

*LGBTQIA Catholics**January 2013*

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Join us for

**Eucharistic Liturgy**

Saturdays at 7:30pm

With dinner and social hour at a local restaurant following

**The Montrose Center**

Room 114

401 Branard

Houston, TX 77006

[Map](#)

*Living openly as LGBT people of faith, forming a community to serve and celebrate*

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

Happy New Year 2013! Dignity Houston wishes you a new year of incredible growth and wellbeing. Around this time, many of us are reflecting on the triumphs and tribulations of the past year. There were life transitions, personal achievements, difficult moments, precious time with family, friends, and family of choice, and so much more. All of these experiences have shaped our present, and already our present is shaping the future.

As Dignity Houston looks at the promise of 2013, we want to reflect on the good work we've undertaken in 2012 that has laid a strong foundation for what's to come.

**Social and Spiritual Development**

In our Book Club and Spirituality Group, we read *To The Tune of a Welcoming God*, a collection of poignant poems

and essays about sacred spirituality for LGBT people of faith in light of antigay biblical interpretations. We also held our annual Galveston retreat in October to foster reflection, prayer, and meditation on mature faith. We had a blast fooding and playing Apples to Apples at our annual holiday party hosted by member Tom in League City. We are especially proud that every Saturday, barring special occasions, we have gathered as a eucharistic community of radical inclusion in keeping with our faith and traditions.

### **Education**

In November we hosted a Transgender panel where community members shared their experience as transgender people, helping us to become more knowledgeable as allies. Also, our Speakers Bureau took off as many members of Dignity Houston visited student organizations, spoke on the radio, and presented on panels and in classrooms to raise positive community awareness of Dignity and to promote partnership-building. Our social media ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)) was launched and has been offering exciting, new avenues for communication and connection.

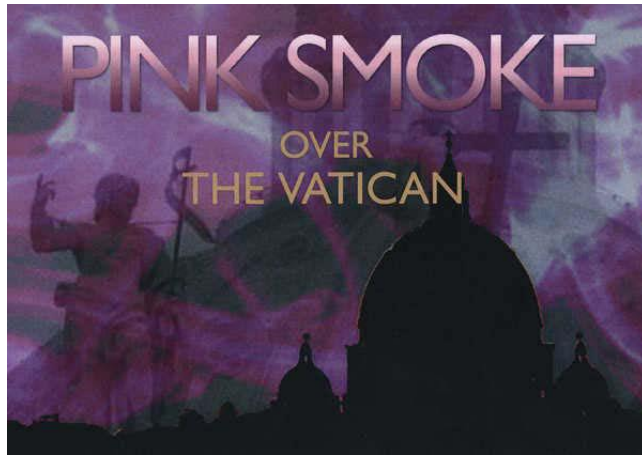
### **Social Justice and Equality**

For Transgender Day of Awareness, Dignity Houston sponsored two vigils at the University of Houston and the University of Houston-Clear Lake, leading the community in [prayer](#) and a call to action. Fostering mealtime conversation about equality for sexual minorities in the context of religious institutions, Dignity Houston fed over 200 students at A.D. Bruce Religion Center in November. We also hosted a table at the biannual Lesbian Health Initiative Health Fair to help members of the community identify welcoming places of worship in Houston. Several of our members attended the Equality Texas Project training led by Equality Texas field worker Daniel Williams aimed at providing practical tips for citizens to engage their elected officials in supporting LGBT initiatives.

These and many other activities have greatly enriched our Dignity community, and we look forward to continuing to develop in the areas of spiritual development, education, social justice, equality, and friendship in 2013!

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**PINK SMOKE**



We're excited to announce our first major event of 2013 —a free community screening of the documentary film, *Pink Smoke Over the Vatican*. Why does women's ordination matter to the LGBT community of Dignity Houston? In the following press release, we offer some thoughts.

Please join the event on [Facebook!](#)

### **An LGBT Catholic Group Asks, Where are Women's Voices in the Catholic Church?**

Every Saturday evening a small group of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Catholics meets for Eucharistic liturgy in a room at The Montrose Center rather than at a parish church. Members of Dignity Houston are among a growing number of Catholics across the nation who feel unrepresented and unwelcome in the Catholic Church because of its official teaching on sex and sexuality which immoralizes, among other things, same-sex behavior and the ordination of women.

Dignity Houston, a nonprofit that has been providing support and liturgy to LGBT Catholics in Houston since 1978, seeks to raise awareness of gender inequality in the Catholic Church by sponsoring a free screening of "*Pink Smoke Over The Vatican*" on Saturday, January 26. *Pink Smoke Over The Vatican* is a documentary film which chronicles the compelling journeys of women in the U.S. who feel called to the priesthood despite the Vatican's order of excommunication for "the crime of the sacred ordination of women."

The 58-minute film will be shown on **Saturday, January 26 at 4pm at The Montrose Center, Room 112/113, 401 Branard, Houston, TX, 77006**. A panel discussion of women ordained in different faith traditions will follow at 5pm.

