

Dignity

HOUSTON

January 1995

We Are Many Parts; We Are All One Body

Taking Responsibility

During the recent holiday season there has been the usual talk of the Christian message being one of "peace on earth." One thoughtful day I began to think about what peace really means.

Beginning with the ever-popular, "the absence of war," which is a definition which defines itself by what it is *not*. A great many writers have dwelled at length on the definition of peace but one which I learned as a wee college freshman in the mid-50's was the Augustinian, "the tranquility of all things."

Over the years this later definition shows its age, and its firm rootedness in some etherial world here all things are perfect. I have never actually lived in that world but I have spent a fair amount of time searching for it. Alas, it is not of this world, nor of this planet, nor of this universe as we know it.

If I read the Gospel message at all correctly, the peace of Christ and hopefully of Christians is the peace of rest and re-creation and the lack of judgment in our human, secular and truly incarnational lives. In so far as that message (and it is not possible to mention peace without love in this Christian context) is spread by Christians, then they are true followers and believers.

In so far as the message is one of distrust, division, judgment, separation and alienation, then I for one, consider it from quite another source.

Christianity was had to face a great many wars to test and expand its views of peace. With a bit of luck it will learn from the century which gave birth to the greatest wars on the planet's face, and the greatest war crimes and misdemeanors.

Will we continue to cultivate and encourage, or simply ignore, entrenched racial, national, secular or religious forms of discrimination or will we move to root them out, let them go and disarm them for the poisonous, hate-filled, envy and prejudice that they are?

While it may be the Church's job to lead the way, it is our own job to root out, eliminate and let go of those elements in our own lives that demean, dishonor and disempower others and which only serve to inflate our own egos and world view.

If we are to expect acceptance, acknowledgment and respect for our own lives, we must be prepared to do likewise. Or, we will be like the Pharisees who knew only the letter and meaning of the law, not how to live it.

As you look back on 1994 and forward to 1995, remember to look for positive, forward growth in striving for peace within yourselves and on this planet of incarnates.

— George M. Wetzel

A Second Kristall Nacht?

In last month's newsletter I noted George Wetzel's "Taking Responsibility" article with interest. In the article he discusses with conviction and flair his perception of what the mid-term elections of 1994 meant to America in general and specifically to our segment of the American tapestry.

To me as an American, a veteran, a father and a gay middle aged male, November 8, 1994 was a Kristall Nacht (Crystal Night), when on the cold dark night of November 9, 1938, a segment of the German society smashed the windows of Jewish owned businesses and homes. That night was a "wake-up call" to the European and Jewish communities, and it was the beginning of the Holocaust. Unfortunately in 1938 the call went largely unheeded by the majority; history records the consequences.

November 8, 1994 is a clear call to action for all disadvantaged minorities whether religious, cultural, socioeconomic, racial, physically/mentally challenged, lesbian, gay or bisexual.

We must not accept the term "new majority" that Wetzel's article uses. These are in fact the same people that brought about the crusades, inquisition, segregation, the red scare and Kent State. They are not the majority. They represent at best a vocal and self empowered radical fringe.

While a true minority, they are empowered because they are self actualized and motivated. They have developed a political platform and agenda for America that affirms their perspective of what America should be. This so-called majority has marketed its platform at

the local, state and national level. They have been very effective in both stealth and open campaigns, registering and delivering voters to the polls in disproportionately large numbers. Their campaigns are financed by obscene "war chests."

Those who vote rule democratic society—this is the foundation upon which our founding fathers built this imperfect nation. How then do we as lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals respond to our disenfranchised status? We allow political organizations such as the GLPC whose small current membership represents only a tiny fraction of our community to represent themselves as the political voice of our entire community.

For example: this organization, rife with publically displayed internal dissention and discord on the local level has made past mistakes of endorsing candidates with questionable backgrounds. Such were the problems that eventually several other endorsed candidates first accepted and then quickly refuted the GLPC's endorsements.

Because we do not get involved and permit small groups to make decisions for us, we must accept some of the responsibility. We as a community must become actively involved in our political organization like the GLPC. We must demand accountability for endorsements, networking and coalition development. If we fail to exercise our rights effectively, then yes, the "thought police" George speaks of in his article will dictate the tomorrows we have left. We may not be "intrinsically disordered" but I fear we could be accused of being "intrinsically disorganized."

It is time to wake up and hear the breaking glass, the time for whining and political pacificity is over. We must become involved in and committed to every aspect of the political process. We must support organizations like the GLPC and we must demand accountability from its leadership. We must develop our networking skills and stop thinking in one-dimensional political terms, but we must rather think in terms of building a multidimensional coalitions. We must register, and we must vote. We must cast informed ballots not mindless block votes. If we do not, we may quickly find ourselves walking through the broken glass of our individual freedoms on the way to tomorrow's Dachau.

Remember, the non-"religious right" is in fact the majority. We and only we can prevent a moral Holocaust. Get involved. Do not let the lessons of Kristall Nacht go unlearned any longer.

—Michael Parr

Lynn Schwartzburg Board Member

Following the resignation of Helen Kreller from the Dignity Houston board due to new and exciting job possibilities for her in Austin, the Board of Directors unanimously voted to name Lynn Schwartzburg to finish out Helen's term through next September. Taking over from Helen immediately, Lynn says she hopes "to

hit the ground running." Do wish the best of luck and good fortune to both of them.

—G.M.W.

John Boswell Dies

John Boswell, well-known Yale historian and researcher who discovered and published medieval church rites that honored same-sex unions, died the day before Christmas at the Yale infirmary. Scouring collections of medieval manuscripts in Europe, he turned up more than 60 texts, dating from the Eighth to the 16th Centuries, of Christian ceremonies which Boswell refers to as "same-sex unions." He published his findings in his book *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe* earlier this year. His death is a major loss to our community. Space permitting, his *New York Times* obituary is enclosed in this newsletter.

Do They Deserve My Money?

Many of us are asked to respond to solicitations for money from a wide variety of organizations, charities and assorted worthy causes. Perhaps, in 1995 it is time to begin to ask, "Does this organization permit discrimination against lesbians and gay men?" If they respond with an easy, "Of course not," then request a copy of their non-discrimination policy and read it carefully.

Don't be fooled by, "Well, we comply with all the laws and regulations of Texas." For, truth be told, because of 21.06, it is perfectly legal to discriminate against us in housing, employment, etc. under the sanction of our Texas Constitution. Those who wish to retain 21.06 know full well the consequences of such blatant discrimination on our tribe. It continues to be a club to intimidate, coerce, manipulate and deceive us.

While this should not be the only criterion to use for charitable solicitations in my view, it is time to stop supporting those who hate, revile, discriminate and manipulate us with our own money. Homophobia is hate filled and ugly in any form.

—G.M.W.

Make Dignity/Houston a Beneficiary!

As you write out the details of your last will and testament, or as you revise a preexisting will, I would ask you to consider a donation to Dignity/Houston.

We are a 501.C.3 charitable organization recognized as such by the state of Texas and the federal IRS for tax-exempt contributions.

As the only organization in Houston with the specific goal and purpose of supporting lesbian and gay Catholics, we deserve to be remembered by those who will be including charities in their last wishes.

There are a great many organizations and groups out there doing good and beneficial things for all kinds of people in all kinds of ways. Dignity/Houston, in my

John E. Boswell, 47, Historian Of Medieval Gay Culture, Dies

By DAVID W. DUNLAP

John Eastburn Boswell, a Yale University historian who upended medieval scholarship by finding not only that homosexuality was tolerated in the Middle Ages but that same-sex unions were celebrated liturgically, died yesterday in the Yale infirmary. He was 47 and lived in New Haven.

The cause was complications from AIDS, a friend, Jerry Hart, said.

"I regard him as one of the major innovative figures in gay and lesbian scholarship," said Martin Duberman, founder and executive director of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at the City University of New York. "John was very brave and pioneering. And very brilliant."

He was also controversial. Some scholars and theologians disputed his findings, which gained wide notice in 1980 with the publication of "Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe From the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century" (University of Chicago

Press).

"I would not hesitate to call his book revolutionary," Paul Robinson, a Stanford University historian, wrote in The New York Times Book Review, "for it tells of things heretofore unimagined and sets a standard of excellence that one would have thought impossible in the treatment of an issue so large, uncharted and vexed." It won the American Book Award for history in 1981.

One major aim of his work, Dr. Boswell wrote, was "to rebut the common idea that religious belief — Christian or other — has been the cause of intolerance in regard to gay people."

Among his findings was that there had been, from about 1050 to 1150, "an efflorescence of gay subculture, with a highly developed literature, its own argot and artistic conventions, its own low life, its elaborate responses to critics."

Last June, Dr. Boswell again captured attention — and provoked much debate — with "Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe" (Villard Books), based on the study of more than 60 manuscripts from the 8th to the 16th century.

By the 12th century, Dr. Boswell wrote, the ceremony of same-sex union had become a "full office" which involved burning candles, placing the parties' hands on the Gospel, binding their hands or covering their heads with the priest's stole, saying the Lord's Prayer, receiving communion, kissing and sometimes circling the altar.

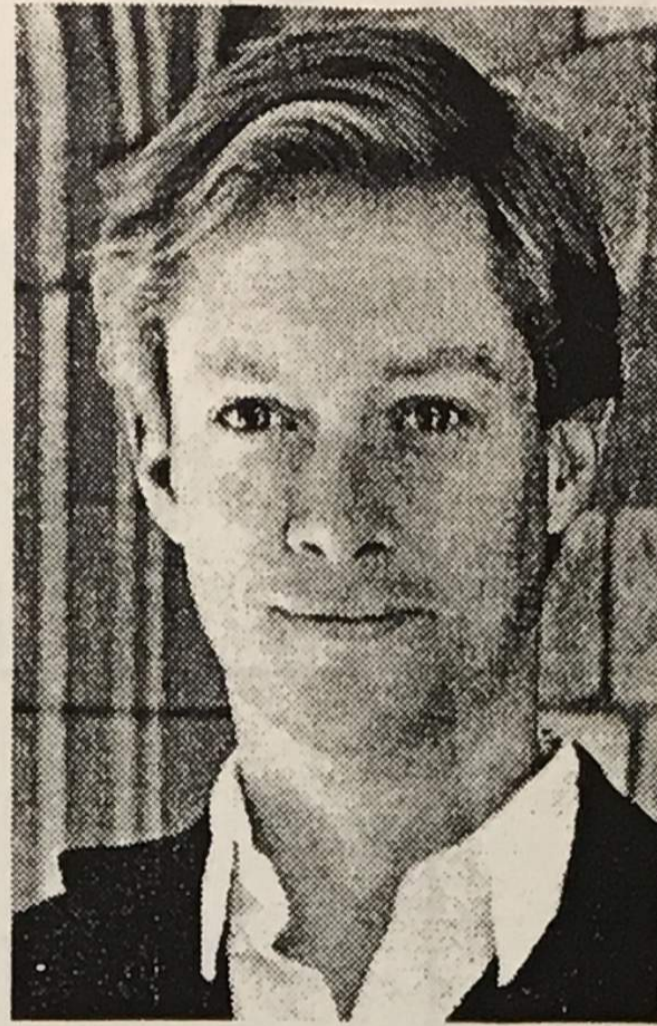
As to whether the ceremony celebrated a "relationship between two men or two women that was (or became) sexual," Dr. Boswell wrote, "Probably, sometimes, but this is obviously a difficult question to answer about the past, since participants cannot be interrogated."

He was far more confident in declaring that the ceremony was "unmistakably a voluntary, emotional union of two persons," one that was "closely related" to heterosexual marriage, "no matter how much some readers may be discomforted by this."

James Brundage, a professor of history and law at the University of Kansas, said in an interview last summer that "the mainstream reaction was that he raised some interesting questions, but hadn't proved his case."

And Brent D. Shaw, of the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, argued in The New Republic that the ceremonies Dr. Boswell described were more akin to the "ritualized agreements struck between members of the Mafia or other 'men of honor' in our own society."

