



# The Independence

The Newsletter of Dignity/Philadelphia for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Catholics & Friends

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## WHAT IS RITE OF RECONCILIATION?

By Michael Rocks

Dignity/Philadelphia will celebrate the Rite of Reconciliation during Mass on the First Sundays of Advent and Lent, beginning on the First Sunday of Advent, **November 30, 2014**. The Liturgy Committee has accepted a suggestion by one of the priest presiders that our community begin to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation in an innovative way by using a variation of “General Absolution.”

While Dignity has made priests available for individual “confession” before the Sunday Mass, very few, if any, of our members went to “individual confession.” It is easy to understand why GLBT Catholics are not interested in individual confession. Most GLBT Catholics who have sought the Sacrament of Reconciliation in parishes have left the confessional unforgiven and unaccepted. Catholic confession for the GLBT Catholic has most often ended in a spiritual disaster.

Still, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as a way to bring our shortcomings and our desire for God’s forgiveness to be reconciled, is an important spiritual experience despite the unfulfilled experiences of not just GLBT Catholics, but many other “Catholics forced to the fringes” in the parish confessional.

Dignity’s Liturgy Committee is in the process of designing a new format for “General Absolution” which will be celebrated at Mass on the First Sundays of Advent and Lent. A rite of Communal Reconciliation will be celebrated during the Penitential Rite on these two Sundays each year.

More information on this new Rite of Reconciliation will be provided to the congregants at Mass as the First Sunday of Advent draws near. The Liturgy Committee will develop a format for the Rite and a written explanation of the Rite, which will be made available several weeks prior to the First Sunday of Advent.

## ALL SOULS’ DAY/DAY OF THE DEAD Sunday, Nov 2, 2014



**Day of the Dead** is a holy day observed throughout Mexico and around the world in other cultures. The holy day focuses on gatherings of family and friends to pray for and remember friends and family members who have died. In Mexico, the celebration takes place on October 31, November 1 and November 2, in connection with the triduum of Allhallowtide: All Hallows’ Eve, Hallowmas, and All Souls’ Day. Traditions connected with the holy day include building private altars

called ofrendas, honoring the deceased using sugar skulls, marigolds, and the favorite foods and beverages of the departed. A common symbol of the day is a skull.

This year, Dignity will be honoring the holy day on **Sunday, November 2** by building an altar and asking members to contribute to this religious structure. The Liturgy Committee will decorate the altar with festive papers and various Day of the Dead figurines; the structure will then be placed either in the center of our worship space or behind the altar we now use. Items on the altar, which members can contribute to, can include candles (lit to welcome the spirits back), Marigolds (these yellow-orange flowers symbolize death), salt (represents the continuance of life), photos of the deceased, fresh water, images of saints, and items that once belonged to the deceased (a tambourine, a book, a Pittsburgh Steelers cap, a T-shirt, a necklace, etc.).

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Again, we are asking members to contribute any of these items, especially pictures and mementos of your loved ones, which will be returned at the end of Mass.

Part of this celebration includes “bread of the dead” and sugar skulls. We are hopeful someone will bake the bread associated with this holy day as part of the decoration (and for social afterwards). If you would like to help construct the altar, or wish to bake the “Pan de Muertos,” please let Michael Rocks or Dolores Vera know of your interest. The very nature of the holy day encourages a sense of creativity when it comes to honoring the dead. As they say, “it’s the thought that counts.”

## **ALL SOULS’ MONTH - CONTINUED**

Our Book of Remembrance will be available each Sunday during November. It is a way of commemorating those who have died, especially during the past year. Please list their names in this book. Our Prayer Intention Book (which is available every Sunday of the year) will also be included in the Presentation of the Gifts.

## **“WHAT IS HE DOING UP THERE?”**

By Ric-Ben Safed

Ever wonder what in the world I am doing when I chant some Hebrew before reading the assigned biblical readings? Okay, let me take a few minutes of your reading time to inform and educate you about this.

The first time I came to a Dignity service, the presider was Fr. Joe McOscar, who just happened to live in the southern New Jersey County where I was born and raised. We talked and afterward I asked if he would like me to participate in the readings of what Catholics call the “Old Testament. It’s not ‘old’ to me, as it’s the only one called the “Torah” in Judaism.

