



Newsletter

December 2005

Dignity/Seattle Liturgy

Reminder

Liturgy is at 6:00 p.m. every 2nd Sunday: December 11, Jan. 8
Ravenna United Methodist Church 5751-33rd Ave NE Seattle

Over 100 people attend Sister Jeannine Gramick's film & discussion on November 1st

Seattle's First Baptist Church on First Hill was Sister Jeannine's stop on her recent tour of the Pacific Northwest. She was in Olympia and Portland the prior weekend. The entire program (90-minute film followed by a 30-minute discussion) was scheduled to last two hours, but the crowd's enthusiastic embrace of Sr. Jeannine's mission and probing questions about the Catholic Church's untenable position on GLBT people kept the conversation going almost an extra hour. Thanks go to Call To Action, which sponsored and organized the visit, and to Bill Caldwell, Robert Reeley and Bob Mitchell from the former 7:30 Mass Community at St. Joseph's, who spent hours making the baked goods & refreshments.

Sister Jeannine's Letter of Thanks

November 6, 2005

Dear (Pacific Northwest Call to Action folks),
I want to thank each of you for the tremendous amount of work you did before, during, and after my visit to the Pacific Northwest. I was truly amazed at the numbers of people you were able to draw together. You all did a great job of advertising. I could feel high energy at each of the venues. I truly believe the film and the evening discussions achieved the goal--encouraging people to make mature, moral decisions--taking a stand of conscience. Thank you too for the donations for the ministry and for the yummy refreshments you provided for the receptions. My entire stay was most enjoyable and I thank you all for making it possible.

Peace,
Jeannine

(See press release announcing Sr. Gramick as the recipient of an international peace prize.)

Voice of the Faithful: Dec 10-11

We invite you on the weekend of December 10-11 to join in a national action to demonstrate the following:

- your conviction that a vocation to the priesthood is not and should not be restricted by one's sexuality;
- your belief that excluding homosexuals from the priesthood is not a solution to the clergy sexual abuse crisis;
- and your support of VOTF's second goal – to support priests of integrity.

What can you do? VOTF's National Office invites you on Saturday & Sunday of December 10-11 to

- wear a green ribbon visibly displayed at the Mass you attend;
- forward this email to as many Catholics – and non-Catholics – as you know, and ask them to wear a green ribbon that weekend to show their support.

As many Catholics have been aware since January 2002, our good priests have been under siege. In February of that year our fledgling organization pledged our support for those “priests of integrity” – we knew our servant leaders by their pastoral presence in our lives. We know them still.

The support of VOTF for priests of integrity comes with no “asterisk” – in the wake of the recently released Vatican document on homosexuality in US seminaries, it is time to be demonstrable in that support. We invite you to join a national gesture of our conviction that a vocation to the priesthood is not and should not be restricted by one's sexuality. As was quoted in the Tablet by Fr. Timothy Radcliffe, “We should be more attentive to whom our seminarians may be inclined to hate than whom they love. Racism, misogyny and homophobia would all be signs that someone could not be a good model of Christ.”

We are told in Acts that the early Christian community was recognized when observers would say of them, “See how they love one another.” What better time to live that message?

We urge you to share this email with family and friends. For more information: <www.votf.org/>

Please be generous: DignityUSA's Advent fundraising appeal <<http://www.dignityusa.org/>>

Nun Honored for Work with Sexual Minorities

Press Release: November 28, 2005

A Roman Catholic nun, and board member of the National Coalition of American Nuns, is the recipient of an international peace prize for her work with sexual minorities.

The Santa Claus Foundation, registered in Turkey in 1996, was founded to promote kindness, peace, neighborliness, and love throughout the world. As a universal image of love, Santa Claus was chosen as the foundation's symbol.

The nun will receive the Santa Claus Peace Prize in Antalya, Turkey at a Gala on December 6, in the context of the International Activities for World Peace, Dec. 1-7. In 2005, the foundation chose the theme "Sexual Identities The Path to Peace."

Jeannine Gramick, a Sister of Loretto, has been working for justice and pastoral concern for lesbian and gay people since 1971 when she became a close friend of a homosexual man she met in graduate school.

The Foundation recognizes there are people whose "choices," "lifestyles," or "orientations" are different from the majority. The Foundation believes that sexual minorities should be respected to promote peace. We all "share the same world."

In a letter announcing the award, Muammer Karabulut, Chairman of the Board of the Santa Claus Foundation, commended the nun for her "memorable attempt" in proclaiming that homosexual people can live "an authentically Christian life," and for her perseverance despite "protests" against her ministry of advocating for the human rights and dignity of homosexual persons.

The nun and her work are the subject of a recent documentary, *In Good Conscience: Sister Jeannine Gramick's Journey of Faith*, by the award-winning filmmaker, Barbara Rick.

While engaged in study for her doctoral degree at the University of Pennsylvania, Sister Gramick became friends with a gay man. "Through his gentle persuasion and God's invitation," the nun says she began a church ministry to lesbian and gay people. She organized religious services for people with a homosexual identity who had left the Catholic Church because of prejudice against them. She has conducted spiritual retreats and pilgrimages to holy places and shrines for lesbian and gay people, their parents, families, and friends.

"I had all the myths and stereotypes that our society mistakenly believes about gay and lesbian people," the nun for 45 years said, "but I have learned through my friendships that the average gay or lesbian person is as natural and normal as the average heterosexual person."

Sister Gramick has traveled throughout the English-speaking world to address groups about sexual identity. She advances the judgment of the American

Psychiatric Association that a homosexual identity is not a sickness but an alternative sexual orientation.

In addition to writing books and articles about homosexuality and Catholicism, Sister Gramick helped to begin three organizations for Catholic lesbian and gay people. She also co-founded New Ways Ministry, a Catholic social justice center working for justice and reconciliation of lesbian/gay people in the church.

"I feel honored to be nominated for this award by such a philanthropic world organization. I will joyfully accept this award on behalf of all the lesbian and gay people in the world who have suffered emotional and physical injury and even death because of prejudice, hostility, and lack of understanding. I will also accept this award on behalf of the parents and family, and all persons of good will, who believe in the dignity and goodness of all human beings, regardless of sexual orientation."

Karabulut said the Santa Claus Peace Prize is given annually to a person, institution, or group that shows an "exemplary attitude" toward world peace and maintains "peace, virtue, and good character." The Santa Claus Foundation, he said, believes that people should be treated equally regardless of gender, race, religion, or sexual identity because differences such as these are not fundamental and should not cause division in the human family.

Among the past recipients of the Santa Claus Peace Prize are the Dalai Lama, the International Olympics Committee, and the World Lions Clubs Union.

Sister Jeannine Gramick can be contacted at 301-864-3604 or Gramick@juno.com.

Dignity/Vancouver BC/Dignite

Dignity/Vancouver BC

604/432-1230

Sunday, Dec. 4th. 5:00 p.m. Preparing dinner at Diamond Centre. This is one of Dignity Vancouver's major outreach programs. The Diamond Centre is operated by Friends for Life Society/Loving Spoonful, and each Sunday a group such as ours, volunteers to prepare a home cooked dinner for twenty persons who have a life threatening illness. Together with the staff at the centre and our group, there are usually thirty persons to feed. We are always looking for help in preparing the dinner as well as serving and cleaning up afterwards. If you feel inclined, please call our contact person, Vincent at 604/325-1554.

Saturday, Dec. 10th. 6:00 p.m. Integrity/Vancouver (GLBT Anglicans) Advent Service at St. Margaret's Cedar Cottage, 1530 E 22nd Ave. Vancouver.