

Communion

The Monthly Newsletter of
Catholics for Marriage Equality
In California

“One of the deepest forms of poverty a person can experience is isolation.”
Caritas in veritate

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In this Issue:

Exorcising Fear/Eugene McMullan
Love Wins/Reviewed by Deacon Brian
Fires and Fire
The Irish Spring
A Better Life
Dan Savage at Union
Deb Word at Fordham
Dolan's 'Freedom' Committee
Anti-DOMA Petition/Tom Luce
Anti-Bullying Petition
MLGC Anniversary Mass
Breadless Stuffing/Marvin Vergara
Communion of Saints Long Beach November 1
LGBT Students Group Berkeley November 2, 16
LGBT Parish Group Berkeley November 3
CTA Conference November 4-6
Dignity Prayer Group SF November 17

Exorcising Fear

By Eugene McMullan

This month as we celebrate the great cloud of witnesses, I would like to offer some reflections inspired by the love saints together teach us, and its power to dispel fear. Scripture tells us that love casts out fear, yet what does that mean? Is it wrong to be afraid? It all depends. When I take Sophie out for a walk, she cringes at the least indication of the presence of another pet, person, bicycle or moving vehicle. This is not always a bad thing, as she pulls back from potential dangers. Children, after all, are taught to avoid “stranger danger.” The problem is that (due to some unknown trauma, perhaps) she is *too* afraid, cringing, whining or in the worst instance, barking and lunging at her fellow creatures, and not only the jealousy-inducing C-A-T.

Built on an instinctual basis, rational fear is healthy and good, and we would certainly be in trouble without it. The fear that makes you cross the street, for example, to avoid a group congregated in the middle of the sidewalk may be rational and help preserve your life. If you are with your loved ones, moving all of them to the other side of the street may ensure your collective survival. This is quite natural and good. But what if you were afraid to walk down the street at all? Or what if your response were based on your perception of a group’s race or ethnicity?

Irrational fear, then, is the type of fear that love exorcises, and I would suggest briefly that it comes in at least three types: fear of the unknown, fear of the other, and at a deeper level, the fear of death itself. All are based, like rational fear, in life-preserving instinct. The problem is that the rational grace that would typically suffuse and guide the instincts has been overwhelmed, and the instincts have run amok, creating not only a host of ethical problems, but contravening the instinctual aim of preserving life and ensuring survival. Sophie may actually be in *increased* danger because of the fearful way she reacts to other dogs. Just imagine, God forbid, that she darted madly into traffic to avoid a sniffing dachshund, for example.

Fear of the unknown compelled earlier generations to draw fearsome monsters at the borders of their maps. In this era of Google maps, we are more typically afraid of the unknown future. What will become of my job, for example, or when and where will “the terrorists” strike next? Individually and collectively we often fail to behave lovingly and rationally because we are afraid of what, in truth, only God can know in advance. Fear of the unknown may cause me to cling to a version of religion I learned as a child, for example, or to never want to leave home, or to never take the risk of embarking on a new career or relationship. Collectively, it may cause us to embark on an irrational and too-hastily considered course, as we may have done in response to 9/11. An irrational fear of the unknown can paralyze, or cause us to overreact. A rational love will release this fear, letting it dissipate.

Related to the fear of the unknown is the fear of the other, as illustrated in the 9/11 example. Remember that first year or two when even in San Francisco, every house was flying the American flag? Suddenly men who appeared to be Middle Eastern became objects of suspicion. To make someone “other” is to reject a perceived difference. It may be rooted psychologically in a rejection of sexual difference. Simone de Beauvoir quite famously referred to woman as “the other sex,” and Emmanuel Levinas wrote extensively about the relationship of “self-same” to the typically feminine “other.” The ethical life is one in which we are supposed to yield to the de-

mands of the other. As Mother Teresa noted, “Christ” (the other) comes to us in a distressing disguise. The distress we feel derives from the irrational fear that perfect love would cast out, enabling a gracious and rational embrace of difference. It is gracious and rational to befriend your Hindu or Muslim neighbor, for example, or to ask critical questions about what it means when people created in the image of God are labeled by politicians, military spokesmen and the media as “suspected terrorists.”

The fear of death is based on rational instinct, supported by religious tradition. Scripture differentiates between the way of life and the way of death. We are urged by our tradition to choose life. An *irrational* fear of death, however, can lead us to make shameful individual and collective choices. My life or even the life of my people is not to be chosen over every conceivable good. Ironically, some of the most horrific developments have come in the name of life, such as the gas chambers and the nuclear bomb. To secure the life of an “us,” “they” were sacrificed.

But is this the kind of sacrifice God requires? Surely not. When perfect love has cast out our irrational fear of death, we will not only avoid sacrificing the other, but we will be freed to make a sacrificial gift of ourselves. Jesus became “obedient unto death, even death on a cross,” because the love he was enabled him to “give his death away” (Ron Rolheiser). Choosing life is not always or only about protecting your mortal coil.