Scholars were not the only ones wrestling with this matter. At least



Jerry Bauer

John Eastburn Boswell

two newspapers withheld the comic strip "Doodlesbury," by Garry Trudeau, in which the character Mark Slackmeyer described the "gay marriages" uncovered by Dr. Boswell: "They were just like heterosexual ceremonies, except that straight weddings, being about property, were usually held outdoors. Gay rites, being about love, were held inside the church!"

Dr. Boswell's other major work was "The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe From Late Antiquity to the Renaissance" (Pantheon Books), published in 1989.

"Marred though it may be by interpretive excesses, this is a pioneering work of large importance," Mary Martin McLaughlin, a historian, wrote in The New York Times Book Review. She added that it was "the first to map out and explore a tangled, mysterious region of human experience."

Dr. Boswell was born in Boston. He attended the College of William and Mary and Harvard University, from which he received his master's degree and doctorate. Among the 17 languages he read or spoke, Dr. Boswell counted Church Slavonic, Old Icelandic and some classical Armenian, Syriac and Persian.

He joined the Yale faculty in 1975 as an assistant professor, was appointed a full professor in 1982 and named the A. Whitney Griswold Professor of History in 1990, when he began a two-year term as chairman of the history department.

In 1987, Dr. Boswell helped organize the Lesbian and Gay Studies Center at Yale, which is now the Research Fund for Lesbian and Gay Studies.

He is survived by his parents, Col. Henry Boswell Jr. and Catharine, of Grand Junction, Colo.; a sister, Patricia, of Greensboro, N.C. and two brothers, Wray, of Virginia Beach, Va., and Henry 3d, of Chapel Hill, N.C.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 New Year's Day Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (Holyday of Obligation) 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Center. 5:30pm LITURGY SERVICE at Dignity Center.	2	3	4	5	6 Epiphany (Traditional)	7 7:00pm Sacrament of Reconciliation. 7:30pm MASS at Dignity Center. Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.
8 Epiphany of the Lord 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Center. 5:30pm LITURGY SERVICE at Dignity Center.	9 Baptism of the Lord	10 7:00pm BOARD MEETING at Dignity Center	11	12	13	14 7:30pm MASS at Dignity Center. Sacrament of Healing and Anointing during Mass. General Membership Meeting after Mass. Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.
15 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Center. 5:30pm LITURGY SERVICE at Dignity Center.	16 Martin Luther King, Jr. DEADLINE for Articles in the February newsletter.	17	18	19 6:30pm Worship and Hospitality Team Meeting	20	21 7:30pm MASS at Dignity Center. Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.
22 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Center. 5:30pm LITURGY SERVICE at Dignity Center.	23 DEADLINE for Calendar Entries in Feb. newsletter (call the Center).	24	25	26 6:30pm Priests, Board, and Worship Team Meeting	27	28 7:30pm MASS at Dignity Center. 4th Sat "Loose Change Collection" for Retreat Fund. Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.
29 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Center. 5:30pm LITURGY SERVICE at Dignity Center.	30	31	JANUARY BIRTHDAYS ----- 11 - Ed G. 17 - Marlon B. 23 - Kevin K. 24 - Rhonda S. 27 - Jeff B.			

Peace of the Season

To All Members of the Dignity Family,

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! May the joy and wonder of the holiday season be with you and your loved ones!

As we prepare for the celebration of our Christ's birth and the hope brought forth in the new year, we pause from the season's frantic pace to reflect on the special joy that comes from being together as communities of faith during this special time of the year.

The support from our Dignity brothers and sisters enables us to enjoy this season in the warmth and fellowship of a community of love. We offer to one another the spirit of church and the celebration of Christ's message of hope and light. We recognize the inherent value of each person and call all persons into our community.

The Officers, National Directors, staff, and committee persons wish all members and supporters of Dignity a joyous holiday season and the very best during the New Year.

May peace fill our hearts and reside within us forever.

Officers, Board Look Forward to Meeting

The Board of Directors is set to gather in Washington, DC over the Martin Luther King weekend in mid-January. National President Marianne Duddy is excited about the scope of the agenda items to be considered because many are vital to the 1995 Los Angeles Convention, now just six months away.

Convention Plans

Three major items on the agenda concern the Convention. First, the Officers and Board will focus on a time-line for the coming months and finalize decisions about schedules and workshop topics. Time will also be allotted to reviewing sites for the 1997 Convention in Boston. The second area of focus during the weekend's discussions will be the Board's preparation process for the House of Delegates (HOD) meeting in Los Angeles. Marianne is looking forward to discussions on how the different chapters and regions will be preparing for the HOD meeting. Time will also be spent on leadership training plans, as directed by the Structure Task Force, so that the current crop of Dignity leaders will be able to both lay groundwork and provide development opportunities for the upcoming generation of Dignity leaders.

Motion Process Revised

A third area of discussion in anticipation of the Convention will be centered upon the new process of HOD motions. Marianne
continued on back page

Board Meeting

continued from front page

says this new process, part of the ongoing restructuring process, was created to insure ample time for all members to consider the important issues and substantive motions that will be discussed. She hopes that through dialogue with delegates and chapter leaders before the HOD on specific issues, members' voices will become an important aspect of the future of Dignity. Marianne says the Officers and Directors will also look at topics related to the Statement of Position and Purpose, ordination and presider issues, and moving beyond the current definition of memberships.

Motion Submission Packet

To begin the new HOD motion process, Dennis Finnegan, on behalf of all the Regional Coordinators, sent delegates and chapter leaders a "Motion Submission Packet" in mid-November. In the letter accompanying the packet, Dennis outlined the three goals of the new motion process: 1) to increase chapter level involvement and awareness of the issues; 2) to better inform delegates of the issues to be discussed; and 3) to enhance the consensus decision making process which was adopted in New Orleans in 1993.

Key dates were also outlined in the packet: *First draft motions* are due to Dennis by January 4; copies of first draft motions will be mailed to all Directors, Coordinators, and Delegates during the week of January 23. *Final motions* must then be sent to Dennis by March 23 so that copies of the final motions can be mailed during the week of April 23 to all Directors and Coordinators and be included in Delegate packets.

Publications Plan

In addition to the 1995 Convention, the Board is also set to examine and address the tasks and responsibilities of Board members as well as Membership Services and the role of Dignity "supporters" and friends. The final area to be addressed will be a publications plan which will encompass outreach to members, non-members, and other supportive organizations and groups. Marianne looks

Convention Corner

1995 Los Angeles Convention
June 28 to July 2, 1995

•CONVENTION INFORMATION PACKETS
will be mailed to each chapter in January.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

23 - Chicago
18 - Brooklyn

National Secretary Ben Boerkoel reminds chapter leaders to send him information about anniversary dates—especially if your chapter isn't listed here!

Mountain-Plains Weekend Planned

The Mountain-Plains Region invites Dignity members and friends to its regional gathering and meeting from February 17 through 20, 1995 in Colorado. According to Sue Kansteiner, co-chair of the weekend, the theme "Reaching In: Reaching Out: Breaking the Ties of Religious Oppression" will be addressed during sessions by several speakers, panel discussions, and a variety of workshops. A central focus will be on women's issues and issues of other special interest groups—such as the Defenders—as related to oppression. Camp Laforet is a rustic campsite located outside of Colorado Springs. For a brochure describing the weekend, call Sue directly at (303) 782-9458.

forward to the development of a multi-faceted plan that will include the monthly *Dateline*, the *Journal*, the Defenders' newsletter, and *Voices and Visions*, the newsletter of the Committee for Women's Concerns.

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.

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

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, Herman Salinas.

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)

George Wetzel (93-95)	President
John Wehr (94-96)	Vice President
Victor Lamas (94-96)	Secretary
Steve Ruimveld (94-96)	Treasurer
Joel Avery (94-96)	Board Member
Phil DeMarco (93-95)	Board Member
Lynn Schwartzenburger (til 95)	Board Member

TEAMS & CONTACTS

John Wehr	Worship & Hospitality
Joel Avery	Education
José Solis/John Truax	St. Stephen's
Phil DeMarco	Membership
J. Victor Lamas	Social
Steve Ruimveld	Outreach
	C. for Women's Concerns
Bob Singleton, editor	Newsletter
Phil DeMarco	Buildings & Grounds
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.

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
 Newsletter Phone: 937-3310

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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Dignity

HOUSTON

February 1995

We Are Many Parts; We Are All One Body

Taking Responsibility

We have just recently begun a new liturgical year, a new calendar year and are embarking on a new year of state and national politics.

As I look back over the past several months and ahead toward the rest of this new year, I see some exciting times ahead. The Chinese, I believe, would call these times "interesting," and consider that a curse. I prefer exciting to describe new and evolving ways of doing things, seeing things and responding to changed circumstances.

Here at Dignity Houston we are growing and learning how to more actively involve ourselves in our own religious community. By means of the "team" system we are doing what we can to cultivate, encourage, foster and expand involvement in social, liturgical and educational decision-making.

This is not a painless process. Attitudes, patterns and habits may have to change or be modified. Some have grown used to leaving decision making to "others" so they can more grandly criticize their every misstep, or loudly proclaim how it would be so much better if it was done "their" way. Or they may enjoy just coasting along and not actively supporting the organization except to show up occasionally to run it and its leaders into the ground.

Some people will, apparently, never be happy with their life or the world around them. I can only feel sadness and sorrow for their plight. Yet, for those who are willing to engage themselves in the process of making this organization work and be a model, an active, involved, membership is essential.

Sure, it seems the officers are constantly talking about money! That's right! It is our duty and responsibility to look out for the income so as to be fiscally responsible. And, it is our responsibility to point out that there are lots of ways to support this organization if money is not an option for you.

Volunteering is rarely painless, but it is a way to grow in experience, knowledge and contact with your fellow Dignity members. Take another look at the new team listing in the foyer. Are there other ways you could share in contributing to build this Dignity Houston?

— George M. Wetzel

P.S. I will be off in mid-February to the Regional Conference "Reaching In, Reaching Out: Breaking the

Ties of Religious Oppression." Do pray for our successful encounter.

Vatican Fires Bishop!

In a surprise move the Vatican in mid January 1995 removed from office Bishop Jacques Gaillot without a hearing or consultation with fellow French Bishops.

Gaillot was Bishop of Evreux in Normandie. Many church officials in France were shocked and indignant and protest marches appeared in Paris.

And who was this Bishop removed by an increasingly authoritarian Vatican as it continues to erode its thinning credibility? He is 59 and was installed as bishop in 1982. But, he showed an independent streak that gave some pause. He defended homosexuals, urged a married priesthood, and spoke up for the unemployed and homeless of France. He advocated a strong AIDS ministry, publicly supported a law to recognize same-sex unions and once recited a prayer of welcome for a gay couple, he also counselled the use of condoms to prevent the spread of AIDS.

Fortunately, Gaillot will not go quietly. He has promised to continue to speak out and to be even more vigorous in his criticism of Vatican totalitarianism. After being forced out, Gaillot wrote a letter to be read in his diocese that said:

The important thing is to follow Christ, to welcome his world, to continue to be the Church, to proclaim the Good News of salvation to everyone.

[Details gleaned from NCR (Jan 27, 1995)]

—G.M.W.

Here's Lynn!!

Happy New Year! I am writing to introduce myself as the newest board member. My name is Lynn Schwartzenburg. Mostly, I want to learn about you and how Dignity can meet more of your social and spiritual needs.

The board members have noticed and are concerned that most womyn are not attending the liturgy and social functions regularly. We are curious about attendance among the womyn. We feel that if we could change or enhance things about Dignity that more womyn will attend and womyn attending for the first time will feel comfortable because there will be so many womyn attending Dignity.

I am interested in making Dignity more fulfilling for the womyn of the community. I need your help. I need your help with ideas, energy and trying out the ideas. What are the special needs of womyn that aren't being met by Dignity at the present time?

Please call me. I will contact you for your ideas and to invite you and the other womyn of Dignity to get together for coffee and to chat. My phone number is 861-6121.

