



Newsletter

April 2005

Dignity/Seattle Liturgy

Reminder

Liturgy is at 6:00 p.m. every 2nd Sunday: April 10, May 8
Ravenna United Methodist Church 5751-33rd Ave NE Seattle

DignityUSA and You

By Leo N. Egashira

For the past several months, I have witnessed firsthand the interplay between DignityUSA and our local Dignity/Seattle chapter. Most of us in chapters, including myself, are concerned with purely local issues and building faith communities, leaving national and Vatican issues to DignityUSA--as if it were an entity unto itself. The truth is, however, DignityUSA is composed of individual members--you, me and everyone else, plus chapters. The officers and volunteers who devote countless hours to DignityUSA are all individuals who believe that a strong and visible national organization is important to local faith communities, in the same way as strong chapters and committed individuals acting locally are important to the viability of the whole.

During the latter half of 2004, I was added to the loop of editors who vetted DignityUSA press releases on national, state and local issues. With gay and lesbian issues being decided on several fronts, it was a busy time. Last month, Washington State started addressing civil rights in the State Legislature and marriage equality in the State Supreme Court. I went to work on compiling two joint DignityUSA and Dignity/Seattle press releases, liberally "cutting & pasting" text from prior DignityUSA releases and adapting information for local content. To view the two March 1, 2005 press releases, visit our website: <<http://www.DignitySeattle.org>>.

Ten days after the two joint press releases, the Archbishop of Seattle wrote a commentary in the state's largest newspaper opposing equal marriage rights for GLBT people (The Seattle Times, March 10, 2005). Before Dignity/Seattle had a chance to respond, we heard from DignityUSA with helpful comments on formulating a response. No one was more surprised than me on how quickly the national organization jumped on the issue. Four days later, Dignity/Seattle issued a formal response.

In all three cases, DignityUSA became very much involved in lending support to Dignity/Seattle's mission in addressing local issues.

Later in the month of March, I was appointed via election by the DignityUSA Board of Directors to become a Director, and participated in my first board meeting in April. I came away completely awed by the dedication and enormous amount of time and money my fellow directors contribute to DignityUSA, for all of us. I also realized the serious perceptual problem that local groups and the national umbrella group operate in their own different, autonomous spheres.

In a chapter like ours, that is undergoing a critical assessment of our mission and role in increasingly difficult conditions, it is understandable that chapter members devote their energies to the survival of Dignity/Seattle. I could not agree more.

However, from my vantage point of being involved in Dignity for nearly 24 years at local, regional (when we still had a regional structure) and now national levels, I cannot impress upon you the importance of supporting DignityUSA with fervor equal to your support of Dignity/Seattle. It is a relationship based on mutual needs and mutual strength. Think about that the next time a DignityUSA funding appeal arrives in the mail.

Finally, you should have received Convention 2005 registration forms. This is the best opportunity to see how truly intertwined Dignity/Seattle is with DignityUSA and sister chapters, as hundreds of kindred souls from throughout the country gather in Philadelphia, July 7-10. Find out for yourself what compels me to attend my 8th Dignity convention. See you there!

Dignity/Vancouver BC

Dignity/Vancouver BC 604/432-1230

Friday, April 15. 7:30 p.m. Liturgy at Dennis'. 604/430-3466.

Saturday, April 23. 3:00 p.m. 25th Anniversary of Integrity/Vancouver. Christ Church Cathedral. Please RSVP to Michael Kalmuk: 604/683-4775 or <kelmik@telus.net>

Official Business

Dignity/Seattle Board Members

Jim Weston	President, Membership chair
Jim Rankin	Vice-Pres., Social co-chair
Denise Arceneaux	Secretary, Liturgy chair
Delia Vita	Treasurer, Special events chair
Paula Lavallee	At-large, D/USA Secretary
Steve Kearney	At-large, Social co-chair
--vacant position--	At-large

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Board Minutes Summary, Mar. 7, 2005

(Edited for publication.)

Meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. at Jim Weston's condo. Dignity prayer was said.

All board members present except Steve Kearney.

M/M/S/C: To approve the minutes as submitted

President's report: (Jim Weston)

- Jim Weston attended the Equal Rights Rally on Feb. 14th. After the rally, he visited the offices of his legislators, leaving a letter from himself as president of Dignity/Seattle with each of them and has since received replies from them in writing – supportive of our stand.
- Jim W. attended the rally for Same-Sex marriage on March 6. It was also a wonderful experience with many in attendance.
- Took care of usual calls. Janet Tu from the local media called and asked what the Pope has done for Catholics in the NW. Jim W. basically responded that he's set us back by torpedoing equal rights for Gays and Lesbians.

Treasurer's report: (Delia Vita)

Checking Acct.

Beginning Balance: \$878.71

Deposits:

February Collection: \$278.00

Sub-total: \$1156.71

Expenses:

RUMC rent (March): \$75.00

Telephone: \$35.43

Total Expenses: \$110.43

Ending Balance: \$1046.28

Savings Acct.

Beginning Balance: \$1,560.78

Interest income \$.44

Ending Balance: \$1,561.22

M/M/S/C: To accept financial report as submitted.

Committee Chairs' reports:

Liturgy Committee: Denise Arceneaux

- Linda H. cannot preside in March or April. Paula L. said that she will preside at a prayer service in both March and April. Otherwise, there will be readings, prayer and discussion of readings by all.
- Ron R. had suggested that we might want to consider meeting at 7:00 p.m. instead of the usual time so that he could make it to service. The Board decided against this, especially since Ron has only presided a few times for us in the past and still may not preside for us in the future even with a change in the time we meet.
- On March 24th, Holy Thursday, Jim W. and Denise A. are planning to go to a mass at All Pilgrims Christian Church presided by Rev. Philip Knowles who has offered to preside for us in the past but has yet to attend one of our services. Rev. Knowles is a priest with the American Catholic Church, of which the Board knows little.

Membership Committee: Jim Weston

- There are several people due up for renewal this month according to "old standards." since Paula L. had informed us that a person is not considered lapsed (and thus not dropped) by National until there's been no contact from that person to National for 24 months. These people are therefore not lapsed according to new rules.

Old Business

- Pride Breakfast: Discussion ensued over whether we want to continue hosting the Pride breakfast. Paula L. made the point that we risked shutting everything down with regard to Dignity/Seattle if we didn't host it this year. The Board agreed to host the breakfast this year. Jim Rankin still has to reserve Central Lutheran for Pride week.
- Rewording of brochure: Jim W. distributed the revised membership brochures. Paula L. made several minor suggestions to change format and content. The Board accepted the new brochure with corrections made.

New Business:

- Received a letter from Dignity/San Francisco inviting us to "Pax et Bonum" dinner.

Next Meeting: Monday, May 3rd at 7:00 p.m. at Jim Weston's condo.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Denise Arceneaux, Secretary