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Keystone

The Stone Rejected by the Builders Has Become the KEYSTONE. (Acts 4:11)

The newsletter of DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania

**FROM
YOUR PRESIDENT**

It has been a busy time for most of us and especially for our chapter. In spite of much difficulty in getting our meetings 'together,' we were able to have a successful CR program on relationships with much encouragement for a continuance of such programs. I certainly learned much from the giving and sharing that flowed from those present. A particular challenge to me was "Don't say I didn't tell you so." This was in reference to my present relationship. To this I am reminded of words from Fr. John Powell's book The Secret of Staying in Love.

In the movie Butterflies Are Free, the superficial, scatterbrained nymphet played so well by Goldie Hawn is portrayed in the act of running away from her blind lover. She explains her flight: "...because you are blind. You're crippled!" In the most profound moment of the movie, the young man replies: "No, I am not crippled. I am sightless but not crippled. You are crippled because you can't commit yourself to anyone. You can't belong."

When we commit ourselves it must have some degree of permanence and if I claim to be your friend, there should be no ifs, ands, or buts about it. This goes for love. It's not like a retractable ballpoint pen. It is my hope that in Dignity we all make a commitment to love and support each other without all the disclaimers. One of the most unfortunate things that I observe in the gay community is that many gay people can't leave their hang-ups to love one another without qualifications. My relationship is without all the baggage. It's on firm ground and it has allowed me to grow as a person. It is not crippling me, unlike those who can't make the commitment. Let us pray that each of us will not let our blindness cripple us nor our ability to commit ourselves to love and support each other...as friends!

In Dignity,
Jerry B.

Treasurer's report

Annual Treasurer's Report for 1976

BALANCE forwarded from 1975	\$75.10
GENERAL INCOME	
Dues collected by Chapter	355.00
Dues forwarded by International	21.00
Offerings from mass	302.95
Subscriptions to newsletter	9.00
Fundraisers and folders (lent and advent)	184.00
Workshops and social events	224.00
Donations	100.00
Miscellaneous	38.04
TOTAL	\$1,233.99
SUB-TOTAL	\$1,309.09
GENERAL EXPENSES	
Printing	47.86
Postage, Box rent	234.34
Advertising	87.00
Mass stipends and mass material	64.00
Dues forwarded to International	109.00
Office supplies	27.40
Rent to Friends'	25.00
Workshops and social events	335.68
Publications purchased	76.00
Filing for incorporation papers	75.00
Miscellaneous	58.70
TOTAL	\$1,139.98
TOTAL	\$169.11
BALANCE forwarded from 1975	75.10
GENERAL income for 1976	1,233.99
GENERAL expenses for 1976	1,139.98
BALANCE at the end of 1976	169.11

Respectfully,
Aaron S.

Dates to Remember

March 12 (Saturday)

Workshop on Assertiveness/Mass. For details, see article in this newsletter.

March 19 (Saturday)

MCC St. Patrick's Day Party at 8 pm at 200 April Drive (off Trindle Road), Camp Hill, PA. Everyone is invited. For more information, call Jerry B. at 232-2027.

March 25 (Friday)

Mass/Meeting. Friends' Meeting House, 6th and Herr Streets, Harrisburg, 8 pm.

April 2 (Saturday)

Board Meeting at 5 pm at home of Jerry B.

A symbolic Passover meal will be celebrated at 7:30 pm by DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania at Friends' Meeting House. Our brothers and sisters of MCC (Metropolitan Community Church) will join us. A disco dance will follow the meal. Please bring snacks. Punch will be provided.

April 16 (Saturday)

A Consciousness-Raising afternoon. "Coming Out"--to be held at Friends' Meeting House, 6th and Herr Streets, Harrisburg. CR from 1 to 5. Potluck Supper at 5. Mass at 7 pm. For further details, see article in this newsletter.

April 29 (Friday)

Mass/Meeting. Friends' Meeting House, 6th and Herr Streets, Harrisburg, 8 pm.

Special Event

ASSERTIVENESS WORKSHOP

We, as people, are equal. We feel equal deep down inside, but do we always act equal? As gay people in a straight-oriented society, we feel daily the pressure to conform, and we search within ourselves for the

strength to stand by our beliefs. It's not always easy. But there is a tool many people have been using to confront their situations. That tool is assertiveness training.

On Saturday, March 12, from 1 to 5 pm, a workshop will be held at the Friends' Meeting House, 6th and Herr Streets, Harrisburg, to deal with assertiveness. To begin, we will take a look at how we got where we are (assuming that there is some non-assertiveness in us). In the belief that a positive and realistic self-image is basic to being assertive, we will do some group exercises to facilitate feeling confident about ourselves. From there we will discuss the techniques of assertive strength and do mini role playing to practice our new presence. The format will be informal and group-process oriented.