In Spirit,

—Lynn Schwartzenburg, Board Member Dignity
Houston

John McNeil to Visit Texas

John McNeil whose latest book, *Freedom, Glorious Freedom: The Spiritual Journey to the Fullness of Life for Gays, Lesbians and Everybody Else!* will be visiting Texas in June. His book is out this month.

John made arrangements to visit Texas in June through the good graces of MCC Dallas where he will be on Saturday June 3. That evening he will fly to Houston and be a featured guest at the 10:30am service at MCCR. On Monday June 5 he will be traveling to Austin.

We will be joining with MCCR for a special Sunday afternoon presentation and book signing. Stay tuned for further announcements.

—G.M.W.

Romance, Love & Relationship

Join Dignity Houston for a special evening on February 11 with Miles D. Glaspy, LMSW-ACP, psychotherapist who will speak on the topic: Valentine Celebration: Romance, Love & Relationship. He will speak from 6 to 7 pm with mass following at 7:30 to celebrate our special relationships and loving friendships.

Some Reflections About Liturgy in Dignity Houston

The following are some notes that I want to share with Dignity. These are notes I took at the 30th Southwest Liturgical Study Week/Conference recently held in Austin and as such may well have the biases of my hearing what the presenters set out. Your comments are welcome.

Nick Wagner shared from *Principles of Liturgical Adaptation* (1) liturgy is above all the worship of other divine Majesty, (2) sacred scripture is of paramount importance in the celebration of the liturgy, (3) full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy is demanded by the very nature of liturgy. Also, creative liturgy is doing the usual, unusually well.

Fr. Tim Fitzgerald from De Moines, Iowa, shared three essential attitudes for liturgical ministers, one, a spirit of transparency or humility, two, a spirit of service, and three, a spirit of unity and solidarity. Liturgical Services are not private functions but involve the presence and active participation of the faithful, which is to be preferred to a celebration that is individual and quasi-private.

In his keynote address, Fr. Murray outlined eight aspects of today's American culture as they impact on liturgy. 1. A culture of individualism (the individual is

primary vs. related to the common good of the group.) 2. A culture of instant intimacy (every relational encounter demands immediate intimacy to be real: no foreplay, no getting acquainted, no flirting.) 3. A culture of celebrity (I am the greatest, in total neglect or denial of others.) 4. A culture of complaint (poor me; pity supreme; ever and always suffering real or imaginary hurts: this does not relate to compassion.) 5. A culture of victims (no more breaks of life; victimhood is the only rationale for stressing, hurting, painful experiences in life.) 6. A culture characterized by compassion fatigue ("isn't it awful" and "how much I hurt with you" as a universal reaction all the time to every occurrence that is not a "high.") 7. A culture of violence (conversation and dialogue are wastes: aggressive action to gain my good now is normative.) 8. A culture characterized by sensory deprivation, passivity, sterility, fear of the body (the lack of hands-on experience with its dialogue and mutual give-and-take results in unused, stone-like flabby human sensory mechanisms.)

According to Fr. Murray these result in a xenophobic culture unable to resolve conflict without resorting to psychological, physical, economic or moral violence and a culture that pumps itself up at the gym but is afraid to risk contact with others, a culture of mutually suspicious and fearful strangers.

Where is the practical in this for Dignity? Dignity as church, as group, is an American social group with all the components, aspects, complexities of any American social group. Dignity members are a part of the American cultural scene. To relate to Church as a universal group to worship is helped by recognizing that (a) what may get in the way of relating to others who are also Catholic and worshiping with the same Eucharist, same Lord and (b) what negative stuff exists to be faced and moved through thoughtfully, effectively, and prayerfully.

—Alcuin Greenberg

[next month from Alcuin, A Map for Lent 1995]

Let's Talk Finance

At the January general meeting, several questions were raised about the 1995 budget and how confusing the monthly reports can be. Unfortunately, personal obligations had me out of town that weekend and so I would like to take some time to address these issues. Because of limited space in the newsletter I will address these issues in the next few newsletters in a series called "Let's Talk Finance."

First, I would like to start with the 1995 budget. Now I won't do a line by line summary, but I will try to address the most unnerving problem, the budgeted 1995 offertory income. You will notice that the 1995 budget has offertory income at \$32,911. But you will see in 1994 we received only \$19,821. That is an increase of \$13,120 or about 67%! This is an outrageous expectation. Now let me try to explain the logic here.

The \$32,911 was chosen because that totals our budgeted 1995 expenses. So how did our expenses get so high, especially since we only spent \$24,708 in 1994? This whole issue revolves around an account entitled Bank Savings. You will notice that in 1994 we budgeted

\$12,420 for this account (and paid nothing) and in 1995 we have budgeted \$7,900.

Now you may wonder "What is the account Building Savings?" This account represents a commitment by the membership of Dignity to pay back our savings account for the move from our previous address on Commonwealth Street. When Dignity moved from Commonwealth, several expenses were incurred and it was necessary to take \$12,420 from savings. However, when this was done, a vote was taken by the membership to approve this action. Though the action was approved, there was a stipulation by the membership to pay back this amount to savings. So each of us today as members of Dignity has an obligation to pay back this amount to savings and that is why it is in the budget.

Now you may be questioning why the \$12,420 was reduced to \$7,900. To understand this one needs to look at the transfer section. Now we had a transfer of \$8,636 to savings. The restricted Mike Kaney funds represent \$5,000 of this figure. That leaves \$3,636. Add to this figure \$885 (explained in the next newsletter) which was transferred to the Mike Kaney Fund and you get a total of \$4,522. This \$4,522 represents what was transferred, in reality, to savings. Therefore \$12,420-\$4,522 yields \$7,898 or approximately \$7900. Clear as mud, right?

Now back to our original question, why are the expenses so high (\$32,911). We have now discovered that \$7900 is not really an operating expense (i.e. related to the day to day operations of Dignity). This means for Dignity to operate on a day to day basis we really need \$32,911-\$7900 or \$25,011. Now this figure is more in line to what we spent last year (\$24,708.09).

The last point to address then is the offertory. Last year we received only \$19,821 so how can we hope to achieve \$25,011 to cover our expenses? Well as you can see, last year we received a total of \$30,957 in income. Subtract \$5000 for the Mike Kaney fund (those funds are restricted) and that leaves \$25,957. Now if we remove the \$19,821 from offertory that leaves \$6,136 from other sources. However as a board we decided not to budget in these sources because they are unpredictable. Therefore we have moved that entire amount into the 1995 budgeted offertory figure.

Hopefully this clarifies or at least demystifies some of the issues about the budget. I understand the confusion this accounting has caused. Please bear with us over the next few months as we search for a clearer method of presenting Dignity's finances to the membership. Next month I will discuss the Mike Kaney Funds and how they are presented on our statements. Thanks for your questions and concerns.

—Steve Ruimveld

Museum Restaurant Fund Raiser

In November, the Museum Restaurant hosted its second fund raiser for Dignity. The restaurant allowed people to buy \$10 gift certificates, and then they donated all sales back to Dignity. This event allowed us to raise \$570. Unfortunately, the restaurant closed a few weeks afterwards.

In all fairness to the community, the board has decided to redeem the gift certificates from anyone who

so wishes. However we ask you to consider not redeeming your gift certificates and allowing the funds from this event to be dedicated to a stipend to send two delegates to the Dignity USA National Convention this June in Los Angeles (see article entitled Dignity USA Convention). We will redeem the gift certificates up until May 1, 1995 after which all the remaining funds will go towards the convention stipend. Thanks goes to all who attended and the the late Museum Restaurant for all its support; we will miss you.

—S.R.

Italy, Summer 1995

John Truax and Karen Hunter, a prominent Houston artist, will be hosting a group trip to Italy the summer of 1995. A highlight of the trip will be a visit of the famous Venice Biennale which will be occurring this year.

Departure date is July 19 with return the 29th. The cost is \$2576 which includes air and ground transportation, hotel, daily breakfast and dinner and escorted tours.

For further information please call John Truax at 589-1301. A deposit for this trip is due right away.

Free Membership!

Continuing a policy the Board began in 1994, we will again be offering free membership in Dignity/USA for those who match or exceed a pledge of \$7.00 per week (\$364.00 per year) in 1995. We have kept expenses down, and we will monitor expenses closely to keep them down. If your contributions total or exceed \$364 in 1995, your membership will be renewed for free in 1996. Keep up your stewardship and contributions to the only organization which honestly and compassionately has served lesbian and gay Catholics for the last 20 years in Houston!

Mountain-Plains Region Gathers in Colorado

Reserve the weekend of Feb 17-20 for the regional gathering at Camp Laforet, a rustic campsite outside of Colorado Springs. These regional meetings are highly empowering and are greatly recommended. There is more information is on the *Dignity/USA Dateline* included in this newsletter.

Dignity USA National Convention

From June 28 to July 2 Dignity USA will be holding its national convention in Los Angeles CA. This event should provide an opportunity to learn more about Dignity USA, its history, goals and the people who make it the organization it is today. Everybody is welcomed and encouraged to go.

Because of the importance of this event, the board has made a commitment to provide some stipend money for two active members to represent Dignity Houston (see the article entitled Museum Restaurant Fund Raiser). Anyone interested in being a delegate should submit his/her name along with a brief statement of purpose to the Dignity office.

—S.R.

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.

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.

More Theatre Thoughts

This is the first of what we hope will be an ongoing series of articles by Miguel Soares, James McGuire and Bob Heer. All of us at Dignity Houston thank them for their efforts.

Here's what's going on at our local theatres this month.

Main Street Theatre (2540 Times Blvd.) presents Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* on Wednesdays through Sundays until February 12. Opening February 16 will be *Vincent* by Leonard Nimoy (Mr. Spock of the original Star Trek). This is a one-man play recreating the life of Van Gough by his brother, Theo. Jeff Galligan is the principal. You may remember him as Sweeney Todd in MST's production in 1991.

Theatre Under The Stars is mounting *Jekyll and Hyde* in conjunction with the Alley Theatre at the Music Hall. It will be Broadway bound after closing on February 19.

HSPVA (4001 Stanford) will bring Meredith Willson's *The Music Man* through a February 5 matinee (and fundraising silent auction and party). The show is directed by Denton Yockey, director of the Galveston summer musicals.

The Country Playhouse (12802 Queensbury) is presenting Dan Goggin's 1984 musical *Nunsense*.

Houston Skyline Theatre (1617 Fannin) has opened Darlene Craviotto's *Pizza Man* on Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm through February 25.

Curtain Theatre (3722 Washington at Yale) is having a benefit Sunday, February 7 at 7pm entitled *A Touch of Mardi Gras* featuring Lise Liddell and Howard Young with the Charley Prause Trio. Tickets are \$25 per person.

So much for this month—

—Bob Heer

Stone Soup

Weekly 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!

Volunteers Needed at Omega House

Omega House, an eight bed residential hospice for individuals in the terminal stages of AIDS, is seeking new volunteers. Volunteers are primarily needed for bedside care; however, other volunteers are needed for facility maintenance, reception and administrative assistance. If you are interested, please call Claudia Commo at 523-1146.

Movie Night

Some may consider Friday the Thirteenth a night to dread. It was not so this past January at Dignity center. This was the debut of "movie night" and it was a lot of fun. The feature movie was *Victor Victoria* which was full of great comedy and camp. We also had a pre-feature viewing of a unique gymnastics video which all enjoyed (thanks to Gene Rollins).

About fifteen people were scattered about the room with plenty of munchies and beverages within arms reach. Also we enjoyed watching the movie on the new VCR and 27 inch TV both donated for this event.

So if you have nothing to do on the second and fourth Fridays of February and each month thereafter at 7:30 then plan on going to movie night at Dignity Center.

—S. R.

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

Please contribute items for newsletters to make our newsletter the voice of all our members. Articles and submissions from the general membership are always welcome. Each one of you has your own good news to tell. Send your thoughts to the editor's new address: Bob Singleton, 4520 Stanford Ct., Houston, TX 77041-8840. Deadline is the week before the end of the month. You may mail news items or put them on the recorder at 937-3310.

