

Last Chance For Free Membership!

The last day of this month, Dec. 31, will be your last chance to qualify for a free Dignity/Houston membership renewal in 1994. By that date, if you have kept your pledge of \$7.00 per week (\$364.00 per year), you will receive a free membership renewal when your dues are payable in 1995.

If you are not sure what your contributions have been to date, or if you want to make up the deficit to equal at least \$364.00, please check with our treasurer, Steve.

And, in the spirit of Christmas, if you wish to donate your "free" renewal, you may do that also, just ask Steve for details.

Here We Go, A-Caroling . . .

Once again, tune up those vocal folds, dust off your elf caps, and throw you singing cares to the wind. Dignity Houston will again be Christmas-caroling at the Kroger on Montrose from 6-8 pm on Friday, December 16. All donations will be taken to Stone Soup. Even if you think you don't have a voice, we can still use your presence to pass out flyers and pass the hat. Come and have a lot of fun.

1995 Directories Are Ready

Kevin Kelly has prepared the Dignity 1995 directory in time for the holidays. Directories are being sent to members in this newsletter mailing.

A-La-Gag X-Mas Gifts

John and José will be hosting the Annual Dignity Christmas Party at their home, 14226 Manderly Dr. (589-1301) on Sunday, December 11, beginning at 6:00 pm. They will provide the food, you bring drinks. And don't forget to get together your wrapped gag gift for exchanging! Bring your cameras to capture those surprised red-faced looks!

Gay Men's Chorus in December

The Gay Men's Chorus is presenting two Christmas concerts, the first on Dec. 10 at the Wortham Center. Two other groups will perform with them. For tickets call 227-ARTS. The second concert will be held Dec. 16 at the 1894 Grand Opera House in Galveston. The chorus will be the only group performing at this concert. For tickets call 480-1984 or 1-800-821-1894.

Sunday Evening Liturgies

Dignity will continue to celebrate Mass every Sunday afternoon at 5:30 at our Center on Yale presided by Bill T. Attendees report a very prayerful atmosphere that compliments the Saturday Liturgies very well.

Stone Soup

Offerings of groceries may be placed at the altar at each Dignity liturgy. Feminine hygiene items are very much in need as are toiletries of various kinds. Don't forget to save and keep bringing your old paper grocery bags. They are most desperately needed along with non-perishable food items. Thank you!



New York Sunday Times

The New York Sunday Times is an opportunity for Dignity members and their friends to get together to talk, have coffee and munchies, read the Sunday papers and other publications, discuss what is up in the world, the goals of our community, chit-chat, or what-you-please. We gather from 11 am to 2 pm at our Dignity Community Center on Yale. Please bring breakfast goodies to share.

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

New Members, Welcome!

In addition to our regular Saturday night liturgies and Sunday afternoon prayers, new members are invited to join us also at a Sunday Times in the mornings 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. We also have regular social get-togethers. Plan to join us at more than just the liturgies.

Newsletter Submissions

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Dignity Houston is the oldest continuing lesbian, gay and bisexual organization in the city of Houston.

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Necrology

Please remember in your prayers our recent dead: Fr. Dick Allard, Bob Dieker, Nick Escobedo, Rev. Walter Goettsche, Jim Grix, David Hudson, Tom Jarzabek, Steve Jelen, Alton John, Mike Kaney, Cathy Lenahan, Paul Quebodeaux, Lee Ruffino, Hernan Salinas.

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Victor Lamas (94-96)	Secretary
Steve Ruimveld (94-96)	Treasurer
Joel Avery (94-96)	Board Member
Phil DeMarco (93-95)	Board Member
Helen Kreller (93-95)	Board Member

TEAMS & CONTACTS

John Wehr	Worship & Hospitality
Joel Avery	Education
José Solis/John Truax	St. Stephen's
Phil DeMarco	Membership
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CHRISTMAS



IN A MANGER YOU WILL *
FIND AN INFANT WRAPPED
IN SWADDLING CLOTHES *
LK 2:12

Seventh Sunday of Easter—May 15:

Community responsibility

by Father David Meurer

APRIL 29, 1994

Msgr. Wesselsky and I decided to take a spring break and go out to the Davis Mountains in West Texas right after Easter for a few days of prayer and rest. One day we took a side trip down to Presidio, and as we were driving along, my witty friend remarked, "There must be a lot of immoral cattle around here. I keep seeing these signs that say, 'Loose livestock.'"

I don't worry too much about loose livestock, but I do care about the loose living of so many people in our society today. There are many who seem to care only about themselves and show little concern for the needs of others. Their only concern is "to do their own thing," and have little or no concept of community and the common good.

In our Gospel Reading for the Seventh Sunday of



*As you sent me into
the world, so I send
them into the world.*

Easter, which is from the section called "Jesus' High Priestly Prayer," he prays that there be unity in the church. Pope John XXIII, who called the Second Vatican Council, made this the central theme of that council. As he lay dying in the

create.

After the play someone asked me if I didn't think the play was a bit rough on the Catholic Church. My response was, "Not at all, considering the circumstances of New York City, the St. Patrick's Day Parade and the Cardinal openly aligning himself with those who hate, fear and despise all that gay men and lesbians stand for!" By invoking and provoking an angry, vengeful and hate-filled God, I am not surprised that those filled with hatred, fear and ignorance are attracted to that segment of Roman Catholic thought and practice.

middle of the council, on his lips were the words, "*Ut unum sint*" (That they may be one).

We must realize that this sense of unity and community must begin in our parishes. It is easy enough to bewail the disunity in the world, our country or our state, but we must begin in our own parishes to carry out this responsibility of promoting community and fellowship.

At our baptism we were called to carry out our priestly, prophetic and kingly roles. In this column we want to stress the priestly role. In future articles, we will discuss the other two. In the Mass we say, "Pray, brethren, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father." It is not just the ordained priest who offers the Mass but the whole congregation. While it is important that we say private prayers, it is also very important that we join in the public prayers of the church, the liturgy. It is in and through the liturgy that we have one of the best means of building up parish life and community.

One of the important changes in the liturgy at the Vatican Council was the addition of the Sign of Peace. Some mistake this as just a friendly greeting to our fellow parishioners and wonder why it is not at the beginning of Mass. The significance of this ceremony is much deeper than that. It comes right before our union with Christ in the Eucharist to remind us that to be united with the real body of Christ, we must also be united with the mystical body of Christ, the members of the church. That is what our priestly role in the church is all about: to unite us with Christ and with each other so we can form a true community of love.

energy and the universe).

The manuscript is evolutionary in that each of the insights requires that it be personally experienced (as opposed to being read about) in one's life for it to be fully grasped and evaluated.

This might be a fascinating glimpse into what the future of so much obvious, surface and oftentimes jumbled spiritual shifts seem to be even now indicating. Or, it might just be an adventure story written by a man who is creatively searching and researching for some substantial meaning to what he views as occurring in our world today. You, the reader will have to decide.