



MARCH 2012, VOLUME 37, ISSUE 11

SERVING LGBT CATHOLICS SINCE 1974

Spirituality, Equality and Justice: Nurtured in a Welcoming Catholic Community

March Madness Raffle

Our March Madness Raffle concludes on March 25, when the drawing will be held immediately following Mass. Prizes this year for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places are cash awards of \$500.00, \$250.00 and \$100.00. As always, we are asking everyone, members and non-members alike, to take at least one book of 30 tickets to sell or purchase. Tickets are \$1.00 each. If you sell or purchase all 30 tickets, you need only turn in \$25.00....that's five (5) free tickets or \$5.00 cash. Of course, we will not be upset should you decide to turn in the entire \$30.00. Keep in mind that if you add up the cost of the tickets and the prize fund, the expenses associated with the raffle amount to \$1,200.00 before any tickets are sold.

As we have done in past years, at least one-half of the money raised will be donated to the IHM South African AIDS Ministry Outreach Program. The other half will be deposited in our treasury for future use.

The Leadership team thanks you in advance for your generosity.

Easter Flower Donation Program

We are once again sponsoring an Easter Flower Donation program to help beautify the sanctuary during the Easter Season (Easter Sunday through Pentecost). You can donate a plant in memory or honor of someone, or just for the joy of adding to the beauty of the Sanctuary during this most special time of the year. For your convenience, an order form is included with this Newsletter. At the conclusion of our Liturgy on the date you selected, you will be invited to take you plant home with you.

We remind you that this is not a fundraiser and that all funds collected will be spent on flowers.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Calendar of Events - March 2012

- 1 - Deadline for Membership for Council Elections**
- 4 - 2nd Sunday of Lent**
 - Rosary Sunday
 - Hygiene Drive begins
- 11 - 3rd Sunday of Lent**
 - Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
 - New Time! 5 – 5:30**
- 18 - 4th Sunday of Lent**
- 25 - 5th Sunday of Lent**
 - Council Meeting @ 4:30**
 - March Madness Raffle Drawing, immediately following Mass

Frankly Speaking

Growing up in the mid 50's and as a product of Catholic grade school, I can remember Lent as a time "meatless" Fridays and giving things up...all the good things like cake, candy, etc. With a birthday falling in March, I always had to wait until Sunday for my cake and ice cream regardless of what day my birthday occurred. Somehow, Sunday was a safe or exempt day.

In recent years, the Church has suggested that instead of "giving up" things, we try doing things. Such as mending a broken friendship or a strained family relationship, calling or visiting someone you have lost touch with or visiting a sick or homebound acquaintance. The primary purpose is to do something that you simply know you should do but just never seem to find the time to do it. As human beings we all, myself included, can have a tendency to put off what we can or should do today until tomorrow. The unfortunate aspect of that mentality is that sometimes tomorrow might be too late. Again, human nature being what it is, the guilt sets in and the typical "woulda coulda shoulda" kicks in. If we are to be truly Christ-like, we need to do things today. There is no better time than the present. Adopting this mentality, we can truly celebrate New Life in our Risen Lord on Easter Sunday.

BTL EDITORIAL: 30 years, Still a crisis Originally printed 12/1/2011 (Issue 1948 - Between The Lines News)

Thirty years into the HIV epidemic, it is easy to pretend the crisis is over. After all, fewer people are dying. There are miracle drugs that breath new life into those who are desperately ill. So fewer people are being newly infected. Right? Wrong.

Michigan's epidemic continues, people are dying from AIDS still, and the medications sometimes work, but have horrible side effects and the virus itself can develop resistance to them if they are not taken properly. Why haven't we heard more about the epidemic? Because some in the gay community believe our own rhetoric that the epidemic is no longer a gay disease. Some believed that as infection rates increased among heterosexuals that we could let down our guard. But we were wrong. Over 50 percent of new HIV infections are in men who have sex with men in Michigan. That is an unacceptable number of new infections for any community. Further exasperating efforts to stem the tide of new infections in MSMs, the virus is spreading most quickly among some of the most vulnerable and least resourced of us. Young men of color who have sex with men - many of them in the age group of 13-24 - are more likely to have little access to economic or social service resources. As infection rates spiral out of control in this community, there is little in the way to stop new infections. A program that was in the way of rising infections was lost this fall - REC Boyz - due to lack of federal funds. A simply maddening decision.