Then I noticed that one of the Catholic Gospels quotes the Hebrew text “Hear O Israel, the Lord our G-d is one.” And I realized that is exactly what a Cantor in Jewish service chants before the reading of the weekly Marsha (the name of weekly reading). So in a Jewish worship service, it’s considered an act of worship to ‘read and study’ the Torah weekly. The object, of course, is to find the ‘will of G-d’ for yourself in the text. This is also a prayer for Israel to listen and remember that “Israel” was the spiritual name of the Prophet Jacob. And the intention of the prayer is for all ‘spiritual’ Israel to listen. I have been informed that Christians are also “spiritual Israel” (in Hebrew: “Shema Yisrael Adonai Elloheinu Adonai Ehad”).

So I take on the role of the Cantor, who chants the introduction to the readings. Then I name myself by my Hebrew name and then call for another reader. (In Hebrew: Ani David ben Abraham.)

In the Dignity service I call upon Yoshua ben Yosef (e.g., Jesus, the son of Joseph). Then as Cantor I read the weekly assigned text for the person called to the “Bima”, e.g., “Jesus ben Yosef”.

All of the Prophets, lived and wrote about 500 or so years before the beginnings of the Christian movement. Listeners would have understood the ‘will of god’ for themselves in light of their immediate situations. (It’s not likely that any of the Prophets wrote anything that would be applied to a specific individual 500 years into their future.)

And by the way, I completed enough of my Rabbinical Seminary training to be qualified to be a Cantor. However, I am not an ordained Rabbi. I withdrew from the Jewish Yeshiva.

The readings I do are my contribution to and for all of us to listen and find the ‘will of G-d’ for ourselves and to apply it in our daily lives. And so please, if I have generated any question in your minds, feel free to ask me the question. I’ll get an answer for you, even if I have to go back to my Seminary colleagues to get the answer for you. Thank you all for listening, whenever I participate and contribute to the worship service.

## **EUCCHARISTIC MINISTRY WORKSHOP (NOV. 16) – DIGNITY NEEDS YOU!**

By Dick O’Malley

On Sunday, **November 16th at 5:30 p.m.**, Barbara Gindhart, one of Dignity’s two Chaplains, will be facilitating a workshop in the Blue Room at St. Luke’s, for current Eucharistic Ministers who want to keep up with current guidelines, and for anyone who wants to be a new Eucharistic Minister.

Just as Lector volunteers are needed to proclaim the Sacred Scripture in the first part of the Mass, Eucharistic Ministers are needed to help the presider distribute the consecrated bread and wine during Communion, as well as properly clean the sacred vessels, and properly consume or return the sacred elements to the earth after Communion.

The Dignity community will be grateful for those who want to volunteer for this all-important service to our community. All new graduates will be invested during the mass immediately following the workshop.

## REPORT ON THE DIGNITY YOUNG ADULT CAUCUS

On July 25-27, 2014, Grant Shea and Chase Doyle travelled to Washington DC, to participate in the First Annual Dignity Young Adult Caucus Retreat. The retreat consisted of a series of discussions about Catholic theology and how it relates to the young adult community. The retreat was led by Jamie Mansion from Dignity/NYC; it was held at the Dignity Center in Washington DC. The gathering was marked by an overwhelming sense of faith community among the young adults present in contrast to a society in which we live where as LGBT people our faith is questioned almost daily. We concluded the weekend by looking into what we, as the Dignity Young Adult Caucus, wanted to focus on for the future, including: increasing young adult presence, increasing the presence of women and minorities, and specific young adult focused information from Dignity/USA. This weekend really helped enrich the spirits of all who attended and breathed new life into our faith community. The Dignity Young Adult Caucus created a video which can be found on YouTube by Searching “DYAC is calling you” or going to the Dignity Philadelphia website: [www.dignityphila.org](http://www.dignityphila.org) and clicking on Dignity Young Adults.

## DIGNITY PHILADELPHIA IN 2008

D/P members Bill Clossey and Ric-Ben Safed were panelists for the “Out & Faithful” program at the William Way Community Center in February. Panel discussion was on GLBT couple relationships.

D/P hosted a St. Patty’s Cabaret/Dinner on March 29 with Gene Cavanaugh and accompanied by Marc Randall on piano.

An all day retreat was held on April 19 entitled “Jesus’ Life from Galilee to Jerusalem: A Pathway for GLBT Spiritual Growth.”

Equality Forum presentation “Would Jesus Discriminate” by D/P, Imago Dei Metropolitan Community Church and Metropolitan Community Churches on May 3. Michael Rocks represented D/P.

President Norm Simmons attended the Gay Rodeo dinner and presented the Rodeo Buckle award to the winner. Michael Flynn donated the cost of the award.

