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Title: *Dignity, Central PA Keystone*

Date: March 1979

Location: LGBT-001 Joseph W. Burns Collection

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KEYSTONE

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

Vol 4 No 2
March 1979

"The Stone Rejected by the Builders Has Become the Keystone." (Acts 4:11)
The newsletter of DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania

REFLECTIONS

Several years ago a Chicago-based Jesuit, Father John Powell, published a book with the telling title: "Why Am I Afraid To Tell You Who I Am?" Without even reading what Father has to say on the subject, the minute we hear the title our minds conjure the vision of secrets buried deep within the heart that we cannot readily reveal to others. Some things can be told only to the closest of friends. Some things can be revealed only in the anonymity of a darkened confessional. Sometimes people cannot even bring themselves to reveal their inner being even when their secret is protected by the seal of Confession.

What is it that makes us afraid to reveal ourselves to others? Mostly, the fear of rejection.

I am confident that my brother priests are genuinely interested in the spiritual welfare of everyone, that they recognize the need to mirror the compassion of Christ in dealing with the problems that cause anguish to human hearts. Yet, I dare not tell them that I am involved in the ministry to Dignity. Because of the deep prejudices that so many people have toward gay people, I fear that many of my brother priests would reject me if they knew that I am dedicated to helping gay persons find dignity and integrity in their lives. Only when I have good grounds for believing that a brother priest will not reject me dare I tell him about my involvement with Dignity.

Every gay person understands my predicament for they share in it every day of their lives. In their dealings with members of their families, fellow workers, neighbors, in almost every situation and circumstance, this fact of being gay must remain a deep secret. After a while the tension of keeping this fact hidden begins to tear a person apart. Any wonder why there is so much despair and anguish in the heart of the gay person.

This is where Dignity comes in. Our liturgies, our meetings, our Bible Sharing/Prayer group, our social events are just about the only places where a gay person can be truly open, knowing that there is no need to hide. Among our brothers and sisters in Dignity the gay person meets acceptance and love as a beautiful person loved by God and respected by others. Thank God for the untold good that Dignity has done for so many.

Father Sawdy
DIGNITY/Co-Chaplain

A DISCOVER WEEKEND!!

Have you questioned your person life and found it wanting? Are you one of the human race who is looking for meaning, direction, and the God of your daily life? Are you looking for happiness? Peace of mind and heart? Joy? Self-esteem? The feeling of being needed and wanted? Are you looking to love and be loved in the truest sense of the word? If you can answer the above questions

with a "yes," then do we have a week-end for you!

How about a DISCOVER week-end!

What is DISCOVER? It is:

- A time for building friendships, faith, and having fun.
- A time for discussion, song, and a joyful, friendly atmospheres.
- A time for knowing community.
- A time for gaining new insights into the meaning of Christianity.
- A time for sharing your thoughts, ideas, and ideals.
- A time for knowing Jesus as a person.
- A time for growth.
- A time for discovery.

DISCOVER - May 11-13. For more details contact Sr. Kathleen (789-3841), Jerry B. (232-2017), or Fr. Sawdy (238-5380). Reservations on a first-come first-serve basis.

WON'T YOU JOIN US FOR

...Dinner (Dutch Treat) at the Gazebo Room, 2nd & Locust Streets, Harrisburg, on Saturday, March 24, at 6:30 pm. If you plan to attend, please call Father Sawdy (238-5380) before 9 pm on Friday, March 23, so that he can make reservations.



BEGINNING TODAY

Beginning today, I will remind myself that I am not the only gay person alive. I will remember that I am part of a struggle as old as the Colorado River and in many cases, just as slow moving. I will also remember that the Grand Canyon is the result of the Colorado's struggle to find itself, its life.

Beginning today, when I ponder things deep in my heart and sense the groan deep inside that happens when I can't be me, I will recall that Christ couldn't always be Himself either. People being people, will always want more when you're giving everything you have. Some can't recognize an act of love when it isn't presented in the form of a new shirt from Kaufmann's or knowing all the new disco steps. Love often comes in the simple guise of a phone call just to "know how you are." Then again, there is also the act of silent prayer remembering all the people who make all things good and holy.

Beginning today, I will learn more about myself. I will educate myself and raise my own consciousness so that I can be a better minister. I will remember that spreading the Good News is a 24 hour, 365 day a year operation. I will remember that in confrontation there is growth.

Beginning today, I will respect each person's right to not be an activist. I will recognize that people, places and events have

shaped me differently than my peers, but that because of this, I have a responsibility to act as I know I should. I will encourage my friends to be the best they can by my example and by constant faith in my Maker in whom all things have purpose and meaning.

Beginning today, when life's treadmill gets me down, when the bars and their inhabitants kind of mush together in one constant disco beat, I will remember that each one there exists because God wills it. Because of this will, each one has integrity and dignity in His family. At the same time however, I will do my part to make the world outside that bar more tolerant of all its sojourners.