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

Wish List

Dignity/Houston is in 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 microwave cart

3. a copier
4. more 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

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.

DIGNITY/HOUSTON OFFICERS

(terms on board)

George Wetzel (93-95)	President
John Wehr (94-96)	Vice President
Victor Lamas (94-96)	Secretary
Steve Ruimveld (94-96)	Treasurer
Joel Avery (94-96)	Board Member
Phil DeMarco (93-95)	Board Member
Lynn Schwartzenburg (til 95)	Board Member

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John Wehr	Worship & Hospitality
Joel Avery	Education
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Phil DeMarco	Membership
J. Victor Lamas	Social
Steve Ruimveld	Outreach
	C. for Women's Concerns
Bob Singleton, editor	Newsletter
Phil DeMarco	Buildings & Grounds
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.

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

Mailing Address: Box 66821, Houston, TX 77266
 Newsletter Address: 4520 Stanford Ct., Houston, TX 77041-8840
 Newsletter Phone: 937-3310

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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SUNDAY

MONDAY









TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

			1	2 <i>Ground Hog Day Presentation of the Lord</i>	3 <i>Candlemas</i>	4 7:00pm <i>Sacrament of Reconciliation.</i>  7:30pm <i>MASS</i> at Dignity Center. Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.
5 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Center. 5:30pm <i>LITURGY SERVICE</i> at Dignity Center.	6	7	8	9	10  7:30pm <i>CINEMA NIGHT</i> at Dignity Center.	11  7:30pm <i>MASS</i> at Dignity Center. <i>Sacrament of Healing and Anointing</i> during Mass. General Membership Meeting after Mass. Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.
12 <i>Lincoln's Birthday</i> 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Center. 5:30pm <i>LITURGY SERVICE</i> at Dignity Center.	13	14  <i>St. Valent- ine's Day</i> 7:00pm <i>BOARD MEETING</i> at Dignity Center	15	16 DEADLINE for Articles in the March newsletter.	17	18  7:30pm <i>MASS</i> at Dignity Center. Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.
19 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Center. 5:30pm <i>LITURGY SERVICE</i> at Dignity Center.	20 <i>President's Day</i>	21	22  <i>Washington- 's Birthday</i>	23 DEADLINE for Calendar Entries in Mar. newsletter (call the Center).	24  7:30pm <i>CINEMA NIGHT</i> at Dignity Center.	25  7:30pm <i>MASS</i> at Dignity Center. 4th Sat "Love Change Collection" for Retreat Fund Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.
Regional Conference in Colorado Springs						
26 8th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES" at Center. 5:30pm <i>LITURGY SERVICE</i> at Dignity Center.	27	28 <i>Shrove Tuesday/ Mardi Gras</i>	1 <i>Ash Wednesday (Fast and Abstinence) First day of Lent</i>	FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS		
			1 - Peggy R.	18 - John T.		
			5 - Thomas K.	19 - Steve R.		
			10 - David D.	25 - Phil D.		
			17 - Manuel L.	26 - Bob S.		
			- Gene R.	27 - Jon B.		

Dignity

HOUSTON

April 1995

We Are Many Parts; We Are All One Body



Taking Responsibility

The Dignity/USA convention and 25th anniversary celebration will be held in Los Angeles the last week of June. I would like to ask each one of you to ask yourself just where you think you would be if the fearless handful of folks had not had the courage, foresight, conviction and compassion to put together the beginnings of the only organization which has faithfully served lesbian and gay Catholics this last quarter century?

And where will this organization be headed in the next quarter century? Where would you like it to go? How will you invest yourself to achieve that goal? What talent, energy and treasure are you willing to commit to the continued growth and development of this organization?

Sorry, that's the way it is! Without your input the job will not get done. Without the collective talent, energy and treasure of the past 25 years, we would not be here today.

Some are quite happy with our present status. They tend to look on things as settled, peaceful and quiet. And, while those are certainly goals to be sought, they are not the path of those pioneering folks who have helped to bring this organization this far.

For in order to provide a peaceful, quiet, restful space for lesbian and gay Catholics, we had to take public stands which some see as "too political." We had to, first all, face our own demons (and continue to do so) that brought about the frightened, fearful and disease-ridden view of homosexuality as a depraved, ugly and deforming lifestyle. Sometimes there was help, oftentimes not, in dealing with society, religion, peer pressure, laws, etc. For most of us Dignity was there to listen compassionately, to console, to open up avenues to positive, honest and loving lesbians and gay men who were no more depraved nor disordered than the general population, and who had formed Dignity to foster and nourish a solid spiritual foundation for a full Christian relationship with Jesus Christ.

If you can make it to the Dignity/USA national convention in L.A., great, but don't neglect to join all of Dignity in giving thanks for 25 years of being a beacon in the oftentimes dark and stormy sea of life. Let us all join

hands and thank God for this organization which has served us so well and ably.

—George M. Wetzel

The Real Absence

The apparent absence of God in this world is the actual reality of God. — Simon Weil

"Marana tha — O come, Lord Jesus!" (1Cor 16:22)

This cry, this invocation, is probably one of the most ancient prayers of the Christian community. "Marana tha" may constitute the essence of the primordial liturgy!

Philosophers say: Nature abhors the vacuum, any utter emptiness, or even gaps in the fabric of existence. Likewise, many of us were taught to harbor or have learned to harbor a similar fear of emptiness and gaps in our lives. In contradistinction, we have often experienced gaps in our relations with other women and men (anthropology/sociology), as well as with God (theology). In truth, the closer we look at our daily lives, the more our lives appear to consist of gaps and inconsistencies. Experts refer to these gaps as *aporiai* — literally, the absence of a ticket for passage across the tempestuous currents of life, which constitute the fabric of our everyday experience.

There are many of us — lesbian, straight; bisexual, gay or transpersonal; women in general; the divorced; those electing reproductive freedom; those who seek a more democratic administration among the People of God; those who choose to speak, rather than to be silent; those who feel the Spirit working among the People of God in spite of the machinations of a hierarchy, remote from real life and the vitality of the Holy Spirit — who sense the absence of Christ in the hierarchical church. We have two choices: We can embrace Absence as the Sacrament of Life, or we can capitulate and accept the holy, Roman glue that is meant to create the semblance of the slimy, concocted unity, of a seamless garment, and meant to hide the actual quilt-work of the Spirit's infinite diversity, truly mirroring our everyday lives.

Christ comes to us in our everyday lives not to give a Real Presence, in the sense of a fullness and completeness called *pleroma*, but to help us deal with and to

understand the real absences and gaps in the quilt-work of our lives. *Pleroma* also means patch, the means we employ to bridge tears and gaps. Instead of allowing us, the members of the Mystical Body, to confront the gaps or *aporiai* of scripture and to confront the uncertainties of the real world as adults, the hierarchical church, the high priests of our day, spoon-feed us the pabulum of scriptural fullness, of a seamless garment (Jn 19:23), of a real presence, of a world of certainty, of a world without gaps and absences.

Personally, I embrace the theology and the sociology of the Doubting Thomas and of the Emmaus experience. Thomas is the patron saint of absence and gaps and wounds: "Unless I see the holes the nails made, and put my fingers in them and my hand in his side, I'll never believe." Later, Jesus said to Thomas, "Put your finger here . . . take your hand and put it in my side. Don't be skeptical but be a believer." (SV [=Scholars' Version] Jn 20:25-27). Thomas' doubt was a fear of seams, gaps, wounds, and absence. We 20th-Century Christians are even asked to believe in the gaps and the wounds without having seen the risen Jesus! **Talk about gaps!** Resurrection, the triumph of Christ over the wounds of the cross and over death itself, includes the ability to deal with the Real Absences of everyday life, which God, through the earthly life of Jesus, has already shared with us through the grace of salvation or healing.

Absence according to scripture is, furthermore, an expected consequence of our rejecting the Good News, of an ignominious, state-execution of God's Anointed at the instigation of the religious hierarchy, of the complete apostolic betrayal of the messiah (unredeemed in Mark's gospel!), of the visitation of an Empty Tomb only by the faithful women. Absence is terrifying: "And they didn't breathe a word of it to anyone." **Talk about afraid!** (SV Mk 16:8 — the real ending and absence in Mark's gospel!) Thomas encountered the Real Absence of the Good News of the Resurrection and could only respond to the wounds, gaps, fissures, and incongruities of the Resurrection story with disbelief. True, Christian faith embodies the ability to live with wounds, gaps and Real Absence!

Faith, hope, and love — these virtues sustain us during absence! Can you put your love in a box of gold or wood — in a tabernacle, or in the mute letters of a book? "Written words kill, breathed words give life," (2Cor 3:6) Paul admonishes us. The illusion of the real presence of a speaker created by written texts — be they scripture or papal bull — creates the false impression of the presence of authority. God's word is in reality a quilt-work — a garment sown together. God's word has gaps and is wounded, like the crucified and resurrected body of the Anointed, Her child. Faith means trusting that the Spirit bridges gaps and wounds! Love is the way we live together in the Real Absence of everyday life!

My theology of the Eucharist is a theology of the Real Absence. Certainly, Jesus left us this memorial and this means as sustenance in the real world of gaps and wounds and absences. A theology of the Real Absence in

the transubstantiation starts with the gifts of Mother earth and her co-workers who cherish the land enough to bring forth grain and grape in a healthy world. Then other hands transform these gifts of Mother earth into bread and wine. Eucharist is also Incarnation, so we call upon the Spirit to transform these gifts further, just as Mary — the first priest of the new Covenant — through the power of the Spirit gave God body and blood. Incarnation is a celebration of the conditional, tentative bridging of the gap between divine and human by both the Woman-given and the Eucharistic Body of Jesus.

Eucharist as sacrificial death is also a memorial to Real Absence, to the wounded reality that people still kill or state-execute other people. I believe that Christ was forever destined to come into the world as a part of the wonder of creation and finally to share in death as a part of human life. But Christ need only have died **violently** because we had yet not learned to stop killing one another! Thus, we ask a woman or man of our community, in the burden of their ordained priesthood, to recall Christ's words: This is my body; this is my blood, surrendered for you, for salvation, for healing.

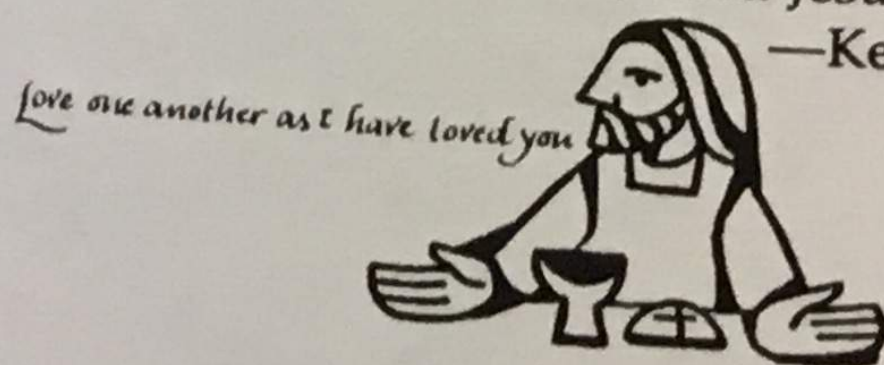
The final act of Eucharist, in my view, is a testimony to gaps and to the Real Absence. The Emmaus experience is akin to the Thomas experience: "Some women . . . gave us quite a shock. They were at the tomb . . . and didn't find Jesus' body Some of us went to the tomb . . . but nobody saw him! As soon as [Jesus] took his place at table with them, he took a loaf, and having given thanks, **broke it**, and started passing it out to them. . . . Then they described . . . how they came to recognize him in the **breaking** of the bread." (SV Lk 24:30-35)

The final act of Eucharist, the final act of transubstantiation is the breaking, wounding, gap-ing of the bread/body to create the Mystical Body of Jesus. To share the bread or to breathe the word, the absence of a whole loaf or of a complete, gap-less and seamless meaning must be tolerated. Sharing the One Bread or the Word entails the creation of gaps, fissures, and absences, like the wounds in the resurrected body of Jesus, like the quilt-work of life. This theology and sociology of Eucharist, then, cannot recognize a difference between the liturgical sociology of Eucharist, then, cannot recognize a difference between the liturgical divisions of "consecration" and "communion." Communion, the breaking and sharing of the bread, is the final action in the spectrum of the transubstantiation, of the consecration of the gifts of Mother earth. Holy communion is, therefore, an action of the entire People of God, the true church, the Mystical Body of Christ.

