

dignity san francisco

Spirit

"Lord Send Out Your SPIRIT!"

Dear Members & Friends,

2003 marks the thirtieth Anniversary of the founding of Dignity/San Francisco! This anniversary presents us with an opportunity to take a deeper look at our community, ministry and mission. It is a chance for us to reconnect with our past and coalesce a vision for our future.

As some of our members reflect on the past thirty years, images of packed churches with vibrant Sunday Services; those who are with The Creator; and Christmas Services at *The Castro Theater* where hundreds of people could hear The Creator's Word in a faith affirming environment are brought to mind. Many of those people that had packed the pews have gone before us. Some have left because Dignity did not meet their needs. Others left our midst because our actions may have driven them away. Some may not have visited us because they could not find us.

If we hurt you, or made you feel unwelcome by failing to inspire your spiritual growth or by not listening to you, then we ask your forgiveness and that you return to us with a renewed vision. If you are just finding out about Dignity, we ask that you stick around for a while. You cannot know us, just as we cannot know you, in a single day. **We invite you to join us.**

Just as a biological family has "issues", so can we. As we look upon our history we see many

challenges that we have faced: HIV/AIDS; Violence and Intolerance; and internal strife within our own Family and Church. As an ideal, we strive to be a community where all *lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered Catholics, their families and friends* can feel welcome. As we continue our mission to achieve a "holistic and inclusive understanding of sexuality in the church," we realize that this ideal can only be accomplished with Christ's presence. At the center of our faith is Christ, who understands our suffering.

• ***In A Tender, Loving Voice*** •

In the coming months there will be many events that will shape our continuing story. From January 24th-26th we will hold our first retreat in 10 years. Join us to listen to that "Tender, Loving Voice". (We are pleased to announce that we have reached our maximum attendance of 27 retreatants but we would be glad to put you on our waiting list, as there are sometimes advance cancellations for such events.)

March will not only be a time of rebirth and renewal for God's Creation, it will be one for our Community as **we elect our new Board of Directors (including our new Co-Chairs), on Sunday, March 2nd.** As we sit in Board Meetings it is difficult not to notice that there are rarely any members in attendance who are not elected to be there. It is also glaring that there are positions that have gone unfilled since before our terms began. Search your heart and help us to guide the future of Dignity. >>>

TED MAYLATH

&

PAUL ZILLER,

Co-CHAIRS



CELEBRATING

OUR SEXUALITY

AND LOVE AS

GIFTS FROM GOD

The first duty of love is to listen.

— PAUL TILLICH



2003 NATIONAL CONVENTION:
"A VOICE IN THE DESERT"

"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion to clarity.... Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."

— MELODY BEATTIE

• ***Pax et Bonum Tradition Continues*** •

As we prepare for our Savior's Passion, Death and Ultimate Triumph over Sin and Death, we will also be preparing for the celebration of **Pax et Bonum, scheduled again at the Crown Plaza Hotel, April 5, 2003!** This event started as a way to celebrate our first decade of peace and service. Now we need help to make certain that this celebration of our thirty years is one to remember for the next thirty years. By the time you receive this letter, some work will have been done. Much more will still need to be completed. Let's make this an unforgettable celebration.

• ***A Voice in the Desert*** •

Our 16th Biennial Dignity/USA Convention will be in Las Vegas, August 7-10, 2003, at the Alexis Park Resort Hotel (*the premier non-gaming, all suite hotel in Vegas*). We need our members and friends to represent Dignity/SF to our extended community, our national family.

...come, be "A Voice in the Desert"!

The **keynote speaker** for this National Convention is **A. W. Richard Sipe**. He is a psychotherapist and former Benedictine monk and priest (ordained 1959, left priesthood in 1970), married to a former Maryknoll nun, Marianne Benkert, MD. For more than 30 years, he has been engaged in research on the institution and practice of priestly celibacy. He has counseled clergy accused of sexual crimes. He has written extensively on the church's policy of committing priests to a lifetime of celibacy.

"If they were to eliminate all those who were homosexually oriented, the number would be so staggering that it would be like an atomic bomb; it would do the same damage to the church's operation," **according to Sipe**. "It would mean the resignation of at least a third of the bishops of the world. And it's very much against the tradition of the church. Discriminating against orientation is not going to solve the problem."

