

dignity san francisco

# Spirit

"Lord Send Out Your SPIRIT!"

Dear Members and Friends,

With the New Year come new opportunities for growth and wisdom.

Many years ago, one of *DignityUSA's* conventions proclaimed, "**We are here for good!**". We believed that our mission would be needed for several years into our future and we called our mission "good". As your *Board of Directors* looks ahead into 2007, we still maintain that our mission is needed by the larger Church and that our commitment to justice for LGBT Catholics is stronger than ever. As 2006 ended on a note of disappointment at the lack of true pastoral care by our bishops, **we celebrated Advent with hope and expectation that the Light of the Incarnation will one day illumine the hearts and minds of our Church's leadership.** Our hope is not in vain because we firmly believe that members of *DignitySan Francisco* have taken up positions of leadership in ministering to our LGBT sisters and brothers. We celebrated our own *Holy Families* on New Year's Eve as those of us in committed relationships were blessed at Mass. **The light of our holy relationships shone threw the darkness of the night as we watched for the dawn of the New Year.**

Your *Board of Directors* will let our light shine throughout this year and we invite all of our members and friends to enter into the Light that is Christ's unconditional love for us. Through worship, socializing and social action, we cooperate with God in bringing into being

the Epiphany of the goodness of our love and lives. We shall not allow the darkness of despair, emanating from the lack of understanding by the hierarchy and the legislative attempts by the State to deny us our civil rights, extinguish the hope that is ours through baptism.

We need your goodness to strengthen our goodness. We need your presence to help make our presence known within the Church and society.

In a few weeks, **we will participate in the Octave for Christian Unity by listening to the preaching of Diana Wear**, president of the *Women's Ordination Conference*. Bring along a friend from another religious tradition to Mass and work for that unity for which Jesus prayed at that Last Supper. Plan on joining us for our annual *Pax et Bonum* dinner dance where we recognize the Light of Christ in our neighbors. Offer your help in planning a fundraiser for *DignityUSA* as a way of bringing together our family of faith to celebrate our lives and to support our national leadership. **Pray for peace; work for justice.** Let your light shine before all people who are in most need this New Year. We ARE here for good.

— Brother Richard Jonathan, SSF, Co-Chair

## • *Tres Reyes/Epifania*

Three Kings/Epiphany, a feast that sets the stage for the Manifestation of our Gods' love to the Nations. The Theologians and Scholars argue loudly about the number, race, and origins of the kings, and the significance of the gifts, but we as LGBT people know that the

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BROTHER RICHARD

JONATHAN, SSF

& NEIL CHRISTENSEN,

CO-CHAIRS

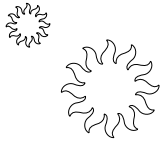


CELEBRATING

OUR SEXUALITY

AND LOVE AS

GIFTS FROM GOD



### An Epiphany Prayer

*Will you fill us so full*

*of your love that there is*

*no more room for intolerance?*

— Dennis Bratcher

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reality of our feast day is INCLUSION, not delusions of grandeur. As the Pope and his jet-setters deck themselves with Prada and Gucci, divisively disenfranchising the so-called "intrinsically disordered," **the Gospel of Jesus, the Christ, shouts out for inclusivity and welcomes all into the household of a gracious and loving creator.** Epiphany is about inclusion: EVERYONE! is invited.

Jesus comes not just for the people of Bethlehem, Judah, or Israel, but for the ENTIRE Worlds' population. Jesus deliberately came as poor, suspect, on-the-run, yet, "wise men know his worth."

Inclusion is dangerous and frightening. It drives the "Herods" crazy with fear. It turns their worlds topsy-turvy. It threatens their base of Power and their control. Just look at Rome's and The American Bishops' latest mis-sives. In them, there is nothing to do with the Gospel, but everything to do with power and control: from who will wash the dishes, to how and who we can love. They slaughter the innocents in a vain attempt to hold on to their dwindling powers. We must be careful; we tread on dangerous ground. It is so easy to overreact to these tyrants and to take on their trappings of righteousness. The danger of falling into their pit of hatefulness is great. We are called to work for inclusiveness, including even them. **WE are called to show all, by how we live our lives, that we believe that our God loves us and our families: that God accepts us, just as we are — no, ifs, ands, or buts !**

Like the Wise Men who "returned home by another route, after being warned by an angel in a dream," let us ignore the mouthings of these Herods and carefully make our way home to our Heavenly creator without becoming enmeshed in their plots, or worse, becoming like them.

Hierarchies and Politicians do not own us, our Church, or our Salvation. Our Faith is in the Person of Christ Jesus, not in a government or a church. We are included, that's what we celebrate in this New Year's feast.

— Neil Christensen, C.S.E.F., Co-Chair

#### • **Calendar of Upcoming Events**

**Sunday, January 21:** *Celebration of the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity.* **Guest**

**Homilist:** Diana Wear, President of the Women's Ordination Conference.

**Sunday, January 28:** *Celebration of January birthdays and anniversaries.* This event takes place every fourth Sunday of the month.

**February 21:** Ash Wednesday

**April 14, 21, OR 28:** *Pax et Bonum Awards*

*Dinner/Dance.* Date to be announced soon!

**Convention 2007: July 5–8, Austin Texas:**

**Dignity/USA 18th Biennial Convention**

Please mark your calendars! Join members of Dignity/San Francisco and our extended family throughout the world in our family reunion! See any of our Board members for further information.

#### • **Board of Directors**

Our *Board of Directors* meets the third Sunday of the month at 2:30pm in the church hall. Our meetings are open to everyone and we are delighted to hear from you. **Please join us and give us your input!**

#### • **Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration '06**

The Advent light shown even more brightly with the joyful celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe. On the Second Sunday of Advent, at the end of Mass, *Dignity* members processed into the church hall to venerate Mary at a beautifully decorated shrine, graced by the image of *Our Lady of Guadalupe*. Our singing hailed *Mary as Patroness of the Americas* and after the roses of the shrine were blessed, they were handed out to all participants as an invitation to a rousing fiesta. Mexican food delighted us as we listened to singer and guitarist Rennea Couttente and her musicians. Their music lured people out onto the dance floor where the singing and dancing gave praise to God for the gift of our Mother. Thank you to everyone who participated in this wonderful annual event; special thanks to Raul for coordinating this fantastic fiesta!