We recognize Jesus in the creation of gaps, of wounds in his body which allow the community to share in this resurrected, Real Absence.

"Marana tha — O come, Lord Jesus!"

—Keith Wright, Ph. D.



The Paschal Mystery 1995

The greatest feast of the Christian and Catholic year is Easter in its fullness. For the foundation for Christian hope in all its forms, the celebration of the Paschal Mystery is key. This celebration is based on the fact that all promised retribution for "sin" is accomplished. Where creatures through sin were alienated from God as Father and Source of Life, all creation is rejoined to God the Source of Life. The image is that of the Passover lamb raised to an infinite power to hint at the Christ who is seen to be immolated in Calvary's sacrifice. Further, the keeping of the Paschal Mystery includes the Passover meal where the Paschal lamb was eaten in both fulfillment of promise and in expectation of all that had been promised. In the Catholic Easter celebration of the mystery, anticipation passes to fact, expectation embraces fulfillment, and all Catholics are invited to engage the new Paschal Lamb. This festive union is in the sacrament at the table of nourishment when once the action was upon the table of sacrifice. Catholics in Paschal celebration are folded into the richness of being the chosen people who are now so enriched by the redemption won for all that they can risk comfortably being the people of God. Here they are the people of God not merely in title but in very act. We are the body of Christ: Christ acts in us, we act in Christ.

In this year's keeping of festival, Dignity is blessed with the explicit opportunities of celebration. The Triduum (the series of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil) is to be celebrated as a planned unity that is the culmination of Lenten preparation for the fullness of this celebration. Further, this year Dignity has the added opportunity to celebrate Easter Sunday. This year this experience is available without some previous years' manipulations to make Saturday as Sunday and Sunday present in Saturday. In the Providence that attends this development the call of special grace is wrapped. Without extraordinary stress, the vision of the fulfilled prophesied and promised salvation is seen in the Faith that is active in the Triduum. Without limiting imagination and fixation on the relics of resurrection Easter and its needed seven weeks of graced Eucharistic celebration embody the experience of the Paschal Mystery made present afresh in the church. In this stance, the empty tomb, the folded linen cloth, the gardener, the fish by the seaside on the fire, the appearances of Jesus the Christ—all of these take on integrated meaning into the reality experienced in Faith that the Paschal Lamb indeed has been immolated and redemption is at hand.

For the Dignity community this is affirmation based in faith, shared with the faithful, and foundational for quality membership in the Church who is Christ present among us. *Alleluia* in the Easter setting is more than the proclamation of resurrection. *Alleluia* here claims victory where death had been end stage. *Alleluia* embraces the fullest imaginable donation of forgiveness

from God and reunion with God that is summarized in the basic meaning of redemption. Redeemed, we are the family of God who are returned to our Father's House and nourished at His table. We are a Godly people, *Alleluia!*

The Final Gift of Easter

The Church needs fifty days to celebrate the Paschal Mystery. This need is for the people of God to be ready to take hold in a renewed way their purpose in the Paschal Mystery that is given to them in Pentecost. For the fifty days of the Easter time celebration craftily moves from the wonderment's expression of *Alleluia* as the shock and marvelousness of the resurrection fact, through progressive opportunity to realize the details of the meanings of this mystery, and where there is an urge to enter into or actively share in the mystery. This last stance is where Pentecost and its grace is the response in God's continuing love for all people.

—Alcuin Greenberg

Triduum Schedule

Holy Thursday (Apr 13), Eucharist at 7:30 pm.

Good Friday (Apr 14), Veneration and Communion at 7:30 pm.

Easter Vigil (Apr 15), Vigil services leading to Easter Proclamation and Celebration at 7:30 pm

Easter Sunday (Apr 16), Easter mass at 4:30 pm followed by a covered dish dinner at 6:00 at the center.

Easter Hymns

The Paschal feast, Easter, is the greatest and longest feast of the Body of Christ. It takes fifty days to sing the praises of the risen Christ! One of the most moving Paschal chants is the Vigil hymn to Christ in the Paschal Candle, the *Exsultet*, which we have discussed before. In *Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim* [ISBN 0-939516-10-1], Edward Hays offers a *Psalm for the Easter Season*. This prayer is reminiscent of the *Exsultet* and can be interpreted as follows:

Jesus is risen, alleluia! — All creation sings.

Jesus is risen, alleluia! — The warmth of spring proclaims.

Jesus is risen, alleluia! — Every reborn child of God shouts with joy.

The paschal feast, Easter, is the feast of feasts, the mother of Sundays, the light of the spring moon, the radiance of the rising sun. Easter dances on our rooftops and plays like a newborn in the cradle of our hearts.

All creation rejoices with us now:

plants and flowers grow; animals multiply;

stars spin through space; lovers kiss;

peace and justice thrive anew;

Christians everywhere partake in eternal life!

As Christ rose from the tomb, victorious over evil and transforming death, we hope that we, united with

Jesus, may also one day celebrate our own Easter morning. Let us, in the meantime, free ourselves from the tombs of narrow spirits and of stonelike hearts!

We trust, also, that we, who share in the Mystical Body of Jesus, will blossom in this spring of the risen Christ:

to the fullness of life and love,
to a life beyond the confines of time and space,
to a new life, united with our, good and loving God.

Jesus is risen. Alleluia!
We will soon be next:
Alleluia, alleluia!

The ancient hymn *Phos hilaron*, or O Smiling Light, also praises the risen Christ envisioned in the light of the Easter Candle. This hymn may be prayed at home, even after the Easter season, at the kindling of light for evening prayer:

O smiling and gracious Light,
pure brightness of the ever living Mother Father in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed, we welcome you.

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the evening light,
we sing your praises, O God: Nurturer, Child, and Holy Spirit!

You, O Child of God — risen to new life, are worthy at all times
and in every place to be honored by happy voices
and to be glorified by all creation.

We welcome you:
O Jesus Christ, our Brother and savior,
O radiance of the living God, O smiling Light!
—Keith Wright

The New Third Sector

[The following article by Jim LeBlanc was submitted to the newsletter two months ago but through my carelessness I misplaced it before typing it. It is now found, and I apologize to Jim for not printing his carefully worked article sooner.—the editor.]

On the Houston Chronicle Outlook page for this past New Year's Day, Peter F. Drucker, author, management consultant and professor of social science, details the radical social transformations of this century. Before WWI farmers were the largest single work group in every country. The second-largest group in the work force of every developed country around 1900 was composed of live-in servants. Today fewer than five percent of the population are farmers and live-in domestic servants scarcely exist in developed countries.

No class in history has ever risen faster than the blue-collar worker. And no class has ever fallen faster. In 1900 industrial workers had no power and no benefits. In the 1950's industrial workers had become the largest single group in every developed country. They had job security, pensions, long paid vacations and comprehensive unemployment insurance. Through unions they had considerable political power. By 1990, industrial workers and their unions were in retreat. They accounted for less than 20% of the work force. That percentage is still declining.

Drucker says that we are now becoming the knowledge society. Education will become the center of the knowledge society. Different levels of knowledge will be required depending on the type of work we do. Increasingly, an educated person will be someone who has learned how to learn and who continues to learn throughout life.

A society in which knowledge workers dominate is under threat from a new class conflict: between the knowledge workers and the majority of people who still make their living traditionally. There are two challenges: to increase the productivity of knowledge work is the economic challenge; the productivity of the non-knowledge, services worker will become the social challenge. No society in history has faced these challenges. For the first time in history, the possibility of leadership will be open to all. The possibility of acquiring knowledge will no longer depend on obtaining a prescribed education at a given age. Knowledge will become the key competitive factor. The central work force in the knowledge society will consist of highly specialized people. Generalists are coming to be seen as dilettantes rather than educated people.

By definition, a knowledge society is a society of mobility. People no longer have roots. There is no more the traditional neighborhood that controls the social problems. The traditional answer that government and the welfare state should solve all social problems has proven not to work. What then is the solution?

Drucker talks about the traditional division of society into the public sector (government) and the private sector (business). In the past twenty years there has been talk of a third sector — the non-profit or social sector. In the United States this sector has already existed in the form of independent and competitive churches. The growth area of this sector has been the rise of volunteer organizations over the past thirty years. In the English-speaking countries there is a long tradition of volunteerism. As a volunteer in a social-sector institution, the individual can make a difference. We can see how this is true in our own organizations. Stone Soup could not survive without contributions and donated time. Our own Christmas caroling at Kroger kept Stone Soup from running out of aid for its clients.

What does all of this have to do with Dignity? I think the results of last November's elections make it all too clear. Recent articles by George Wetzel and Michael

Parr have stressed the need to get involved. Don't sit back and wring your hand. Get involved. If you don't like the way the Gay Political Caucus represents the gay community, join it and make your views known. We have much to fear about the consequences of Republican-led government. Write your legislators. The Radical Right does. Politicians have to represent the views of their constituents or they don't get reelected. Make your voice heard. Dignity too needs your voice and your time. Volunteer your time to one of the teams. You will make a difference. You might even be on the cutting edge of a new society.

— Jim LeBlanc

Celebrating Our Diversity

Recently I read an article that revolved about the issue of being openly gay, and a remark struck me. The person, a self-professed "in your face" drag queen, mentioned how proud he was of who and what he was because he was different. The statement made me realize how I too have come to enjoy and be proud of my own diversity. It is strange to remember back to a few years ago when I used to feel so ashamed of myself and how I used to wish that I was not so different from mainstream America. Yet today I almost relish the fact that I am different. I wonder to myself, "How could I have ever changed so much?"

I don't think I can state a time or a place when my attitude changed. I believe it is a process that everyone goes through. What is more important is to actually enjoy our own differences. We need to realize that each of us is different, to know that we each are unique and what a wonderful thing that is.

This idea was reinforced on a Saturday's homily when Fr. Adam made two comments. One was, "Oh what a wonderful world it would be if we all could accept the differences that God made." How true that is. I remember how miserable I was when I could not accept and enjoy the differences God had given me. In the second comment Fr. Adam referred to an author who wrote, "Only a few people in this world have ever been fully alive." The statement "fully alive" refers to an individual who has found his/her inner or true being. It is a powerful true statement. Hopefully on our spiritual journey to Easter each of us can look inside ourselves to find a part of ourselves which is different, and sit back and enjoy our uniqueness.

—Steve Ruimveld

Freedom, Glorious Freedom

FREEDOM, GLORIOUS FREEDOM: The Spiritual Journey to the Fullness of Life for Gays, Lesbians, and Everybody Else. By John McNeil, 1995, 232 pp, \$24.

With this latest work John McNeil has concluded the trilogy he began in 1975 with *The Church and the Homosexual*, and "focuses on the freedom that lesbians and gay men can find by connecting with the spirit of God in their hearts."

Beginning in the very first chapter, he begins to lay the basis for his argument for the proper and fundamental right of freedom of conscience, gay maturity, and the discernment of spirits in our own lives. Even if these concepts are new to you, McNeill makes them come alive with his own experience and that of his extensive pastoral experience as a practicing psychotherapist. This key part of this book begins the process of looking at the course of the lesbian and gay spiritual journey.

As he moves into part two: *Coming Out: The Three Stages of Homosexual Holiness*, he draws a less than flattering view of the Catholic hierarchy by making convincing argument "that anyone who follows the church program will end by destroying themselves in terms of both mental health and spiritual maturity. Without belaboring the topic, McNeill points out that virtually all Vatican statements on homosexuality in the past twenty-five years are contradicted by personal experience. He is forced to ask "what kind of faith and trust can I place in a teaching authority that is clearly acting in an unloving, hateful and destructive way?"