For further details on the convention, visit the convention link on our website or give Dignity/USA a call at 1.800.877.8797.

• ***We want to hear your stories...*** •

Let us share meals as Christ did: when He began his public ministry at the wedding feast at Cana, on the night before He died, and when the disciples, women and men alike, recognized Him in the breaking of the bread after his Resurrection. Let us remember the Lover of Us All and consider this year as a pivotal point in the ministry of Dignity/San Francisco. Just as we know the story of Jesus is still unfolding in our midst, we also know that our story is unfolding. Come enjoy our *Second Sunday Suppers* with us. Bring what you can, even if it is only your presence, for that is more than we need.

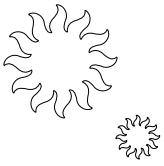
We want to hear your stories; we want to see your faces. We need to reconcile with those who have left us. We want to break bread together with our brothers and sisters we do not yet know. In doing so, we will all recognize the face of Christ in our midst. Please look deep into your hearts and search out God's call to you. Help us continue to strive to become a Community that others "look to" for advocacy, fellowship and The Gospel... to become more fully what we know we can be. *JOIN US!*

• ***Message from the Board*** •

"At our January meeting, the Board of Directors of Dignity/San Francisco recognized all of the chapter members who worked to make this year's Christmas Liturgy at The L/G/B/T Center a great success. Many volunteers spent countless hours planning the Liturgy, decorating the space, and getting the word out to the community. The Board gave special recognition to the Worship Committee for creating a meaningful and joyous celebration, and Co-chair Paul Ziller, who lead the effort for the Liturgy from the beginning. **The Liturgy was a wonderful way for both members and newcomers to celebrate the Birth of Our Savior, and bring Dignity's message to the larger community in the Center. We were pleased to be joined by about 70 people for the celebration, including many visitors and new faces.**"

— THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, DIGNITY/SF

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*Dignity is more than
just a word —
it is the respect we accord
one another.*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS +

Co-Chairs, (see front)

both positions open in March!

Secretary, VACANT!

Treasurer, Jim Remer

At-Large Members,

3 positions open in March!

Neil Christensen

Joseph Curtin

Clarence Luvisi

David Turner

Women's Group Coordinator,

Trudy Guella



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A Special Message from Ted & Paul,

(out-going Co-Chairs)



My Dignity Family,

I would like to take this opportunity to say a small farewell, as Co-Chair of our community, to all of you. The encouragement that I've received over the past two years, from sources too many to name individually, has been heart-warming and much appreciated. As we all move forward with the election of the new Board, I would also like to ask you all to continue to pray for one another. To be there for one another and for the community.

Continue to search out how your time, talent and treasure can help our community to stay happy and healthy.

I look forward to continuing my relationship with you all.

God Bless,

T E D M A Y L A T H



Dear Dignity/SF Sisters & Brothers,

As Ted and I approach the end of our two-year terms as Co-Chairs, I look forward with you to another exciting time of change and opportunity. I want to send out my gratitude to you for entrusting to me this opportunity to walk with you and help guide you through just a small piece of this 30 year journey, as we evolve our mission and grow as a community.

My time in this role has brought me the reward of many personal blessings... coming to a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses

of my own faith, my gifts and limitations, my joys and fears... Thank you for your patience and understanding when, in my most challenging moments, I perhaps didn't respond with grace.

Thanks to those who have given me much needed nudges of support or counsel along the way, so that I could go from really "green" to at least a lighter shade of "green". I have been inspired by the fine living examples of members in our midst and the community-at-large who are truly the hands, mouths and feet of God. Without the passionate and committed involvement and advocacy of these members, Dignity/SF would cease to exist.

And finally, thanks to Ted, my "partner in crime", for his resiliency, flexibility, patience, efficiency, commitment... our complimentary gifts and skills made us a pretty darn good team.

Remember to be open to the new spirit as much as you hold fast to comfortable traditions of what you know, lend affirming support to one another as often as you offer criticism, and if you would like to see change – consider being of part of the solution you envision.

It has been a privilege to have been able to play a special role in an organization who's mission is justice, compassion and DIGNITY. May they prevail!

Much love to you,

PAUL ZILLER