Apathy is perhaps the worst enemy in the fight against new infections. The virus has become nothing to fear in the minds of many, and in others, HIV infection and being gay go hand in hand - an inevitable fatalism of failed moralistic prevention programs which have written off men who have sex with men and ceded them as an acceptable loss to the battle.

That is why Between The Lines is launching the PrideSource.com interactive HIV/AIDS portal this month. We believe that you are either part of the problem or part of the solution, and we stand squarely on the side of solutions. The continuing epidemic is a crisis. In part it is a crisis of communication. A Kaiser Family Foundation study released in June 2011 found that while the epidemic has been around since 1981, the public's understanding of how the virus is spread remains poor. Of the respondents in the study, 25 percent thought one could get HIV by sharing a drinking glass with some one with HIV, 45 percent say they would be uncomfortable having their food prepared by someone who is HIV positive, 36 percent with having an HIV positive roommate, 29 percent having their child in a classroom with an HIV positive teacher, and 18 percent working with someone with HIV.

The problem of ignorance is linked to another reality: where people get their information on the virus. "Six in ten Americans say most of what they know about HIV/AIDS comes from the media, putting it ahead of other sources like school, their doctors, friends and family, and the church," the report says. It found that mainstream media coverage of HIV is often shallow and reinforces stereotypes. Culturally sensitive prevention messages are rare, and the number of stories that deal with HIV related issues is disproportionately low compared to the severity of the epidemic.

Pridesource.com is launching this HIV portal in order to help address these stunning numbers and provide accurate, current information about the epidemic in Michigan. Together, we can, as Secretary of State Clinton said in November, fulfill the dream of an AIDS-free world. But it will take all of us to get there, and we are stepping up to the plate. What are you doing?

The "Living Stations" returns to the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Detroit for its second year. This is an epic theatrical experience presenting the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It runs from March 16th through April 1st 2012. Purchase tickets now while available. You can buy individual tickets at any Meijer store, or purchase online at www.livingstations.org. For groups of 12 or more call 800 585 3737.

The "Living Stations" is the inspiration of Michigan actress, Kelly Nieto. The musical drama and communal prayer experience is an adaptation of Pope John Paul II's version of The Stations. It is produced by Living Faith-Fine Arts Apostolate.

The following is taken from the Director Notes by Kelly Nieto in 2011. Jesus used stories to teach people. God continues to inspire us to tell the story of His Son's suffering, death, and resurrection. In the Living Stations of the Cross, people can now experience Christ's Passion like never before. We tell the story of the most important moment in human history through theater and music.

In 2000 Kelly and her husband attended their first Stations of the Cross at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church in Farmington. She was becoming Catholic that year. The experience changed her life forever. As she knelt during the flogging she felt horrific spiritual pain. She looked up at the altar and saw The Living Stations. It was then she heard God say 'This is why you're here'. Her crazy life journey as an artist and performer made sense at that moment.

In 2001 God called together an amazing group of people from Our Lady of Sorrows and entrusted them with the mission of presenting The Living Stations. For 10 years they performed it at Our Lady of Sorrows. In 2011 it came to the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Living Faith-Fine Arts Apostolate plans to produce The Living Stations Internationally with a Spanish translation in the works. If you are interested in getting involved or helping in the future you can contact Kelly@livingstations.org.

Council Election Nominations

Effective March 1st, nominations for our upcoming Council Elections to be held in May, will be accepted. We will be electing a President, Treasurer and Community Involvement Chairperson. All offices are a two year term. Potential candidates must be a dues paying member as of March 1st and of course, be willing to make a commitment of service to the organization. Candidates must also complete and submit an "Intent to Run" form by the end of March. The forms are available from any member of the Election Committee (Carolyn Shalhoub, Paul Schimmick or Frank D'Amore).

38th Anniversary Celebration

As we have done in the past, The Dignity Detroit Council sponsored a contest to name the theme for this year's Anniversary Celebration. Our 38th Anniversary takes place the weekend of May 19-20. The response to this year's contest was unbelievable with 17 possible themes submitted. After the names of the submitter were removed, the organizing committee met (electronically) and narrowed the 17 down to the top six. The committee then met in person and ranked the six with their 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices. The clear favorite...insert drum roll.....and our theme for this year's celebration.....***Changing Lives Together***, submitted by Chris Dixon.