D/P celebrated 35 years at the May 18 Anniversary Potluck Dinner coordinated by Leo Chang and Louis G. with centerpieces by Bethany Davis. The committee members (Dick O’Malley, Bethany Davis, David

Kalinowski and Norm Simmons) sent letters of invitation to past 50/50 recipients and other community groups. Keynote speaker was Judge Ann Butchart (D/P member and past president). Estimated attendance was between 90 – 100 people.

Letter of congratulations from D/P sent to Gloria Casarez on being appointed the GLBT Liaison to Mayor Nutter.

St. Luke’s requested D/P complete a Master Plan Study concerning renovations to the church. Jimmy Calnan, Ron Hoskins and David Kalinowski filled out the form.

Mike Viola, Pat L. and Dom Cordone were selected to form a committee for the cookbook “Dining with Dignity: A Rainbow Collection.”

Ballots and Petition to Amend the Constitution were mailed to dues paying members on August 11. Members ratified by ballot on September 7.

D/P held a Flea Market on November 30.



OUTfest 10/12 – representing Dignity Philadelphia are Mike Viola, Mike Bradley, BJ and Dick O’Malley.

## THE STEERING COMMITTEE WANTS YOU!

By Mike Viola, President

The Steering Committee of the Chapter consists of the four officers and representatives from each of the four standing committees: Communications, Community Life, Education and Liturgy. Each committee has different responsibilities in the Chapter. For example, the Community Life Committee coordinates activities that involve the members of the Chapter that take place outside our usual weekly liturgy. Those activities can be social, such as trips to local theater productions, or service

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oriented, such as the Chapter's involvement with Broad Street Ministry.

The Education Committee is involved in projects that we present to the community at large, including our involvement in the June Pride and OUTFest. While there is no limit on the number of members who can be a part of each committee, there are usually two co-coordinators for each committee, who are usually selected by the members of the committee.

The Steering Committee is looking for more people to get involved with the Community Life and Education Committees with the possibility of serving as co-coordinators. Any member who is interested in getting more involved in either of these committees should contact any member of the Steering Committee.

## Bi-monthly Munchie

Happy all Hallows Eve

"You make a life by giving not gathering"

-Bill Gray

Happy Thanksgiving

## THANKSGIVING POTLUCK IS NOVEMBER 23, 2014

Dignity members - mark your calendars. And start your grocery shopping; look up new and exciting (or lame but true) recipes and cook/bake/broil/roast to your hearts content for this annual event. Then bring the food to the Dignity Thanksgiving Potluck Sunday 11/23 afternoon – and see it disappear. At the Dignity potlucks, the audience makes magic! We make all the food disappear! Entrees are always welcome\*, vegetables are a big hit and desserts are our favorites. And for those that are culinary-challenged, feel free to bring soft drinks, a box-o-wine, a store-bought cake(s) or cheese! But do come and share a meal with your Dignity community and give thanks to God for bringing us together – around food – once again this year.

\*Members wishing to donate a fat buttock turkey, please confer with Louis G. a week prior to this event.



## MOTIONS FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The following motions were made at two separate Steering Committee Meetings (Sept. 7, and Oct. 5, 2014):

Please note that there were no motions made at the Sept. SC meeting.

**Motion 14-10-01** made by Dolores Vera; seconded by Jimmy Calnan. Be it moved that the Steering Committee extend its gratitude to the Ad Hoc Committee for Memorial Panels: Fr. Ralph, Tony L., David K., Kevin D., Dolores V., Jean, Bill B., Louis G., Bill Q. Passed unanimously.

**Motion 14-10-02** made by Jimmy Calnan; seconded by Kevin Davies. Be it moved that the November 2014, 50/50 be donated to Calcutta House. Passed unanimously.

(When we celebrate Christmas with the residents of Calcutta House, we will present them with the money collected from the November 50/50.)

**50/50 for November:** Calcutta House provides housing and other highly supportive services for people living with AIDS in Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley region.



Their mission is based on the premise that housing is the foundation for the most effective and compassionate treatment, management, and prevention of the disease. Customized support services, responsive to the individual, are delivered with the conviction that self-empowerment will advance attainable goals enabling a resident to realize his/her full potential while adhering to treatment and care plans.

## AND SPEAKING OF CALCUTTA HOUSE...

Don't forget Dignity Philadelphia's annual visit to Calcutta House on **November 24 and 25** (for follow up) for interviewing the residents regarding their Christmas lists. Members are encouraged to accompany Jimmy and Rob; these interviews go fast and give us an opportunity to meet the residents. These suggested "requests" will then be brought to church so Dignity elves can fulfill their wishes! Then for the next two weeks, gifts are brought to church – always beautifully wrapped – and are ready for delivery!