### **Solidarity**

Dignity Houston's Community Organizer, Tierra Ortiz-Rodriguez, explains why women's ordination matters to the LGBT community. "Roy Bourgeois said it beautifully. 'It's called solidarity. It means to accompany, it means to walk with others. It means to make the struggle of others your struggle.'" Roy Bourgeois is a former priest who served the Maryknoll order for 45 years until he was dismissed last November and earlier excommunicated by the Vatican for participating in the ordination of Janet Sevre-Duszynska of the Roman Catholic Womenpriests in 2008.

Clergy who in good conscience express solidarity with ordained women are threatened with the removal of priestly duties at best and excommunication at worst. Priests who minister to openly LGBT people and openly support LGBT civil and religious rights risk a similar fate. Ordained priests are not allowed to preside over the liturgy for DignityUSA chapters.

Dignity Houston finds many parallels between the struggle for inclusion by LGBT people and women called to ministry which demand solidarity.

### **Privilege and Power**

Oppression is privilege multiplied by power, and the church hierarchy is guilty of using its power to preserve heterosexual and male privilege at the high cost of marginalizing and rendering invisible women and LGBT people of faith. Where are women's voices? Where are LGBT voices? Each act to silence our members, to refuse their active participation in leadership and church life and to devalue their intrinsic qualities as human beings, is an act of discrimination and spiritual abuse that must be confronted.

### **A Natural Gift**

Dignity Houston recognizes that all are created in God's image. Our sexuality is God-given—a gift from God. Our sexual orientations vitally deepen our capacity for love and connection through the sincere gift of ourselves to others. Similarly, the call to priesthood is God-given and gifted. Women are no less created in God's image, and their genders grant them a revelatory experience of God that enriches our own understanding. Both LGBT people and women alike are tasked to lead authentic lives and to honor God through worshipping with the whole self, excluding neither body, gender, and sexual orientation.

### **Reclaim and Reform**

Dignity Houston believes we are all invited to claim a direct relationship with Jesus. When people of faith are withheld the sacraments or threatened with excommunication because they approach God with their whole selves, something is wrong. When even speaking one's conscience is deemed dangerous and subversive, something is seriously wrong. To correct these wrongs, LGBT people, women seeking to be ordained, and their allies are tasked with reclaiming and reforming the church, continually pushing the envelope so that the Word bursts forth for everyone to read and relate to!

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**Ordain A Lady**



Plus you've got to watch this very catchy [Youtube video](#) sponsored by the Women's Ordination Conference!

## YOUNG ADULTS

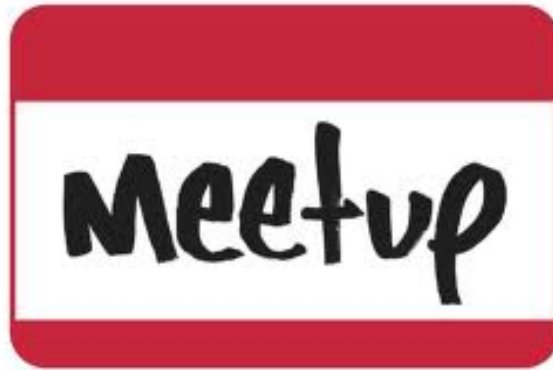


Know any young adult + Catholic + LGBT + Houston members of the community? Introduce them to our young adult group! This month Dignity Houston is launching a group that aims to provide a new avenue for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer Catholics between the ages of 18 and 40 in Houston to live out their faith. Commitment to religious life isn't easy for so many reasons, and it is uniquely challenging for young adults. Thus the purpose of the group is to provide a meaningful way for young adult LGBT Catholics to socialize, mobilize, and participate in life-affirming spirituality rooted in the Catholic social justice tradition.

There are multiple ways to connect to the young adult group:

Social media: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Meetup](#)  
 Email: [info@dignityhouston.com](mailto:info@dignityhouston.com)  
 Phone: 832-390-4453

On the topic, John McCarthy at the National Catholic Reporter writes about [The Best Resources for Young Catholics](#)



We would like to draw special attention to our newest form of relationship-building: Meetup.com. Meetup helps groups of people with shared interests plan meetings and form clubs in local communities.

The [LGBT Catholics in Houston Meetup](#) is another way to connect with other gay and lesbian Catholics in Houston and stay in the loop on get-togethers.

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#### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 12 - Liturgy and social, 7:30pm  
January 19 - Liturgy and social, 7:30pm  
January 25 - Dignity Houston on [Polar Effect Radio](#), 3pm-5pm  
January 26 - Pink Smoke Screening, 4pm  
                  - Liturgy and social, 7:30pm  
January 29 - Queer Catholic Faith "Young, Adult, Catholic" webinar with Victor Postemski, 8pm. [Register here](#)

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#### DIGNITY HOUSTON

*Empowering LGBTQIA Catholics to live authentically in religion and sexual orientation since 1974.*

Dignity Houston  
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Houston, TX 77266

[Add us to your address book](#)