Thanks Chris!!!!

Special thanks to
Sonja Langdon for her
hard work on the
social activities.

Thank you, also, to
everyone who helped
decorate the chapel
for the Advent, Christ-
mas and Lent seasons

Please pardon the small type in the article on the following page. Though some content was edited out, the remaining text was felt pertinent to retain. As of the posting of the newsletter, it is available on the DignityUSA website if you wish to view it there in its entirety.

I sit cross-legged on my bed, staring at the streetlamp across the road, beside the courtyard where my friends once played. For those of you that don't know -and I think that is most of you, Internet- this place is a sacred space. Like a shrine to the apparition of some saint or the occurrence of a miracle, this spot reminds me of God's presence in the world. It marks not only the place of my conversion, but the time I opted out of suicide and whispered my first earnest prayer. So it makes sense that I start writing here of all places. This spot is a place for new beginnings, where I first began my journey as Ian, the gay Catholic. That's right. You read it correctly. I am a gay, Virgin Mary-loving, saint-interceding, knees-bowed, Eucharist-bound Catholic boy who's proud to say he attends the Roman rite. And although my friends at college have heard — nay, been brow beaten with — my love for all things churchy, tonight I am coming out. Way out. Like, the heavenly host proclaiming the birth of a Savior through songs of jubilation, out. So, get ready for this Catholic explosion — because it's a doozy.

As you socially conscious queers and allies probably know, this month has not been a good one for Queer/Catholic relations — but is it ever? For those of you out of the loop, everything started with a conflict regarding a newly planned route for the Chicago Pride Parade. Due to problems with crowd control and traffic in last year's parade, the city and parade planners moved the route to pass in front of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. The church was not consulted with the change until it happened, and grew worried with that the parade would interfere with their Masses. Conflict born. Then Cardinal George came crashing into the situation. On a local Fox News interview, the Cardinal implied that the gay liberation movement could morph into something like the Ku Klux Klan, with its anti-Catholic rhetoric. Then he reminded the public that while every person deserves respect and access to spiritual help, homosexuals need to live chastely or participate in a heterosexual marriage in order to live a life in discipleship with Jesus Christ. So how does a person remain Catholic after such vitriolic statements? Or, better yet, how does one remain Catholic when the official documents produced by the Vatican call homosexual relations "intrinsically disordered." At face value, the Church's culture is toxic, stubborn, and evil. How does one spiritually thrive when all seems lost? Why remain a Catholic? These questions reverberate around my head whenever one of these scandals makes headway in the news. They revisit every time a priest, whether they have good intentions or bad, mentions homosexuality. They torment me when I hear rumors of sexual abuse within the clergy. They grace my head with doubts when I hear of more progressive, Protestant churches making headway. They ask: Why? Why? Why?

And yet, I am still Catholic.

I stay because I believe in the Nicene Creed. I close my eyes and with a heavy breath I utter in an almost Delphic trance: "I believe in God, the Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth..." I understand these words, not the Pope's words, are my beliefs. But I also believe in the papacy, though I disagree with most things our Pope says about how to live a moral, sexual life. I see things with a Catholic eye and aesthetic. Protestant and Catholic worship are different, and I know I can say this because I regularly attend Methodist services after Mass back home. I enjoy the rowdy singing and clapping, the worship with guitars, the rousing speeches the pastor gives when he intones with the Spirit. I imagine I am in an ancient house-church in Turkey and that the people around me are my family. But it is different from how I feel at a Catholic church. Yes, they offer that vital role of support everyone needs. But something is missing. I feel dispossessed in large auditorium-like churches where pictures of Jesus are stripped of His Sacred Heart, as if actual biology overcame the loveliness of symbolism. I do not like crosses that lack The Suffering Man nailed to it, flesh whipped and head crowned with thorns. They appear to me barren, merely signs without expression. And I find myself asking, "Where are the Saints?" Where is Mary holding her Child, smiling in her secret joy? Where is Joseph, holding his staff of lilies over Mary to adore his adopted Son? And where are the modern saints? What about St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Ignatius of Loyola, or St. Bernadette Soubirous, whose wellspring supposedly cured my Nana from blindness? Most of all, where is the Eucharist? I believe in that little morsel of love which God gives in each Mass. Not only is God present to me in church, but he asks me to partake and share of His essence. A flush of joy enters into me when I know He is physically there. I worship Jesus at bent knees and in adoration of the Eucharist. Tell me what other place can offer this, and I will go. The truth is that Catholicism isn't just a religion; it is a tradition that is ingrained. I know that this is the rite by which all my ancestors have worshipped, from century to century. When I go to Mass, I join with them and my family above, with the Saints and the Angels, praising God. Corrupt, wicked prelates have cycled through the church, but this perspective remains the same. And I think the way I see things is beautiful. I also find acceptance there. Surprising, I know. But all the priests or people I care to have friendships with affirm me as whom I am.