The workshop will be followed by a potluck (bring your own filled pot) dinner at 5 pm and mass at 7 pm.

RETREAT

Kirkridge, a Christian retreat and study center in Bangor, Pa., is sponsoring a weekend on the theme "Gay and Christian," May 5th to 7th, 1977. Fr. John McNeill and Malcolm Boyd will be present as resource persons for the two purposes of the program: (1) A sharing and hearing of the gay Christian experience, and (2) A discussion of the ministry of the Church with and to the gay people. There will be talks, workshops, sharing sessions, and a beautiful retreat atmosphere in the Poconos.

Our chapter has information and registration forms for this retreat. If anyone is interested in going and possibly car-pooling, please contact Jerry B. at 232-2027 soon because registration is limited. Please note that the retreat begins Thursday evening and runs until Saturday noon. We'll probably leave here Thursday at 5 pm.

BOOK BIN



The following books are not part of our own library but are suggested readings .

The Homosexual Matrix
Dr. C. A. Tripp

Consenting Adult
Laura Z. Hobson

The Front Runner
Patricia Nell Warren

The Fancy Dancer
Patricia Nell Warren

The Bull from the Sea
Mary Renault

The Persian Boy
Mary Renault

A Fairly Honorable Defeat
Iris Murdoch

Living with Loneliness
Eugene Kennedy

Question / Answer

Beginning with this issue, we will present a question and answer from Dignity International's publication Homosexual Catholics: A Primer for Discussion. The entire booklet, authored by Sr. Jeannine Gramick, Fr. Bob Nugent, and Fr. Tom Oddo, is available from the International office for \$1.50.

1. Can a person be a practicing Catholic and an active homosexual?

In recent years there has been a growing insistence on the part of many people that the Church re-think its classical position on homosexuality and

homosexual relationships. Theologians, philosophers, psychologists and pastors of many denominations, including the Catholic Church, are beginning to believe and state openly that, under certain conditions, a homosexual can express her/his sexuality (including genital sex) in a way that does not necessarily separate him/her from either the Christian community or the love of God which includes (for some) full participation in the Eucharist by the reception of Holy Communion.

The Protestant theologian Norman Pittinger, for example, says that "Our ancestors were not all fools by any means; the guidelines they laid down should be noted and valued. But it is no false pride to say that in many instances--of which homosexuality is one, since...we have available much information they did not have--we cannot follow those guidelines if we hope to do justice to our fellowmen, and to ourselves, in the particular situations in which we find ourselves."

Even according to the most traditional Church teachings on serious sin and the conditions necessary for it, a Catholic homosexual could be in good faith as to his/her lifestyle and still receive Communion. The new position, however, believes that there is nothing inherently wrong with a homosexual's living out his/her sexual orientation in an ethically responsible and morally uplifting way--a way which can be in keeping with the basic Christian injunction to love God and neighbor with a self-sacrificing love.

NEWS NOTES

With the strains of the "Attende Domine" still in our ears and with our little ash-smudged foreheads held high, we now progress into the most solemn season of the Christian year. As an attempt to aid us on our Lenten Way, our Executive Board has arranged some special programs for the Chapter at the Friends' Meeting House in the weeks to come.

The opening mass of Lent for the Chapter was held Friday, February 25.

There is a slightly different tenor to our liturgies now, with the emphasis, both in word and music, being placed on an inner searching toward the 'Christ-center,' which ideally then flows outward to prevail in our new 'Easter lives.'

The first of two special Saturdays this Lent will be on March 12th and will reexamine our theme of self discovery in an assertiveness training workshop, conducted by Sandy, one of the newer members to the Chapter. She has compiled an interesting outline for the afternoon which will enrich us all on our journey to a self-awareness that grows into a very positive action, helping us 'to become,' i.e. to reach the fullness of our own personal potentials. The day will be followed by a liturgy either at the Friends' or at a nearby Church, the exact details to be announced.

Friday, the 25th of March will be our final Lenten mass at 8 pm in the Meeting House. Once more we will try to enhance our concept of 'reflection to renewal' through a special liturgy of meditations, where the hymns and usual music are replaced with various readings that will compliment the themes of the liturgy and show us how others have taken this same inquisitory road.

So there is our Lenten season and one of the best we have ever planned, at least in the opinion of this lowly writer. Please, plan to attend all or as many of the meetings as you can and take part in the journey. You will be excited about what you may find.