In Part Three McNeill takes a close and careful look at the twelve step spirituality of AA and finds it "the single most important development in North American spirituality," and he even takes another step in his belief that "the twelve-step process is the most powerful spiritual liberation process in the world today."

In Part Four homosexuality and the New Testament is analyzed as the author takes first God's love of gays and then the special nature of the lesbian and gay love of God.

In the final Epilogue, "Emerging from the Heart of the World", McNeill begins with a broad view of the dialectic of human liberation and then describes how the gay spiritual liberation movement fits into that dialectic. Here he relies heavily on his debt to Richard Tarnas' *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*, 1991, Ballantine. It is in this section that the reader gets more insight into Maurice Blondel, the French philosopher whose writings and thinking pepper McNeil's work.

And, for those who remember first reading *The Church and the Homosexual* some twenty years ago, you will get to see the author's defense of his book and its ideas when he locks horns with Cardinal Ratzinger whose critique, until now, had stood unchallenged and uncriticized.

Finally, this book is an easy, insightful and meditative book. A great Lenten read or a summer project. It speaks to the heart of this Catholic gay person and I suspect it will speak to yours as well.

From his experience you will discover why John McNeill is such a powerful writer. He has the boldness, audacity and anger to declare that the emperor is without any clothes. Yet he is humble, honest and rational in looking for the freedom, glorious freedom, so many of us have looked for for such a long time. And he

has assured us that this message will not die and be coopted by "a pathologically homophobic religion.

Don't forget that John McNeill will be here in Houston on Sunday, June 5 and is a featured speaker at the Dignity/USA convention in Los Angeles.

— G. M. W.

Catholic Parents Network Retreat

A regional retreat for Catholic parents of gay and lesbian children will be held June 9-11, 1995 at the Marydale Retreat Center in Covington, Kentucky.

"The weekend will involve story-telling, presentations, film, discussions, communal prayer, quiet time, worship, and socializing. [They] hope to provide a relaxed and supportive atmosphere for Catholic parents to reflect and talk about their concerns and needs, to ask questions about Catholic thought and practice, to learn about ministries and resources and to meet and interact with other parents who are at various points on their personal and family journeys."

Mary Ellen Lopath, a Catholic mother of a gay son, who came out in 1983, and a P-FLAG contributor and Robert Nugent, SDS, who has written extensively on homosexuality and religion in articles and has edited several books on this topic are the retreat facilitators.

The registration deadline is May 31, 1995, \$125.00 per person which includes room, meals, snacks, and materials. If you have further questions or wish more information, phone (301) 927-8766. Check it out.

— G. M. W.

Dignity Houston Phone Answering and Info System

When you call Dignity Houston you will be greeted by a message that will offer you several options from leaving a new message to sending a fax to Dignity Houston. After you have selected an option you may always return to the main menu by pressing the star (*) button and making another selection.

- Here is a list of options you will have: Press
- 1 to leave a general message for Dignity Houston.
 - 2 to leave messages for individual board members
 - 2 for the president (George Wetzel)
 - 3 for the vice president (John W.)
 - 4 for the secretary (Victor L.)
 - 5 for the treasurer (Steve R.)
 - 6 for board member (Joel A.)
 - 7 for board member (Lynn S.)
 - 8 for board member (Phil D.)
 - 9 for membership (to become a member)
 - 3 for schedule of communion services
 - 4 for upcoming events
 - 5 to send a fax to Dignity Houston.

T-Shirts

Yes! We have received new T-shirts with the Dignity/Houston logo. They are available from any

Board Member for \$10.00. If you would like one but are unable to pick it up, we will mail it to you for \$12.00. Wear it with pride!! We have been here for twenty-one years serving the Houston Lesbian and Gay community.

—G.M.W.

Dignity Float in the Pride Parade

Kevin Kelly is looking for volunteers to form a team to get together a float for this year's pride parade. Call him at 861-2697.

Let's Talk Finance

Continuing this series of financial information, let's talk about St. Stephen's Fund.

Most of you have heard about the St. Stephen's Fund and have probably even donated some money to it, but you may still be unsure what the fund really is.

St. Stephen's Fund was created to help any active member from our chapter who finds herself/himself in financial hardship. All requests are confidential as well as the actual execution of the funds to the individual in need.

To qualify, an active member of the chapter must submit in writing to the St. Stephen's Fund administrators a request specifying the need for the funds. Some examples of requests are membership dues, scholarships to Dignity sponsored events, prescription/medical supplies, rent or utilities, and funeral expenses.

Funding for the fund is mostly provided by special fund raisers such as the annual Halloween and Christmas parties sponsored by John and Jose. The fund is also increased through specially earmarked donations as well as receiving 10% of all general fund raisers.

For more information about St. Stephen's Fund, please contact me or any of the active board members of Dignity Houston.

—S. R.

Free Membership!

Continuing a policy the Board began in 1994, we will again be offering free membership in Dignity/USA for those who match or exceed a pledge of \$7.00 per week (\$364.00 per year) in 1995. We have kept expenses down, and we will monitor expenses closely to keep them down. If your contributions total or exceed \$364 in 1995, your membership will be renewed for free in 1996. Keep up your stewardship and contributions to the only organization which honestly and compassionately has served lesbian and gay Catholics for the last 20 years in Houston!

Sunday Evening Liturgies

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

More Theatre Thoughts

While the season officially opened last month, Miller Theatre in Hermann Park will be presenting this month several productions to which you may get reserved seats between 11:30 am and 1:00 pm.

HITS Unicorn Theatre Co. *Peter Pan*. Apr 6-8, 8 pm, Apr 13-15, 8 pm.

University Opera Theatre. *The Tales Of Hoffman*. In French with surtitles, Apr 21, 22, 8 pm.

Curtains (3722 Washington at Yale). *12 Steps to a More Dysfunctional Family*. Thru Fri. Apr 8, 8 pm., Sat 6 pm & 9 pm., Sun 6 pm.

Alley Theatre (615 Texas). *Angels in America, Part 1* this month in the Neuhaus Arena Stage. Many performances are already sold out. Check box office.

Theatre LaB (1706 Alamo). Stephen Sondheim's *Assassins*. Fridays 8 pm., Sat. 8 pm., Sun. 4 pm thru Apr. 9.

Houston Skyline Theatre (1617 Fannin). *The Owl and the Pussycat* by Bill Manhoff. Fri & Sat 8pm thru Apr 8.

Actors Workshop (1009 Chartres). *The Boys Next Door*. A comedy not to be missed. Thur-Sat 8pm., Sun 4pm thru Apr 9.

HSPVA (4001 Stanford) Sondheim's *Into the Woods*. Apr 20-27, Thur-Sat 7:30 pm., Matinee Apr 27, 3:30 pm.

Actors Theatre of Houston (2506 South Blvd.) *Prelude to a Kiss* by Craig Lucas. Fri-Sat 8pm., Sun 4pm., thru Apr. 16.

Stages Repertory Theatre (3201 Allen Pkwy). *Never in My Lifetime*. Drama of six Irish Catholic girls in love with a British soldier, thru Apr 23. *And the World Goes 'Round*, an off-Broadway review opening Apr. 26, times not available.

So much for this month.

—Bob Heer

Stone Soup

Weekly 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!

Movie Night

If you have nothing to do on the second and fourth Fridays of each month at 7:30, plan on attending a movie night at Dignity Center. Munchies and sociability vie with fun movies for a very pleasant Friday evening.

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

Please continue to contribute items for newsletters to make our newsletter truly the voice of all our members. Thanks to those who have been submitting recently for the first time. Send your thoughts to the editor's new address: Bob Singleton, 4520 Stanford Ct., Houston, TX 77041-8840. You may mail news items or put them on the recorder at 937-3310.

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

Wish List

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 microwave cart
3. a copier
4. more 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 76115
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 12494, 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

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.

He has risen, alleluia

Necrology

Please remember in your prayers our recent dead: Fr. Dick Allard, Bob Dieker, John Elliott, 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.

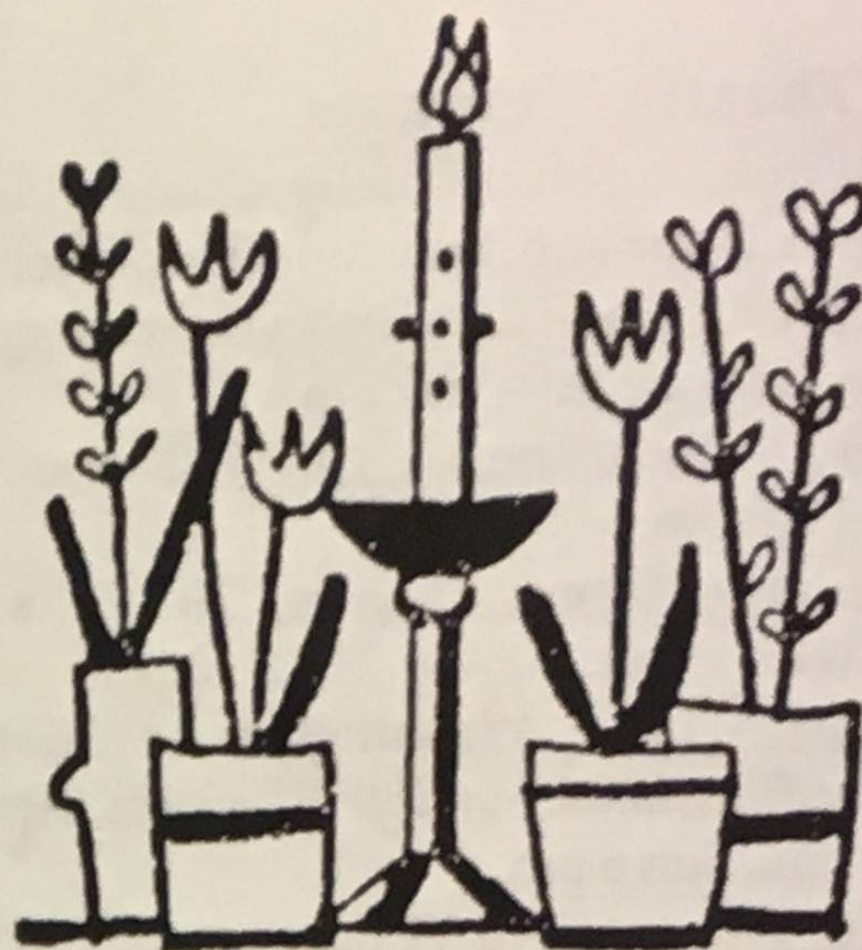
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Christ our Light

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

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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

meets Saturdays at 7:30 pm at
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(713) 880-2872

Mailing Address: Box 66821, Houston, TX 77266

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

Newsletter Phone: 937-3310

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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Pentecost

Dignity

HOUSTON

June 1995

We Are Many Parts; We Are All One Body

Taking Responsibility

"June is busting out all over!" With these words Oscar Hammerstein's lyric describes how a beautiful combination of weather and opportunity can produce a great climate for love, relationships and joy.

Our June will be no exception. With the presence of John McNeill for our 21st Birthday Celebration over the Pentecost weekend, to the Gay Pride Celebrations around the country on June 25th to the Dignity/USA Convention and 25th Anniversary Celebration in Los Angeles June 28 through July 2.

And, for all the celebrations and festivities, both public and private, we should always remember those who have gone before us on this journey we call life. The friends, lovers and acquaintances who will not be here to share our joy or our sorrow.

Looking around, it is a special joy to join with those who are celebrating joy, life and living rather than those stuck in their own visions of despair, depression and restriction. We all create and inhabit a world, to a great extent, of our own choosing. We will project that view of the world as we see it or we will endlessly struggle to change that world.