I am still a Catholic.

The questions of "why" will always rattle about my head, but an even greater desire lies deep within to calm them. More questions bubble out. I wonder what other Catholic children would do without queer Catholic role models. What if they are left with only messages from people like the Cardinal? Some queer activists believe that true progress will be made when the Catholic Church disappears from history. They believe that with the current flux of people leaving the Church, the Church will slowly dissipate and collapse from within. Afterwards, we will have true morality; sexual shame will be destroyed and people will explore liberal values more fully. Some will even go so far as to say that the Catholic Church is devoid of morality. This is a simplistic and bigoted opinion, just as bigoted as the Cardinal's thoughts. They forget that I and many other queers and allies are part of this church the movement. We are present, we are fighting, and the siege will not be lifted. I see great shifts happening in our Church. The laity is unsettled. Catholic theologians are moving ideological positions. Conservative priests are losing their moral authority through their hypocrisies. It is like hearing ice crackle underneath a giant glacier. You can sense the tremors in the accepting whispers of the confessional, in personal letters, or more loudly in the outright conversations with some priests. I believe the hoarse breath of clericalism will not be able to hold back the currents. Indeed, I believe the Holy Spirit is flying.

And Catholic opinions are changing. The Public Religion Research Institute published statistics in 2011 that state that though Catholics are more likely to hear negative messages about homosexuality, Catholics are more supportive of legal recognition of same-sex couples than any other Christian denomination. Furthermore, it also states that the majority of Catholics (56%) do not believe that sexual relations between homosexuals is a sin. Among the general population, only 46 % believe it is not a sin. The official Vatican positions are rigid, but many American Catholics question them. The Cardinal's words are appalling. Nothing justifies comparing our movement and community to the KKK. But he is right that there is some anti-Catholic sentiment within the community. And reasonably so. The Magisterium says ugly things about our people, though they purport that they are an accepting bunch, so long as we do not express what makes us uniquely queer. But do not forget about us Catholic queers. Do not denigrate our experience. We are with you.

When I sit staring at the streetlamp shrine, I eventually close my eyes to let the light wash over my eyelids. Waiting calmly, I breathe slower and slower, fingers at first folded together in prayer. Then my hand reaches out into the shadows. There is a warm feeling. Jesus sits next to me, holding my hand, and the streetlamp is like the Father's eye, exuding His radiant kindness. With the Father overhead, and Jesus by my side, the Holy Spirit translates our silence into love. We talk. And sometimes we dream.

This is why I am still a Catholic.

What is the relationship of Eucharistic adoration to the Mass?

The celebration of the Mass is the origin and purpose of the worship shown to the Eucharist outside the Mass. Eucharistic adoration extends Holy Communion in a lasting way even as it prepares the faithful to participate more fully in the celebration of the Mass. It leads us to acknowledge Christ's marvelous presence in the sacrament and invites us to deeper spiritual union with him in the reception of Holy Communion.

What is the importance of Eucharistic adoration?

Eucharistic adoration is the respect and worship we give to Jesus, who is truly present to us under the appearance of bread and wine. The Eucharist is a priceless treasure; by not only celebrating it but also by praying before it outside of Mass we are enabled to make contact with the very wellspring of grace. As St. Alphonsus Liguori noted, "of all devotions, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the greatest after the sacraments, the one dearest to God and the one most helpful to us." [CCC 1418]

What forms does this adoration take?

We show our adoration in many ways. The most intimate form of adoration is Holy Communion, when we receive Jesus' body into our own. The most common and ordinary way we adore Jesus is by genuflecting - that is, kneeling briefly on one knee - whenever we pass the tabernacle in a church (see Philippians 2:10). Outside the Mass, the Church gives us further opportunities to worship Jesus. We may visit him at the tabernacle. And we may adore him when the Sacrament is brought out from the tabernacle for public worship. This is commonly called "exposition." [CCC 1378]

What is exposition of the Blessed Sacrament?