Beginning today, I will realize that my contribution to our community is just as important as that of the person who put the stamps on the newsletter envelopes. Both equally important because we have both contributed positively in the ways we know we can; in ways we are comfortable.

Beginning today, there is no retreating; there is no going back to the security of what used to be. There will only be the insecurity of what is to come. Once one has made a stand, nothing is ever the same again.

Beginning today, when the road ahead and behind me, to my left and right is clouded with fog, I will know that only forward movement will bring me again into the light of day. I will remember God's covenant, I will not be deserted.

Beginning today, I will know that all of these things could, and should have been done yesterday.

Beginning today, beginning now, I will!
James Wolf
DIGNITY/Pittsburgh

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 1 (Thursday)

Bible Sharing and Prayer group at Father Sawdy's home, 920 Green Street, Harrisburg, at 7:30 pm.

March 15 (Thursday)

Bible Sharing and Prayer group at Father Sawdy's home at 7:30 pm.

March 17 (Saturday)

Potluck supper at 5 pm. Mass for the gay community at 7 pm at Friends' Meeting House, 6th and Herr Streets, Harrisburg.

March 23-25 (Friday-Sunday)

Journey to Freedom. A conference for lesbians, feminists, Christians, and advocates at Kirkridge, Bangor, PA 18013. The cost is \$50. For details call Sr. Kathleen at 789-3841.

March 24 (Saturday)

Dutch Treat dinner at the Gazebo Room. See article for further details.

March 29 (Thursday)

Bible Sharing and Prayer group at Father Sawdy's home at 7:30 pm.

April 7 (Saturday)

Regional Women's Conference sponsored by DIGNITY/Philadelphia. Registration fee \$5-10 (based on ability to pay). For more details, call Jerry B. at 232-2027.

April 8 (Passion Sunday)

The gay community is invited to a Seder meal at 6 pm at Friends' Meeting House.

May 2-4 (Wednesday-Friday)

Retreat for Gay Religious Women to be held in the Washington/Baltimore area. The cost is \$40. For details contact New Ways Ministry, 3312 Buchanan Street, #302, Mt. Rainier, MD 20822. Phone 301-864-7149.

May 25-28 (Friday-Monday)

DIGNITY East Coast Conference in New York City.

July 15 (Sunday)

DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania's Fourth Anniversary Picnic. Details to be announced.

August 31-September 3 (Friday-Monday)

DIGNITY National Convention in San Diego, California.

For further information about the calendar or any other announcements, contact Jerry B. at 232-2027.

NEWS WAYS MINISTRY

NEW WAYS MINISTRY announces a new booklet just published and now available-- "A Time to Speak," edited by C. Robert Nugent, SDS, and Jeannine Gramick, SSND.

You will find this collection of contemporary statements on gay ministry a valuable addition to your library collection--or give it as a gift to your Pastor, your former 5th Grade Teacher, or someone you know who's dying to find out the T R U T H about Catholic homosexuals.

For just one, thin dollar bill (\$1.00), Bob and Jeannine will mail you this dynamic little booklet. After browsing through it, I'm sure you will want to order more, at discount prices.

Their address:

NEW WAYS MINISTRY
3312 Buchanan St., #302
Mt. Rainier, MD 20822

While you're at it, ask for their publication newsletter, BONDINGS, which will tell you all about the "Catholic Coalition For Gay Civil Rights."

The Heart
DIGNITY/Sacramento, Inc.

Licentious Plates

There are no BUMS, CADS or DUDS on the road in Iowa, not even APES, HAGS or HAMS. These prefixes were all banned from the state's automobile license plates on grounds of taste by the Iowa Department of Transportation. But since new plates were issued last month, 130 irate motorists in Scott County have returned the plates because they bore the prefix GAY. One woman wrote: "I cannot be a single teacher and sport those plates." A traveling salesman complained that while he was in Chicago, his car doors were kicked in because of the plates.

State officials blame the foul-up on their decision to use California's list of three-letter, three-digit combinations rather than prepare their own. The officials tried to eliminate prefixes that might be offensive to Iowans but overlooked GAY. Says Scott County Treasurer William Cusack: "Out in California I'm sure there is a waiting line for GAY plates. But not in Iowa." He is offering to exchange the GAY plates--1,000 were issued--on payment of a \$4 fee.

If you are interested in joining DIGNITY, please fill out the membership application.

I wish to become a member of DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Dues are as follows: \$15.00 Single Membership
\$25.00 Couple Membership
\$25.00 or more Generous Person

Mail to DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania
P.O. Box 297
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The KEYSTONE is an educational and communication feature of DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania, Inc. All opinions expressed are those of the individual author and not necessarily of DIGNITY. Your letters, remarks, and suggestions are welcomed. The KEYSTONE is available free to members and friends of DIGNITY, and to others at a nominal charge of \$3.00 per year. Write: DIGNITY/Central Pennsylvania, P.O. Box 297, Harrisburg, PA 17108.