



Newsletter

August 2005

Dignity/Seattle Liturgy

Reminder

Liturgy is at 6:00 p.m. every 2nd Sunday: August 14, September 11
Ravenna United Methodist Church 5751-33rd Ave NE Seattle

Call for Board Candidates

We're looking for new blood to give hard-working "old-timers" (or is "lifers" a more apt term? ☺) well-deserved breaks. Dignity/Seattle is at another crossroads, one of many in our over three decades of service to the GLBT Catholic community.

A constantly changing environment calls to question how we address our stated mission & purpose in the local community. On the one hand, the official church from Rome down to the Archdiocese of Seattle has become more hard-line in opposing the rights of GLBT people in church & society. On the other hand, parishes and other faith communities have become more accepting, more supportive of gay brethren worshipping in their midst. How can Dignity/Seattle operate and thrive in such a dichotomous, conflicting environment? Implementing your ideas will be as challenging as it is rewarding. If you are interested, please submit your candidacy a.s.a.p.

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Men's spirituality book group to start in September. Come together once a month to discuss a book or author (including such works as Thomas Merton's 'Mystics and Zen Masters'; Richard Rohr's 'Everything Belongs'; John McNeill's 'Freedom, Glorious Freedom'). Open to members of all faiths. Be open to taking turns as group leader. For more information, please contact Dan.Fernandez@AvantGuild.com.

Two Membership Meetings

Vote on Dignity/Seattle By-laws Change
Sunday, August 14th, 5:00 p.m.
Ravenna United Methodist Church

Correction: The July Newsletter incorrectly announced that the August 14th meeting was the Annual General Membership Meeting. The purpose of this month's meeting is to approve proposed changes in Dignity/Seattle's by-laws to reflect changes in both the national and local organization.

A quorum is necessary, so your attendance is vitally important. Refreshments will be served.

Copies of the current by-laws, proposed changes and absentee ballots were mailed to each Dignity/Seattle member. If you have not received them, please advise the Board. Better yet, vote in person at the meeting.

Annual Meeting & Elections
Late September: TBA
Ravenna United Methodist Church

A definitive date has not been set, but please look for an announcement in the next Newsletter or in the mail. Board Members will present annual reports and answer questions from the membership, followed by elections for the 2005-2006 Board.

Dignity/Vancouver BC

Dignity/Vancouver BC 604/432-1230

Friday, August 19. 7:30 p.m. Liturgy at Dennis L-H's. 604/430-3466.

Sunday, August 28. To be announced: Potluck Picnic or Supper at Gerry W's. 604/435-1950.

No Dues Policy: Membership in Dignity/Seattle and DignityUSA is free. Join today!

A Mother Speaks

This letter was published in the Valley News, White River Junction, VT. The author's name was not available at press time.

Many letters have been sent to the Valley News concerning the homosexual menace in Vermont. I am the mother of a gay son and I've taken enough from you good people. I'm tired of your foolish rhetoric about the "homosexual agenda" and your allegations that accepting homosexuality is the same thing as advocating sex with children. You are cruel and ignorant. You have been robbing me of the joys of motherhood ever since my children were tiny.

My firstborn son started suffering at the hands of the moral little thugs from your moral, upright families from the time he was in the first grade. He was physically and verbally abused from first grade straight through high school because he was perceived to be gay.

He never professed to be gay or had any association with anything gay, but he had the misfortune not to walk or have gestures like the other boys. He was called "fag" incessantly, starting when he was 6.

In high school, while your children were doing what kids that age should be doing, mine labored over a suicide note, drafting and redrafting it to be sure his family knew how much he loved them. My sobbing 17-year-old tore the heart out of me as he choked out that he just couldn't bear to continue living any longer, that he didn't want to be gay and that he couldn't face a life without dignity.

You have the audacity to talk about protecting families and children from the homosexual menace, while you yourselves tear apart families and drive children to despair. I don't know why my son is gay, but I do know that God didn't put him, and millions like him, on this Earth to give you someone to abuse. God gave you brains so that you could think, and it's about time you started doing that.

At the core of all your misguided beliefs is the belief that this could never happen to you, that there is some kind of subculture out there that people have chosen to join. The fact is that if it can happen to my family, it can happen to yours, and you won't get to choose. Whether it is genetic or whether something occurs during a critical time of fetal development, I don't know. I can only tell you with an absolute certainty that it is inborn.

If you want to tout your own morality, you'd best come up with something more substantive than your heterosexuality. You did nothing to earn it; it was given to you. If you disagree, I would be interested in hearing your story, because my own heterosexuality was a blessing I received with no effort whatsoever on my part. It is so woven into the very soul of me that nothing could ever change it. For those of you who reduce sexual orientation to a simple choice, a character issue, a bad habit or something that can be changed by a 10-step program, I'm puzzled. Are you saying that your own sexual orientation is nothing more than something you have chosen, that you

could change it at will? If that's not the case, then why would you suggest that someone else can?

A popular theme in your letters is that Vermont has been infiltrated by outsiders. Both sides of my family have lived in Vermont for generations. I am heart and soul a Vermonter, so I'll thank you to stop saying that you are speaking for "true Vermonters."

You invoke the memory of the brave people who have fought on the battlefield for this great country, saying that they didn't give their lives so that the "homosexual agenda" could tear down the principles they died defending. My 83-year-old father fought in some of the most horrific battles of World War II, was wounded and awarded the Purple Heart.

He shakes his head in sadness at the life his grandson has had to live. He says he fought alongside homosexuals in those battles, that they did their part and bothered no one. One of his best friends in the service was gay, and he never knew it until the end, and when he did find out, it mattered not at all. That wasn't the measure of the man.

You religious folk just can't bear the thought that as my son emerges from the hell that was his childhood he might like to find a lifelong companion and have a measure of happiness. It offends your sensibilities that he should request the right to visit that companion in the hospital, to make medical decisions for him or to benefit from tax laws governing inheritance.

How dare he? you say. These outrageous requests would threaten the very existence of your family, would undermine the sanctity of marriage. You use religion to abdicate your responsibility to be thinking human beings. There are vast numbers of religious people who find your attitudes repugnant. God is not for the privileged majority, and God knows my son has committed no sin.

The deep-thinking author of a letter to the April 12 Valley News who lectures about homosexual sin and tells us about "those of us who have been blessed with the benefits of a religious upbringing" asks: "What ever happened to the idea of striving . . . to be better human beings than we are?"

Indeed, sir, what ever happened to that?

St. Joe's Rummage Sale for Lambert House Saturday, September 10, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. St. Joseph Church Basement

Last year's sale for Lambert House for GLBT youth netted \$7000! Donations of saleable items are needed (but no beds, sofas, futons or similar heavy items). Volunteers are also sought to help with set-up prior to the sale and work on the day of the sale. To donate or to help, please contact Bill Caldwell at 206/320-1479 or Higinio Martinez at 206/669-4127.