Exposition is the placement of the sacred host outside the tabernacle for public adoration. This can take many forms. The simplest form is the opening of the tabernacle doors. Another form is the removal of the sacred vessels from the tabernacle for a more prominent and visible placement. The Church also permits a "full" exposition, when the sacred host is clearly visible in a vessel called a "monstrance."

What is the purpose of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament?

There are three purposes of Eucharistic exposition: (1) to acknowledge Christ's marvelous presence in the sacrament; (2) to lead us to a fuller participation in the celebration of the Eucharist, culminating in Holy Communion; and (3) to foster the worship which is due to Christ in spirit and in truth.

What conditions are necessary for proper exposition of the sacrament?

The sponsors of this devotion should make sure that a suitable number of worshippers are present during the entire time of exposition. The Church also asks us to light four to six candles around the sacrament, and permits us to use incense. The Blessed Sacrament may never be left exposed without at least one worshipper present.

What are the fruits of Eucharistic adoration?

People who observe Eucharistic adoration experience a deeper devotion to Jesus, and this manifests itself in countless ways. The primary fruits are repentance and conversion which lead to increased charity - that is, the love of Christ alive in his people. The adoration of Jesus in the Eucharist also leads to greater reverence at Mass, a deeper desire for personal holiness, and a stronger sense of union with the parish and the whole Church. Ever since the early centuries of Christianity, the Church has linked Eucharistic devotion to service to the poor. More recently, the practice has led to an increase in vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life.

How long have Christians practiced Eucharistic adoration?

Christians have adored the Eucharist as long as the Church has celebrated the Eucharist - that is, from the time of the Apostles. The earliest texts that speak of the Mass are probably older than some of the New Testament books. In every generation since the generation of the Apostles, the Church Fathers wrote about Jesus' real presence in the Eucharist. In the second, third, and fourth centuries, Christians in lands as far-flung as Italy, Egypt, North Africa, and Cappadocia (modern-day Turkey) testify to the special care given to the Eucharist that was reserved for the sick and homebound.

What is proper etiquette during Eucharistic adoration?

When we are not taking part in vocal prayers and hymns with other adorers, we should be praying silently. Whenever we pass before the place where the sacred host is reserved, we should genuflect. We should observe the modest dress and decorum that are appropriate to very solemn occasions. We should avoid any actions that might disturb or distract others or draw attention to ourselves rather than Jesus.

How should we pray during Eucharistic adoration?

There are many ways to pray. We may meditate silently by gazing on the sacred host. We may silently speak to Jesus from our mind and heart. We may also rely on devotions and prayers from Catholic tradition, such as the reading of Scripture, recitation of the rosary, or the litanies.

From the Diocese of Pittsburgh website

Dignity Detroit meets every Sunday evening at 6:00 pm

Sacred Heart Chapel at Marygrove College

8425 W. McNichols @ Wyoming

Contact us at:

Postal Mail: P.O. Box 558, Royal Oak, MI 48068-0558

Voice-mail: 313-278-4786

E-mail: dignitydetroit74@yahoo.com

Website: www.dignitydetroit.org

We are a 501 (c) 3 organization

Dignity Detroit meetings:

Our meetings are open to all

Council -

Third Sunday every month @ 4:30 pm

General Membership -

Third Sunday of January, April, July and October,
immediately after Mass

DignityUSA:

P.O. Box 376

Medford, MA 02155-0376

Phone: 800-877-8797

E-mail: info@dignityusa.org

Dignity Detroit offers community out-reach for our less fortunate brothers & sisters at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen in Detroit

Our volunteer participation needs your help on the 2nd and 4th Friday each month between 3:30 - 6:00.



Please see George K. or Denise S. if you can help. Thank You!!!



Our annual hygiene drive this year will benefit the Community Health Awareness Group (C-HAG). It is a non-profit, community based organization that addresses current health issues and concerns of the African-American community and promotes the reduction of transmission of HIV through education, counseling testing, etc.

As has been the practice, we request donations of personal-sized items such as shampoo, deodorant, dental care, women's hygiene products, and so forth.

Thank you very much for your support of this very important ministry! Please see Denise if you have any questions.