Several weeks ago a good friend (now approaching his 40th year) quietly announced that he is telling his parents that he is gay. To me there are no better sharings. If that is not a blessing on both parties, I don't know what might be.

Of course, there is pain, sadness and sorrow in our lives, and it can be handled with a firm sense of self worth and the spiritual tools of faith, hope and charity. And, there is little growth without challenge, testing and mistakes.

Join us for our Pentecostal Birthday with John McNeill and attend the Pride Week celebrations which focus on honest, positive, rewarding and compassionate relationships and activities. Read similar literature which tells of the trials and tribulations of our predecessors who have made it possible for us to be here today. And join us to celebrate and enjoy *Freedom, Glorious Freedom* from those who would lie, deceive and manipulate us to keep us in our place and from

threatening their status quo. Have a great life, a great month and celebrate and honor all your relations.

—George M. Wetzel

Lord, Let Them Be Good In Bed

[A précis of the late John Boswell's *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe* (Villard Books, 1994, ISBN 0-679-43228-0)]

"Love and marriage . . . go together like a horse and carriage." The tune is catchy, but are the history and theology accurate? John Boswell utters a definite NO! Yet how do Boswell's scholarly endeavors impinge upon the Christian, lesbian and gay community?

What would it mean to any of us to discover that the Church once performed "gay marriages?" In a nutshell, Boswell's main focus in this book is the concept of "marriage" and lesbian/gay "unions," and secondarily gay/lesbian self-identity. The clues in Boswell's detective mystery of same-sex unions are documents which preserve liturgies for uniting two men (usually) in a special, holy way. The title of this essay—Lord, may they be good in bed—is appropriated from a blessing in such Church rituals!

Boswell actually contrasts the ideas of love and marriage as factors in heterosexual unions in his historical treatment of interpersonal relations. Furthermore, he notes that only relatively recently were current, Western phobias of lesbian/gay relationships interjected into the discussion of romance and sanctity. Such fear and paranoia pollute the discussion of the blessing of long-term same-sex relationships.

Understandably, Boswell commences with a consideration of the language of love. How have different cultures in different historical periods put the power of this universal, passionate, bodily-expressed power of such a uniquely human characteristic into cold words? Our mothers and fathers in the language of love took no great trouble to distinguish by special words among sexual attraction between lovers, friendship in a close circle of acquaintances, and altruism or common charity within a community. Modern fiends against the body would have us believe that terms like *eros*, *agape*, and *philia* were used to compartmentalize various

expressions of human love. Not so, attests Boswell: Our forbearers in the faith of love found no need to dissect in language the expression of this basic, human passion. Here, modern theorists of love, especially Biblical scholars, have erred seriously.

In truth, the language of straight, lesbian, and gay unions has always appropriated sibling nomenclature. Spouses and lovers are addressed as "sister" or "brother." Such terms, on the one hand, reveal the richness of love, and on the other hand, reveal the poverty of language to express such intimacy adequately. Furthermore, we appear to evolve from languages of greater precision in speaking the many tongues of love to those of lesser flexibility, such as modern English and Spanish. For example, in times past, a woman might be referred to as "sister" by a lover of either gender. Significantly, same-sex, male unions bore designations akin to "brotherhood" or fraternization." Such liturgical usages reflect the crossover of sibling designations into erotic parlance. By such analysis, Boswell lays the foundation for an unprejudiced reading of Church rituals of union. Such unions are not formal adoptions or expressions of material charity, but contracts based on the "erotic" feelings between members of the same sex. But dare we call such contracts "marriages?"

Between 400 BC and AD 400, sexual unions between men and women were based on three considerations: financial or societal necessity, pleasure, and romance. Within this constellation of factors, marriages were "business deals." A man allied his family with another, procured heirs, and made new connections in society through marriage; the wife was a property transferred in such a deal. Physical, sexual pleasure could be found with a concubine or slave, while both physical and emotional satisfaction could be found in romance with a lover. Nevertheless, there was a tendency in the course of eight centuries towards a leveling of the disparate status of male and female partners in heterosexual unions. In the Greek literary tradition, such equality of partners in male, same-sex unions was indeed idealized. The erotic relation within such a fraternity constituted a bulwark of democracy and the bane of tyranny. In contrast, the subordinate position of women in heterosexual unions could hardly be invoked as a model of the equality of females or males in same-sex relationships. At this point, we might conclude that no self-respecting gay or lesbian couple, or a former or present age, would condescend to call their co-equal, erotic union a marriage, a mere business contract.

In addition, during this so-called Classical period a significant cultural inversion occurred: At its beginning, the religion of the Roman Empire was polytheistic and Christianity was a governmentally persecuted cult; at its end the once-condemned cult became the state religion, and "paganism" was suppressed by fire and sword. Sexual union suffered a fate similar to that of the popular religion. Surprisingly, orthodox, catholic faith—which had striven passionately to assert the

human bodily-ness of Christ—pathologically strove to denigrate expressions of eroticism, or bodily passions. Marriage in this post-classical, ecclesiastical dictatorship became an instrument of procreation, a tolerated imperfection, if not evil. Certainly, the faithful, those near to Christ, rejected such twisted views and forced the hierarchy, so Boswell documents, to bless such physical unions, as it blessed even mere sacramentals such as holy water.

It was not until the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 (coincidentally of Magna Carta fame!) that the emotionally crippled hierarchy was forced to elevate marriage from a mere Blessing to a full Sacrament. Would a reasonable person seek the equality of a same-sex physically expressive, passionate union in the pallor of such a so-called sacrament? Lesbian/gay marriage: NO THANKS! It would indeed seem that one should seek the provenance of modern, spousal equality in the "pagan," same-sex unions of the Classical and Early Christian Period. Therefore, any Christian Blessing or Office of same-sex unions may have both pre-Christian and Christian provenance. How were same-sex unions solemnized in Medieval Europe?

Boswell has collected Greek, Latin, and Old Slavonic texts from the 6th to the 16th Century for solemnizing same-sex unions. These Offices contain some or all of the following: Hymns or narratives of the same-sex couple Saints Serge and Bacchus; the New Testament readings from Jn 15:17; 17:1,18-26; 1Cor 12:27-31 & 13:4-8; Psalm 133, the placing of hands on the Book of the Gospels; the holding of lighted candles; the incensation of the same-sex couple by the priest; the kissing of the Gospel, priest, and each other; the wearing of crowns (heterosexual union is also called "coronation" in the Eastern Church); the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ; the carrying or the exchange of crosses; the triple circumambulation of the altar by the priest and the couple; the binding of the couple's hands by a stole or cincture. Multiple parallels exist between ecclesiastical blessings of heterosexual and same-sex unions. Here is one Blessing from a 12th-Century Greek prayer for holy union:

Good and loving God, you made heaven and earth and women and men in your image. You bestowed upon humanity every grace and the power of eternal life. You also considered it appropriate that the holy apostles Philip and Bartholomew be united together and be happy in bed (*adelphous euklineis genesthai*), not by nature but by a holy spirit and faith. O loving God, send down now the grace of your Holy Spirit upon these men, your servants, whom you have found worthy to be united together, not bound by nature but by a holy spirit and in the way of faith. Give them your love that they may dwell safely until the end of their lives under your protection. Give them your grace, as you gave it to your holy

apostles in your great love, kindness, and favor."

(cf. pp 311-2/350-2)

Did the Church ever perform "gay marriages?" The answer is a definite—maybe!

On the one hand, same-sex unions seemed to have outstripped different-sex unions in terms of their emotional and physical depths. Classically, marriage was contractual; ecclesiastically, marriage (certainly after Augustine) was merely procreative and still morally compromised. In contradistinction, same-sex unions were, on the one hand, romantic, passionate, physical, and still very holy; and, on the other hand, socially progressive, and egalitarian.

"Gay marriage" in the Classical and Medieval Periods is where "straight marriage" only hoped to be ethically and romantically!

Boswell's investigations have uncovered many other kernels in this discussion. Here are but four: First, chastity or being chaste—in Latin, *casta* or *castitas*—has nothing to do with celibacy. Chastity means being both faithful and sexually active within a relationship. Thus chastity equates most readily, not with abstinence, but with monogamy! Next, male, same-sex unions were celebrated by the recollection of Biblical, same-sex unions such as those of Jonathan and David, and Christ and John and amplified by the story of Saints Serge and Bacchus. The third point is "The lady protests too much, methinks." During the Classical Period, lesbian/gay/bisexual relationships were sanctioned, *i.e.* held holy. Anti-same-sex rhetoric increased as the Christian hierarchy gained political power. "Doctrine" appears to be the result of politics, more than the result of true theology. That this misdirected, sexual asceticism of Patristic, Augustine Christianity often, or indeed usually, went unheeded is witnessed by the frequency and vituperation of the hierarchical invectives. Compare, for instance the paroxysms suffered by Rome when the topics of birth control and the ordination of women are broached. How many Catholic families practice modern family planning? The hierarchy is most vociferous when widespread, commonly accepted practices of the faithful are attacked.

The fourth point Boswell raises is whether premodern Europeans had a gay/lesbian self-consciousness. Self-identification as lesbian or gay is matter of pride for us; however, such labels create an us-them mentality *vis-à-vis* the straight population. My reading of the author here is that the premoderns had a holistic view in that same-sex love was merely another possible facet of a person's nature. There was no need for gay/lesbian labels in a tolerant society! Does this imply that hierarchy was/is divorced from the People of God and everyday life?

The implication of Boswell's research in this connection evinces powerful ties to our present concerns with Roman dictatorship. The louder the hierarchy rails against same-sex unions, women priest, reproductive freedom, exercise of conscience, democracy within the

People of God, safer sex, liturgies of the laity (a pleonasm!), the more this indicates that these practices were/are widespread! Curial paroxysms are always occasioned by current practices.

Rome anticipated the computer age by engaging in virtual theology: Cannons and rules were promulgated without regard for the real, body, passionate existence of women and men, who in their bodily-ness and passion can still follow Jesus.

The best minds of the Church, the People of God, tell us that the partners are the ministers of sacraments of the unity of two, loving human beings. Let it be so always! What can we say in this respect about lesbian and gay unions in the 20th Century?

In view of the egalitarian constitution of same-sex unions from ancient times, as recognized by Holy Mother Church in various Offices of Holy Union, we may demand lesbian and gay marriages, not because same-sex love has become acceptable to straight society; but rather, because movements for equal civil rights, especially those of women, have made marriage an institution conforming to the historical equality of same-sex unions.

—J. Keith Wright, Ph.D.

The Lord's Prayer: Grace for Meals or Messianic Challenge?

Christians have been called a *Tischgemeinschaft*, a tongue-twister for: a community of the table. Check both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures! Hospitality, the sharing of the table with a stranger, is a basic, divinely ordered virtue. In fact, the sin of Sodom is the violation of this basic right, the law of hospitality towards the pilgrim, *viz.* the right, even of a potential enemy, to be received with courtesy and with the basic necessities of life. Jesus, our Brother and the Child of God and Mary, distinguished his ministry by sharing table with people who were considered unclean or outcast by the powers that be. To call yourself Christian, you must call yourself a sharer of your table with everyone! Beyond the response to nourish the bodies of those we meet, we Christians covenant to invite each and every person to the Messianic table, to the heavenly banquet of all women and men with Jesus.

When we gather at table, we say a thanksgiving, a eucharist, a grace. Is the Lord's Prayer a grace for the common, daily table, or is the Our Father a call to a different, heavenly table of truly apocalyptic dimensions?

"Give us this day our daily (in Greek, *epiousion*) bread." (Mt 6:11; Lk 11:3) Only two of the accepted gospels recount the text of the Lord's Prayer, and even these gospels have different texts!

Luke recounts the shorter version, which some experts—on the principle that a sacred text is never shortened, but only lengthened by commentary—suggest is the earlier of the two. The Lucan Lord's Prayer comes in response to an apostolic query about praying as the (perhaps rival) disciples of John the Baptizer prayed.