And **December 15, 2014** Dignity elves and members will get together at Calcutta House for the BIG holiday party. At this event, we have ice cream, cake, gift giving and a special Liturgy by Fr. Ron Hoskins. Anyone who has been to these parties knows how much fun they are for Dignity and the residents. And if you haven't been there before, please join us

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for an evening you will not forget. These visits help remind us that Christmas is for giving those less fortunate than us, and expecting nothing in return. The true spirit of Christmas is very evident at this annual party.

For the interviews and for the holiday party, transportation is arranged by Jimmy Calnan. If you plan to join us for either or both events, and need a ride, please be outside St. Luke's for a 7:00 p.m. carpooling on all three dates mentioned above. For additional information, such as directions, etc., please contact Jimmy on email year1826@aol.com

## **COMMUNITY EMERGENCY FUND**

When members are going through some hard times, and there is not enough money for utilities and/or food, please don't forget the Dignity Community Emergency Fund. This fund is ready to help those in the Dignity Philadelphia community who are going through difficult times in this rough economy. If you, or a member of the Dignity community you know, could use some extra funds for those necessities of life, please let a member of the Steering Committee know of the need. All referrals will be treated in confidence and with sensitivity. Please talk to one of them, or email President.DignityPhila@gmail.com

## **FATHER ROBERT NUGENT MEMORIAL LECTURESHIP FUND**

New Ways Ministry has established a fund to host lectures on Catholic LGBT topics in memory of their co-founder, Father Robert Nugent, SDS. The purpose of the lectureship is to address topics that were dear to Fr. Bob's mind and heart: pastoral outreach to LGBT people and their families, theological developments in the area of sexuality, homosexuality and gender, building bridges of reconciliation between the LGBT community and the institutions of the Catholic Church. Your contribution will help create a more inclusive and welcoming church for LGBT people, their families, and friends. Your contribution can be mailed to New Ways Ministry, 4012 29th Street, Mount Rainier, MD 20712. More information may be obtained at [info@newwaysministry.org](mailto:info@newwaysministry.org).

## **REBUILD MY CHURCH: POPE FRANCIS AND ST. FRANCIS**

An LGBT-friendly pilgrimage to Rome, Assisi, and Florence is planned for February 12-21, 2015. This pilgrimage includes a general audience with Pope Francis! And, this trip will be lead by Sr. Jeannine Gramick, SL. More information may be obtained by going on-line to [gramick@juno.com](mailto:gramick@juno.com) or calling 301-864-3604.

## **DIGNIFIED WEDDINGS**

Since May 20th, when same-sex marriages became legal in Pennsylvania, couples have been rushing to City Hall and churches. Dignity members have contributed to some of these weddings. In order to congratulate these couples and share in their joy, The Independence will periodically run pictures of these members who have "tied the knot." By mentioning their names and publishing available pictures, we can share in their commitment to each other, share in their contribution to all communities, and to celebrate the rights they are now entitled to in the Commonwealth. Congratulations to



Dignity President Mike and husband Phil married November 12, 2013 in Wilmington, DE



Joanne and Linda, July 2, 2014, married by Jamie Bednarchick



Judge Ann Butchart, Rob and Jimmy, married August 8, 2014



BJ and Erin, married by Monsignor Hoskins, on Sept. 20, 2014

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS - NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER

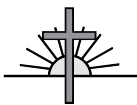
## November is All Souls' Month

- Sat., Nov. 1 All Saints Day – No Mass at Dignity
- Sunday, Nov. 2 All Souls' Day – Special Liturgy for Dia de los Muertos, 7 p.m.  
Steering Committee @4:30 p.m.
- Wed., Nov. 5 Broad Street Ministry 3-6 p.m.
- Friday, Nov. 7 Prayer Around the Cross, 7 p.m. (upstairs)
- Sunday, Nov. 9 Eucharistic Liturgy, 7 p.m.  
Liturgy Committee Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- Sunday, Nov. 16 Eucharistic Liturgy, 7 p.m.  
EM Workshop, 5:30 p.m. and newly-formed Monthly Rosary Group will meet at 6 p.m. to pray the rosary together at St. Luke's kitchen.
- Sunday, Nov. 23 Eucharistic Liturgy, 7 p.m.  
Thanksgiving Potluck, 4:30 – 5 p.m.
- Monday, Nov. 24 Interview visits of Calcutta House residents
- Tuesday, Nov. 25 Interview visits of Calcutta House residents (follow up for residents not available on Monday).
- Wed., Nov. 26 Mass for Eve of Thanksgiving, 7:30 p.m. in the Dignity Office
- Thursday, Nov. 27 Thanksgiving Day
- Sunday, Nov. 30 Eucharistic Liturgy, 7 p.m., World AIDS Day (Dec. 1st.), 1st Sunday in Advent and General Rite of Absolution