Oh, before I forget ***FLASH*** It was decided not to distribute Lenten Self-Denial Folders this year. So you can stop saving those dimes and quarters. Just put something in your checking accounts because you will receive Lenten Offering Envelopes! Thought you were getting out of it this year, didn't you? Got ya!

God willing, we shall be together soon. Until then--

Pax,
Paul

WORKSHOP

"Coming Out!" Every gay woman or man at some time feels that she or he must make a decision to "come out." But what exactly does that mean? It can mean anything from tentatively telling about your lifestyle to that very first person, whoever it may be, to being totally "out" with family, friends, co-workers, not feeling the need to hide it from anyone. Consciously or unconsciously, all of us probably "come out" a little each day in many little or big ways. What is it that causes us to fear telling others of our lifestyle? What is the reason that some of us are open to some people and totally closed to others. What have been the reactions of friends or family or whomever to people who have "dared" to be open and honest? Do poor reactions send gays "back into the closet" and positive reactions cause them to tell another. These and many other questions will be explored in a mutual sharing consciousness-raising session at the Friends' Meeting House on April 16 at 1 pm.

What is a consciousness-raising session? It's not therapy, sensitivity, or an encounter group. It's not probing or confronting each other. It's not just a rap or bitch session where we unload problems. It's not a class--no lectures, no lessons, no recitations. And it's not a personal problem-solving group.

CR is an increasing of our awareness and a knowledge of the oppression in a prejudiced society. Through it we see and hopefully understand how society deliberately trained us and prepared us to play certain roles, accept certain situations, and not challenge the way things are. We intensify our understanding by opening intellectually, emotionally, honestly.

A few simple rules will help build a learning, growing, exploring environment.

1. Try to arrive on time and stay through to the end of discussion.
2. Confidentiality is a must. What is said is not repeated.

3. No confrontation. What anyone says is true and real for them. No one challenges that truth. Use "I" statements. Describe your feelings. Don't evaluate others.
4. Everyone gives everyone else undivided attention.
5. Everyone is expected to participate.

We hope to see you there. Bring your friends.

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

1. Attendance at mass has been rather poor, especially on Friday nights. We're trying, and I hope you'll join us in trying as well.

2. Sister Kathleen and I met with Monsignor Keeler and Father Keffer in the Diocesan Chancery office. All I can say is they're not giving us nothin'. No chaplains, no place to meet, or tacit support. I can't say this was unexpected in the Philadelphia tradition. We do have plans to continue our dialogue with them so please keep out efforts in your prayers.

3. We do have one vacancy for an at-large member for the Executive Board. If anyone wants to volunteer for this position, please let Barb or me know as soon as possible.

4. In the next few months we will be expanding our mailing list since we can now mail at a non-profit reduced rate. If you would like to add anyone to the mailing for the Keystone, please let John O. or me know.

5. Somewhere inserted in this newsletter will be a Easter envelope. We are asking for your generous support to our Easter collection! Hopefully, you will give at least \$10.00. Our goal is \$300.00. Since we have plans for this money, please do what you can.

6. This month I will file with the Internal Revenue Service for DIGNITY to be a tax-deductible organization, which means all donations, etc., will be tax-deductible for income tax purposes.

AN APPEAL TO MEMBERS

DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania
P. O. Box 297
Federal Square Station
Harrisburg, PA 17108

Dear Members and Friends,

We will not attempt to disguise the purpose of this letter for several paragraphs. We'll get to its intent immediately and also explain why it's being written.

This letter is an appeal for a donation to DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania, above and beyond your already generous support.

Why? Because we're growing and reaching more people and our budget cannot keep pace with this growth. Consider our ordinary expenses--the Keystone, including printing and postage, printed materials for new members or persons seeking information, and on and on. And then special expenses coming up such as a tentative workshop for priests and women religious.

Your membership and other donations keep us operating on a fixed level. But if we want to do more and reach more people--we, plain and simple, need more money.

A little bit more "discretionary income" each month means we could have more materials available, advertise more, offer our members and the gay community more services, and generally improve the quality and quantity of our programs.

How much are we talking about?--as much as you feel you can give and as often as you feel you can give. You can begin by using the enclosed Easter envelope. Hopefully sometime soon your donation will be fully deductible for income tax purposes. You can also make a commitment to a monthly pledge of, for instance, \$10.00.

The donations and pledges that you make will benefit the local gay community directly and immediately. Consider the benefits you have received from knowing about DIGNITY and then consider those who do not know about our organization because we haven't reached them yet. Your donations can help us.

We thank you for your thoughts and any donations you might make.

Yours, in Dignity,

The Executive Board