There the subsequent emphasis is on the value of insistent and persistent prayer: "So if you, worthless as you are, know how to give your children good gifts, isn't it much more likely that the Mother Father in heaven will give the Spirit of holiness to those who ask?" (Lk 11:13) Is the bread of the Lord's Prayer really the powerful presence of the Spirit, the fulfiller of God's will?

Commentary in the Scholars' Version (*The Complete Gospels*, R. J. Miller, ed.; ISBN 0-06-065587-9) states "The meaning of the Greek word *epiousios* is disputed. Possible translations are 'daily,' 'for substance,' as well as 'for the future.' Its *only* certain occurrence in the Greek language is in the Lord's Prayer." The notion of "for the future" fits best with the theme of divine providence or Messianism in this Lucan periscope.

Matthew, on the other hand, contrasts the directness of the Lord's Prayer with the senseless repetitions or litanies of the pagans. We are not to babble when we pray (Mt 6:8); the Father Mother already knows what we want before we ask. The Lord's Prayer, in this context, is followed both by admonitions to forgiveness, to fast in secret, to reject earthly possession, and also by the advice: "Don't fret about your life—what you're going to eat or drink—or about your body—what you're going to wear. There is more to living than food and clothing, isn't there?" (Mt 6:25) Thus, in Matthew, the *Pater Noster* appears to refer to a bread that is not everyday fare!

We can glean greater understanding of the *Pater Noster* by consulting other, early Christian witnesses. The *Gospel of the Nazoreans* is unfortunately still a fragmentary narrative, cited by early Christian teachers, and is apparently related to Matthew's gospel. With regard to a fragment of this now tentatively reconstructed gospel, St. Jerome relates the following: "In the so-called Gospel of the Hebrews (in the Lord's Prayer), instead of 'the bread we need for the day' I found *mahar*, which means 'for tomorrow,' so that the sense is "Provide us today with the bread we need for tomorrow"—that is, for the future." St. Jerome continues, "In the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew it reads thus: 'Provide us today with the bread we need for tomorrow,' that is, give us today the bread you will give us in your domain." (*The Complete Gospels*, pp. 443-4.) On this construal, we should pray: **Give us today the bread of/for tomorrow!**

In addition, the enigmatic Gospel of John, which lacks both a complete text of the Lord's Prayer as well as the Words of Institution, may actually dissect—a religious profi would say "de-construct"—both the Lord's Prayer and Eucharistic meal in the Bread of Life story in Jn 6:25-61. Here the talk is of the "bread of the heavens," (Jn 6:31,34) and of the raising up of those who see Jesus as executing the will of God (Jn 6:37-40). Finally this Johannine discourse concludes with the *skleros logos*, with an indigestible text, with the so-called *sermo durus* or "hard saying." Remember especially that pious Jews were strictly forbidden to eat flesh with the blood of life

still in it by the law of Moses and so the Messianic table is not usual or conventional, but scandalous: "I am the life-giving bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever . . . I swear to God, if you don't eat the son of Adam's mortal flesh and drink his blood, you don't possess life. Everyone who feeds on my mortal flesh and drinks my blood possesses real life, and I will resurrect them on the last day. . . . Those who feed on my mortal flesh and drink my blood are part of me and I am part of them." (SV Jn 6:53-56)

Jesus' table serves up paradoxes: the familiar and the revolting, the novel and the traditional. The consequence of paradox was disbelief among those who idolized the usual and conventional. There was an exodus from the community around Jesus:

". . . When the disciples heard this [hard, indigestible language], many responded, 'This is offensive. Who can take it seriously?' . . . As a result, many of his disciples pulled out and would no longer travel about with him." (Jn 6:51-66) The Gospel of John does not contain an account of the Last Supper with the Words of Institution of the Eucharist. One might suggest with the Johannine interpretations of both the Lord's Prayer and of the Institution of the Eucharist are juxtaposed in Jn 6. Therefore, to equate the Lord's Prayer with the blessing of anything other than a Messianic banquet is to ignore both the deliberate slap in the face to pious Jewish practice of some early (perhaps even Jewish) Christian ritual and also the radical, yet Christically unitive, nature of the Bread and Cup as the Body and Blood of our true Messiah, Jesus.

In the Roman Rite, we have liturgically used Jerome's Lucan translation *panem quotidianum* (Vulgate, Lk 11:3), which equates with "daily bread" in the Lord's Prayer. yet in the Matthean gospel, this same St. Jerome in the "authoritative" Latin translation actually employed *panem supersubstantialiem* the supersubstantial bread—a wonder bread, hardly everyday fare! Ancient commentators interpreted this rendering as "bread for sustenance, which serves to maintain life," or "bread for the present," or "food for tomorrow." Perhaps significant for those of us in the Greek, Roman and sister sacramental traditions is the derogatory comment of a Protestant translator who designates the Latin phrase, "*supersubstantialis* = superabundant" above as a "barbarism." (J.H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* after Grimm's *Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti*) For us in the sacramental tradition of Jesus' messianic meal, the Eucharistic table should be called to share in the hospitality of heaven and in the new creation and covenant! Is this call not also a demand for real, social justice, for the equal sharing of the banquet of the earth's resources?

In a practical sense, we may ask: What is the justification for using the Lord's Prayer as a grace before meals? The fittingness of this prayer as a preprandial thanksgiving depends upon our concept of the purpose of *Tischgemeinschaft*, of the community of the table, within

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p style="text-align: center;">JUNE BIRTHDAYS</p> <p>-----</p> <p>1 - Robert G. - Ruben M. 2 - Bobby M. 4 - Mike S. 12 - Maria A.</p> <p>13 - Mike C. 17 - Jim L. 24 - Joe D. 29 - Lawrence H.</p>				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<p>Dignity 21st Anniversary Celebration! Pentecost Sunday 11am - 2pm "NEW YORK TIMES" at Bill & Gene's, 2612 Yupon (529-3268). 4:30pm Choir practice at Dignity Center. 5:30pm MASS at Center concelebrated by Fr. John McNeil and Fr. Bill T., followed by potluck dinner and ice cream social.</p>				7:00pm LITURGY TEAM MEETING at Dignity Center, all are invited.	7:30pm CINEMA NIGHT at Dignity Center.	7:30pm MASS at Dignity Center. Sacrament of Healing and Anointing during Mass. Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<p>Trinity Sunday 11am - 2pm "NEW YORK TIMES" at Bill & Gene's, 2612 Yupon (529-3268). 5:30pm LITURGY SERVICE at Dignity Center.</p>		 6:30pm BOARD MEETING at Dignity Center.	 Flag Day		HOUSTON GAY/LESBIAN PRIDE WEEK BEGINS. DEADLINE for Articles in the July newsletter.	7:30pm MASS at Dignity Center. Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.
GAY/LESBIAN PRIDE WEEK						
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<p>Father's Day Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) 11am - 2pm "NEW YORK TIMES" at Bill & Gene's, 2612 Yupon (529-3268). 5:30pm LITURGY SERVICE at Dignity Center.</p>			Summer begins		7:30pm CINEMA NIGHT at Dignity Center. DEADLINE for Calendar Entries in July newsletter (call the Center).	7:30pm MASS at Dignity Center. 4th Sat "Loose Change Collection" for Retreat Fund. Please bring canned goods for Stone Soup.
GAY/LESBIAN PRIDE WEEK						
25	26	27	28	29	30	
<p>12th Sunday in Ordinary Time 11am - 2pm "NEW YORK TIMES" at Bill & Gene's, 2612 Yupon (529-3268). 5:30pm LITURGY SERVICE at Dignity Center.</p> <p>2:00pm GAY/LESBIAN PRIDE PARADE</p>		 6:30pm BOARD MEETING at Dignity Center				

the modern Christian community. In fact, modern interpretations of the Word of God as ever spoken anew suggests every new praying of the Lord's Prayer is open to new meaning. Thus there can never be a single meaning!

The nitty-gritty for us is: To what extent is every shared meal of the Christian community, especially Dignity, a Eucharist or Mass? This is not an easy question to answer! We are forced to consider the nature of priesthood or of the priesthoods within the Christian community and the nature of a sacrament.

Amidst all this, perhaps completely academic debate, one definitive point emerges. If we pray the Lord's Prayer as grace before a communal meal, in the least, we are proclaiming this sharing of food and fellowship as a Messianic banquet.

Are we asserting our baptismal priesthood by calling down, through the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the physical presence of the Divine at our community of the table. Can we even hope to do this? Perhaps the distinction between communal, messianic banquet and Eucharistic sacrament pales, perhaps not.

We should think and feel and pray twice, before we use the Lord's Prayer as a mere *hors-d'oeuvre* or spiritual appetizer. Are we not challenged to attend the messianic banquet of Jesus, are we prepared for the table of the Lord? Are we truly a community of the table?

Jesus is the Child of God, Jesus is Body and Blood, Jesus is Bread and Wine! Alleluia! What does the bread of Jesus' community mean to you?

—J. Keith Wright, Ph.D.

Catholic Parents Network Retreat

A regional retreat for Catholic parents of gay and lesbian children will be held June 9-11, 1995 at the Marydale Retreat Center in Covington, Kentucky.

The registration deadline is May 31, 1995, \$125.00 per person which includes room, meals, snacks, and materials. More information was given about this retreat in the two previous newsletters. If you have further questions or wish more information, phone (301) 927-8766. Check it out.

—G. M. W.

T-Shirts

Dignity/Houston are available from any Board Member for \$10.00. We have been here for twenty-one years serving the Houston Lesbian and Gay community.

Dignity Float in the Pride Parade

Kevin Kelly is looking for helpers to get together a float for this year's pride parade. Call him at 861-2697.

Free Membership!

Continuing a policy the Board began in 1994, we will again be offering free membership in Dignity/USA for those who match or exceed a pledge of \$7.00 per week (\$364.00 per year) in 1995. Keep up your stewardship and contributions to the only organization which honestly

and compassionately has served lesbian and gay Catholics for the last 20 years in Houston!

Sunday Evening Liturgies

Dignity also celebrates Mass every Sunday afternoon at 5:30 at our Center on Yale. The prayerful atmosphere compliments the Saturday Liturgies very well.

Theatre Thoughts and More

The theatre season is quickly coming up to summer vacation time. Here are the productions still on the boards:

A. D. Players (2710 W. Alabama) *What Ever Happened to Villa Real* by Jeannette Clift George, Wed-Sun thru June 4.

Actors Workshop (1009 Chartres) *Our of Order* by Ray Cooney, Thur-Sun thru June 4.

Alley Theatre (615 Texas) *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner, all month, alternating Parts 1 & 2.

Center Stage Theatre (806 Russell Palmer Rd) *West Side Story*, music by Leonard Bernstein, Fri-Sun thru June 11.

The Company on Stage (536 Westbury Square) *Spider's Web*, by Agatha Christie, Fri & Sat thru June 10.

Country Playhouse (12802 Queensbury) *Lend Me a Tenor*, by Ken Ludwig, Fri & Sat thru June 3.

Houston Skyline Theatre (1617 Fannin) *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress* by Allen Ball, Fri-Sat thru June 3.

Main Street Theatre (2540 Times Blvd) *Waiting for a Kiss* by Tim & Kim Powers, Wed-Sun June 3-25.

New Heights Theatre (339 W. 19th) *The Glass Mendacity*, a parody on Tennessee Williams' works, Fri-Sun, thru June 11.

Stages Theatre (3201 Allen Pkwy) *Heaven and Hell* by Michael J. Farrand, Fri-Sat thru June 3.

Theatre LaB (1706 Alamo) *The Destiny of Me* by Larry Kramer, sequel to *The Normal Heart* mounted a few seasons ago at the Alley, Fri-Sun thru June 24.

—Bob Heer

Stone Soup

Weekly offerings of groceries, hygiene items (and don't forget, paper bags) may be placed at the altar at each Dignity liturgy.

Movie Night

If you have nothing to do on the second and fourth Fridays of each month at 7:30, plan on attending a movie night at Dignity Center. Munchies and sociability vie with fun movies for a very pleasant Friday evening.

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