Love Wins

Reviewed by Deacon Brian

www.susancasslan.com

Unless you’ve been hiding in a cave, you could hardly have missed the controversy spurred by Pastor Rob Bell’s new book, *Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived*. The book was contentious even before it was officially published, due to a promotional video Bell made and posted on YouTube, in which he recalled an art show done at his church, based on the theme of what it means to be a peacemaker. In one piece the artist included a quote from Mahatma Gandhi. Some onlooker anonymously attached a piece of paper to the work, writing, “Reality check: he’s in hell.” To which Bell chimes, “Really? Gandhi’s in hell? We have confirmation of this? Somebody knows this? Without a doubt? And that somebody decided to take on the responsibility of letting the rest of us know?”

Bell, a spiritual provocateur and a genius in using social media to broadcast his message, has been dubbed America’s hipster pastor and a singular rock star in the church world by *Time Magazine*. He preaches at a 10,000 member nondenominational megachurch, the Mars Hill Bible Church (which he founded), in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Last month he announced that he will be leaving Mars Hill at the end of this year.

The book seeks to answer the question whether a loving God would select just a relatively few people to make it to Heaven, while billions of people burn forever in hell. One of the reasons the book has caught the popular imagination is since we live in a pluralistic religious world, whether our non-Christian colleague at work or our atheist friend from school will go to Heaven, are real questions for many people. Also, since LGBT folk are often consigned to hell by other Christians, the way one understands hell, can have huge repercussions for how one strives to integrate

one's sexuality with one's spirituality. Still I can't help wondering, if Christians truly lived the path Jesus envisioned, would we be so obsessively concerned with our own and others' eternal destiny?

Bell has been called a universalist, defined as believing all people will eventually be saved, even if they haven't professed faith in Jesus Christ. Bell never uses this term and in interviews denies he's a universalist. However, he's close to that position, since he believes God's irresistible love will eventually melt the hearts of even the most depraved sinners, if only after death (which to these Roman Catholic ears sounds like purgatory). Thus hell is not forever and love wins in the end, as everything will be restored and almost all will finally be reconciled to God.

Whether the New Testament subscribes to this understanding is disputable, as clearly there are passages on eternal judgment, yet there are also verses including John 12:32, Acts 3:21; Matthew 19:28, and Colossians 1:20 which strongly hint at some universal restoration. Bell claims that the eternal torment of people in hell doesn't bring God glory but that reconciliation does, because God's desire and intention to see people become everything they were always intended to be by God, would be fulfilled, not thwarted.

Still Bell retains an element of free choice. We still have the choice of resisting, rejecting, and avoiding God's love in this life, such that God will graciously grant all the hell we want, now and into eternity, with some perishing apart from God forever because they continually decide to resist God's invitation even in the afterlife. Bell sees this as a very remote possibility (believing that God's love is so irresistible, few if any will be able to refuse it permanently), yet people can still choose for or against this love. Hell or heaven, we can have what we want. Salvation only truly begins when we say yes to God, yet not a verbal *pro forma* assent, but a yes that changes the way we conduct our lives and interact with other people.

In Roman Catholic theology, there has always been a stream of thought, most recently explicated by Hans von Balthasar, that even though hell exists, whether anyone is actually there is an open question. Pope John Paul II rejected the reality of a physical, literal hell as a place of eternal fire and torment. Rather, the pope said hell is separation, even in this life, from joyful communion with God. According to an official Vatican transcript of the pope's speech before a 1999 weekly audience, Pope John Paul II noted that the scriptural references to hell and the images portrayed by scripture are only symbolic and figurative of "the complete frustration and emptiness of life without God." He depicts hell as "a condition resulting from attitudes and actions which people adopt in this life."

Hell, for Bell, seems less an eternal fate and more a condition where we reject here all the good, humane, and beautiful options God has given us. This position is similar to Pope John Paul II conceiving hell as destructive attitudes and actions we adopt here which then follow us into the afterlife. This interpretation of hell as permanent exclusion from a relationship with God may be more horrifying than the prevailing cosmic torture chamber scenario.

I firmly believe in God's all-embracing mercy as I'm continually surrounded by it. Both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures testify to a God of boundless, tenacious grace, who never stops pursuing us no matter how often we fall or wander away. Jesus' whole ministry was releasing people from hell. Why wouldn't that same welcoming, unfailing kindness Jesus displayed on earth, not be shown in the afterlife?

Like Bell, I believe that the core gospel message is about participating in heaven now by bringing transformation, renewal, justice, and hope to the world, as Jesus did. By saying yes to God through our actions toward others, then the question of hell becomes moot, because the more forgiveness, compassion, and love we achieve as individuals and community, the more heaven we will experience now and beyond. In Jesus' ministry, pardon always triumphed over punishment.