## December is Rape Awareness Month

- Wed., Dec. 3 Broad Street Ministry, 3-6 p.m.
  - Friday, Dec. 5 Prayer Around the Cross, 7 p.m. (upstairs)  
Special Mummies Concert (see below)
  - Sunday, Dec. 7 Eucharistic Liturgy, 7 p.m.  
Steering Committee at 4:30 p.m.
  - Monday, Dec. 8 Immaculate Conception Mass, 7:30 p.m. in Dignity Office
  - Saturday, Dec. 12 Feast of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe
  - Sunday, Dec. 14 Eucharistic Liturgy, 7 p.m.  
Liturgy Committee Meeting at 4:30 p.m.
  - Monday, Dec. 15 Calcutta House Holiday Party, 7 p.m.
  - Sunday, Dec. 21 Eucharistic Liturgy, 7 p.m.  
and newly-formed Monthly Rosary Group will meet at 6 p.m. to pray the rosary together in the Blue Room
  - Wed., Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Liturgy, 10:30 p.m.
  - Thursday, Dec. 25 Christmas Day – no liturgy at Dignity and have a wonderful holiday!
  - Sunday, Dec. 28 Eucharistic Liturgy, 7 p.m.
  - Wed., Dec. 31 New Year's Eve Mass, 6 p.m.
- Mummer's Concert on Friday, **December 5, 2014**, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in South Philadelphia, located at 3rd and Wolf Sts. For tickets, which are only \$5, contact Joe T. @ swpjoey429@hotmail.com. All the money raised will benefit homeless men at My Brothers House.

## P R A Y E R I N T E N T I O N S



Please sign our Prayer Intentions book if you have anyone you would like the community to remember in our prayers.

**The deadline date submission for the December/January 2015 newsletter is Jan. 12, 2015.**

*Articles published in the Dignity/Philadelphia newsletter, The Independence, are not necessarily the opinions of the Steering Committee of Dignity/Philadelphia, or of the Communications Co-chairs. Publication of names, organizations, and/or photographs in The Independence is not to be construed as any indication of the sexual orientation of such persons, employees, and/or members of organizations.*

- Steering Committee**
- Michael Viola – President
  - Jimmy Calnan – Vice President
  - Kevin Davies – Secretary
  - Mike Bradley – Treasurer
  - Jim Clay/Grant Shea – Liturgy Committee Co-coordinators
  - Vacant – Community Life Committee Coordinator
  - Michelle Perrone/Dolores Vera – Communications Co-coordinators
  - Vacant – Education Committee Co-coordinator
  - Chaplains:** Barbara Gindhart and Father Ron Hoskins



*Electronic payment at [razoo.com/story/Dignity-Philadelphia](http://razoo.com/story/Dignity-Philadelphia)*

The Catholic Christian Tradition in the L/G/B/T Community  
**Celebrate Who You Are And Embrace The Person God Calls You To Be!**  
*Yes, I want to be a member of the Dignity family!*

\_\_\_ I am joining as a **new member** \_\_\_ I am **renewing my membership** \_\_\_ **Address Change**

**Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Numbers:** cell \_\_\_\_\_ home \_\_\_\_\_ work \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_ to receive Dignity/Philadelphia's

Newsletter (*The Independence*) and the latest news via email blasts. Your support through your dues to Dignity/USA will entitle you to voting privileges in national elections; subscriptions to the monthly Dateline and Quarterly Voice; discounted registration for biennial conventions and other Dignity/USA events; and access to Dignity News email list and chat groups.

Scholarships are available for Dignity/Philadelphia and Dignity/USA memberships. Contact the Dignity/Philadelphia Vice President for more information ([vp.dignityphila@gmail.com](mailto:vp.dignityphila@gmail.com)).

*The total amount of your dues and donations to both Dignity/Philadelphia and Dignity/USA may be included in one check. We will forward your Dignity/USA dues/donations and your contact information to the Dignity/USA national office.*

**Please enclose your check, payable to Dignity/Philadelphia, and mail to: Dignity/Philadelphia, P.O. Box 53348, Philadelphia, PA 19105.**

**Individual annual dues:**  
 Dignity/Phila \$20;  
 Dignity/USA \$30  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Total**

**Couple's annual dues:**  
 Dignity/Phila \$35;  
 Dignity/USA \$60  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Total**