



DignityHouston

September 2015 Newsletter

From the President



DignityHouston's Annual Meeting can be a kind of ho-humm non-event where we move as quickly as possible to elect trustees so we can

move on to more fun things. I'm hoping that, in coming years, we can make it a much bigger event, a milestone where we celebrate all of our accomplishments in the past year and set ourselves firmly on the path to the next year's goals. It is, after all, DignityHouston's birthday!

I hope you'll take a moment to think about how you will be a part of DignityHouston's strategic directions for the coming year:

- Increased involvement of the membership in all decisions and activities of the organization
- A renewed and reinvigorated Liturgy developed with input from members
- More activities focused on the spiritual development and needs of the members
- Increased interaction with other

Family 2.0: We Are All Called to Be Family



Catholics are pro-life and pro-family. Both make sense to

me. They state our values.

Catholics are against birth control and against marriage equality. Neither make sense to me. These are rules of doctrine to propagate the faith through population growth.

The Church is holding on to these old rules beyond their usefulness. We have vastly different sorrows in our society today that are literally starving for our attention. Population growth is not the single guiding force for humanity that it once was. Now, equally important, perhaps even more so, we need to learn to take care of the babies, children, the living and dying souls we already have.

We are no longer little villages in ancient history who have the same instinct of an endangered species where every male sperm is needed or every female egg must be fertilized. We are a diverse, growing, global people aware of our

religious and faith-based organizations in inter-faith and interdenominational activities

- More emphasis on outreach to the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Remember that you are

DignityHouston. The Liturgy, the discussion, the activities, all of those are created by you. We all look forward to the coming year to make DignityHouston an even better place to be.

In this new world of marriage equality, a Papal visit, and much more, there's no better way to begin than by reading the essay to the right by our newest member Kathleen Fallon. Kathleen is a social worker and the proud mother of a gay son. I'm sure you'll find the essay inspiring — hopefully inspiring enough to get the Papal attention at the World Meeting of Families!

Your Board of Trustees

As you may recall, we had to elect three trustees to two-



year terms and two trustees to one-year terms at our Annual Meeting in order to get back onto staggered two-year terms of offices. The trustees that you elected were:

- Frank Aguilar, term expires September, 2017
- William Brent Clarkson, terms expires September, 2016

neighbors' sufferings, needs, homelessness, and poverty. In the age of information we can no longer live our lives in ignorant bliss in a belief system that supports only the biological family to the exclusion of everything else. I believe we are breaking loose of this single minded life scenario created so long ago. We are expanding to become more inclusive as evidenced in marriage equality and diversity awareness all around the developed world.

The responsible use of artificial birth control slows down population growth certainly. Homosexual relationships slows population growth naturally and has shifted our social mores trajectory away from one single procreative, hetero-normative mindset toward a more inclusive loving understanding of what it means to be a human family. If we are not driven by the exclusive imperative to individual procreation, maybe we will become better people who learn to care for others in a broader sense to deal with our global problems. Consider this. What part of ego makes us think there is something so special about passing on our own genes? It may even seem a little selfish if you think about it to keep having new babies when so many are already born and desperately needing food, clothing, shelter, and love. Not only babies, but grown children, and adults, and seniors need love too and will receive none.

- Kathleen Joiner, term expires September, 2017
- Larry E. Lutz, term expires September, 2017
- George Wetzel, term expires September, 2016

You can contact any of the trustees at info@dignityhouston.org.

At the first meeting in October, the trustees will elect the officers of Dignity/Houston, Inc.

So What's Next?



Once the officers are elected, your Board of Trustees will have a very full agenda in the coming months. Our first order of

business will be to develop an annual budget by the time our new fiscal year begins January 1, 2016. You may recall that a **budget** authorizes no expenditures; instead, it lays out the plan of action and crystallizes the priorities for the coming year by **allocating** funds for the various program operations of DignityHouston. Then, as time goes on, your Board of Trustees will **authorize** the expenditure of those planned, allocated funds. It's just the way Congress is supposed to work and all businesses work. It also means that we work in a planned, meaningful way, rather than a knee-jerk, seat-of-the-pants way.

While most heterosexual couples continue to have babies, some may choose to adopt children who need loving homes instead, but usually have their own. And what is God's plan for homosexual couples who do not naturally make babies? Doesn't it seem obvious now as the voice of the gay community is heard in church and state? Gay couples are life-giving for families too. If our gay brothers and sisters had been valued and respected throughout time, we might have seen they are a natural safety net in this human family life of ours. Imagine all the discarded children gay couples might have made homes for and saved from poverty if they themselves hadn't been proclaimed as outcast and unworthy. Isn't it possible that the Catholic Church missed the true meaning of God's sexual orientation design?

Marriage equality is consistent with pro family life values and yet the religious rule against it dominates the true value for it. Now that marriage equality laws exist in many developed countries, maybe we will finally see God's goodness in creating a percentage of us with different sexual orientations not necessarily driven to procreation. I believe the Holy Spirit is guiding us. We just have to step out of our own way. Loosen the grip. Let go of the olive branch. Trust in the goodness of God.

We hope you'll join us at the Board meeting on Saturday, October 10, 2015, when we'll start the budgeting process with a consideration of our 501(c)(3) tax-exempt public charity status. As you may recall, a **public charity** does not distribute money to anyone. Instead, it provides social, educational, religious, and certain other **services** to a specific community.

Another requirement for public charities is that at least 10% of their income must come from donations, as opposed to being from investments. While we very much appreciate your donations to DignityHouston, they actually constitute a minimal amount of our operating expenses. At the October 10th meeting, we will be exploring new ways to maximize our donations without impinging too greatly on those of you who are living on fixed incomes. (There are ways — but only with your help!) Daniel Sereno, Accountant, and Brent Clarkson, Trustee/Attorney, will be there to discuss this matter in much more detail. In the meantime, you may want to check out the [Compliance Guide for 501\(c\)\(3\) Public Charities](#).

A married life of covenant love may be truest to the nature of God's love for all of us. Therefore, we can all aspire to love, live married lives, raise children, or care for others. Covenant relationships help us to grow, discover our purpose, and to ultimately learn to serve others. Our answers to many of today's problems remain in family life, but that includes every one of us, call it 2.0. Family 2.0 is a corrected version of heteronormative dominance that fixes the operating systems to include more options, better functioning. As we constantly evolve as God's people, the Church as usual lags behind. The Holy Spirit is always our advocate even when our institutions are not.

Kathleen Fallon, Member
DignityHouston



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Don't forget to join!

Speaking of contributions, your membership contribution is critical to DignityHouston.



It's very simple. Just go online at [DignityUSA](#) or call (800) 877-8797, and be sure to designate Dignity/Houston, Inc. as your local Chapter. As a member, you get to fully participate in setting the

direction of the Chapter by voting in all elections, participating on committees, and generally being a full-fledged member.



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