



# *DIGNITY / FORT LAUDERDALE*

## *THE WORD MAY 2012*

*Serving the Roman Catholic GLBT Community, its families & friends in Broward County since 1986*

### **From the President's Desk:**

St Damien de Vueter "invited" me to attend Mass with Dignity chapter.

One of my first Sunday night Dignity Masses that I attended with the chapter of Fort Lauderdale was on Sun Oct 11, 2009. How do I remember that? It was the day that Father Joseph "Damien" de Veuter of Molokai was declared a saint by Pope Benedict the XVI.

I first learned about Father Damien in 1971 when I was in the sixth grade. I was 12. It was my first year attending the Hall of Divine child catholic school run by the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Monroe Michigan. During one of the study periods, there was a book reading about the life a Belgium priest named Father "Damien" Joseph who choose lived with those who were forced from homes and families because they had leprosy and sent to live on the isolated island of Molokai until they died. With great help and support from Mother Marianne Cope and her sisters, Father Damien tried to alleviate the suffering of the outcast lepers: he dressed ulcers, built homes and beds, built coffins and dug graves. He wrote to his brother: ...I make myself a leper with the lepers to gain all to Jesus Christ. Father Damien eventually contacted leprosy and died from the disease on Monday April 15, 1889 at 8:00am. He was 49 years of age.

I never forgot this story and found this story for me the most inspiring of all the saint stories and hagiographies. With the AIDS crisis beginning in 1981 and the isolation reaction, the fear, the ignorance and labeling associated against those diagnosed with this disease e.g. "GRID", the "4-H club", I saw a correlation with those stigmatized with AIDS today and those stigmatized with leprosy 100 years earlier and thought of Father Damien.

### ***Upcoming Events:***

Every Sunday 7:00 PM..... Liturgy  
May 17<sup>th</sup> .....Ascension Thursday  
May 19<sup>th</sup> 5:30 PM .....Dinner/Movie Night  
May 20<sup>th</sup> 11:00 AM.....Aids Walk  
May 20<sup>th</sup> .....Deadline for GMC Tickets  
Jun 23<sup>rd</sup> 8:00 PM .....Gay Men's Chorus Concert  
Jun 24<sup>th</sup> Noon – 6 PM .....Pride Fest

FYI: the patron saint associated for people with AIDS is Aloysius Gonzaga. Feast day, June 21.

While Father Damien was a Catholic, he wasn't always supported by others Catholics or his Catholic Bishops or his religious superiors. He was even judged a scandal by some protestant ministers who were also working on the Hawaiian Islands. So when Sunday October 11 2009 arrived, I found it appropriate to be with other Catholics at Mass. Yet at the time, I was working on Saturdays and Sundays and the only Mass (continued on next page)

### **OUR NEW WEBSITE IS UP AND RUNNING!**

***Thanks to Logan Bear, Dignity USA's web-guru, we have a new website - DignityFortLauderdale.org! Please visit us and give us your feedback to help improve it.***

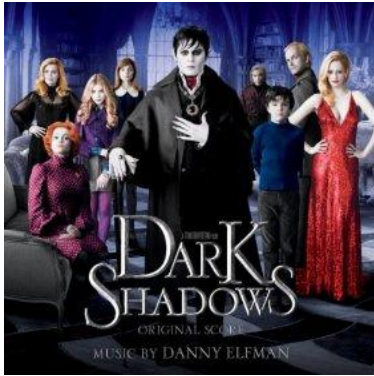


time available to me was a 7PM Mass held at the MCC Sunshine Cathedral offered by the Dignity Fort Lauderdale Chapter. This was, for me, an invitation. Thank you Saint Damien. Invitation accepted.

Andrew

**DINNER & MOVIE NIGHT**  
**SATURDAY, MAY 19<sup>th</sup> AT 5:30 P.M.**

Our monthly dinner and movie night will be held on Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM. We will meet at the California Pizza Kitchen located at 2301 N Federal Highway. Afterwards, we either see “Dark Shadows” with Johnny Depp or another film.



If you are planning to attend the dinner or the movie, please contact George Cullen at 954-465-3317 or at GFCullen@bellsouth.net by Friday night, May 18<sup>th</sup>. You'll have a “bloody” good time!

**HOLISTIC SERIES**

Last month, forty people attended Fr. Kevin's presentation “Sex As God Intended last month at the Pride Center.” Fr. John McNeill was present and answered questions from the audience.

Due to the success of last month's presentation, the final two presentations will be delayed until the fall to give us time to tweak the series.

The chapter would like to thank Fr. Kevin for the time and effort put into presenting four seminars this past spring.



**FLORIDA AIDS WALK**  
**SUNDAY, MAY 20, 2012, 11:00 AM**

The chapter is forming a team to march in this year's Florida Aids Walk to be held on Sunday May 20, 2012. The walk is 5 kilometers and will start and end in south beach in Fort Lauderdale. The opening ceremonies begins at 10:15 AM and the walk at 11:00 AM and will last about one hour.



If you would like to walk as a group or wish to donate to the team, please contact Andrew at 954-647-3597. For further information about the walk, including the route, please to go their website, [Takeaction.aidshealth.org](http://Takeaction.aidshealth.org).

**SOUTH FLORIDA GAY MEN'S CHORUS**  
**SATURDAY, JUNE 23<sup>RD</sup> 8:00 PM**

The South Florida Gay Men's Chorus will hold their Gay Pride concert, “Take Me to the Moon”, on Friday June 22<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>. We plan to go to the Saturday performance which will be held at MCC Sunshine Cathedral. Ticket prices have not been published yet. If you plan to attend, please contact George at 954-465-3317 or at GFCullen@bellsouth.net by May 20<sup>th</sup>. Tickets for the concerts sell out fast so we plan to purchase tickets early. We will let people know what the ticket prices are when they are posted on the group's website.



May 17, 2012 – Ascension Thursday



**Dignity/ Fort Lauderdale Inc Membership Form**

**Suggested Dues: \$50.00**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Address**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**City**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**State**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Zip**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Email**

**Make Membership check payable to:**

**DIGNITY USA INC.**

**PO Box 376**

**Medford, MA 02155**