It's extraordinary that in 2011 the reality of hell would be a *Time* cover story, inciting a national debate! The implicit question in Bell's narrative is what image of God are we proclaiming: one of uncontainable joy and gracious love worthy of trust or a terrifying, angry, slave driving God ready to condemn us forever whenever we do something wrong. Ultimately, hell is more an indictment of our lack of Gospel values, than any judgment on God's lack of fairness towards us. Bell is correct that love wins, but if it doesn't win within our hearts and confirm itself by the way we lead our lives, we've no one to blame for hell's existence but ourselves!

Fires and Fire

<http://samdavidson.net/insurrection-by-peter-rollins/>

<http://www.gladysganiel.com/social-justice/peter-rollins-insurrection-book-review-talk-in-belfast-5-september/>

Excerpts from Peter Rollins' *Insurrection*:

Mother Teresa continued to affirm God at an intellectual level, but she passed through the white-hot fires of forsakenness. She is, as such, a shining example of what it means to enter into the fundamental Christian event of Crucifixion.

To give to someone in need can make us feel good. We can even gain much more than we give in these situations. But what if our real job is not to give to those who are poor but to help create a world where the poor do not exist?

Do the activities we participate in as church act as token gestures or perverse protests that end up supporting the system they supposedly oppose? Could our prayer meetings and weekly involvement with social justice programs actually operate as a means of preventing us from changing how we spend our time and energy the rest of the week, enabling us to continue in careers that contribute to the very things we are praying against and acting in ways that contradict what we express in our Bible studies?

What if the Church should be less concerned with creating saints than creating a world where we do not need saints? A world where people like Mother Teresa and MLK would have nothing to do.

The Irish Spring

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/essays-theology/irish-spring-reflects-attitudes-toward-vatican>

What is happening in Ireland? According to a recent essay posted with the *National Catholic Reporter*, Ireland has experienced an “Irish Spring” in terms of its relationship with the institutional church. Irish Prime Minister Edna Kenny, a practicing Catholic, contributed to the revolt when this past summer he took the floor of the Irish Parliament to openly criticize the Vatican and the hierarchy for its invocation of ecclesiastical and canonical privilege in matters related to the sexual abuse of children.

A Better Life

Luis is the 14-year-old son of an illegal Mexican day laborer whose wife left him when Luis was a young boy. She had wanted “more than he could give her.” They had married young in Mexico, then travelled north because that was what people did in pursuit of a better life. They had Luis, who may or may not have been an “anchor baby.” Luis’ father was angry when his wife left, but having Luis to care for gave him a reason to live. He wanted to keep Luis safe, provide for him, and ensure that he had a good education so that he could “be somebody.” As Luis grew up, his father was a constant, loving presence.

Luis went to a school where he made friends with the wrong peers, and was at risk for joining a gang. Here the film flirts with a stereotype, but avoids going down that road. Gangsters are in the background, but their life is not portrayed in detail. Thus the film avoids the usual pitfalls of either a glamorized portrayal, or a demon-infested hell. More than anything, the gangster life here represents a moral temptation that no 14-year-old boy should have to face.

Meanwhile the father decides to buy the truck from the Mexican contractor who has employed him for several years. He doesn’t want to, knowing that he is at risk of deportation should he be pulled over. But his boss is going back to Mexico, so the truck must be sold. When his sister takes makes an extraordinary loan—“This is what we came here for,” she says—he buys the truck loaded with tools so that he can begin to build that elusive “better life” for himself and his son.

The truck is stolen, as readers who have seen *The Bicycle Thief* might have expected. The boy joins his father in his quest to retrieve it, which eventually lands them in a world of trouble I won’t describe to you here. You should really see the movie. Without being preachy or overly sentimental, it raises consciousness about a very important ethical and political issue. Immigration reform is about families. *A Better Life* brings that message home.

Dan Savage at Union

<http://fairfieldmirror.com/2011/10/05/savage-love-on-the-catholic-church/>

In his keynote address for the Pro-Queer Life Conference, one of the More than a Monologue series, held at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, sex advice columnist and cradle Catholic Dan Savage decried the abusive attitudes and teachings of the institutional church. As an openly gay married man and father, he challenged the church to change its outdated perspec-

tive on homosexuality. The Bible, he insisted, should not be used to justify prejudice and discrimination. "We have got to ignore the bullshit in the Bible about gay people, just as we've learned to ignore what the bullshit in the Bible says about women ... about polyester, about farming and about slavery," he said.

Savage still believes some aspects of Catholic teaching, and holds his parents in high regard. They are active Catholics. At one time Savage was preparing to become a priest. Now he has discovered his vocation as a family man, and activist. His It Gets Better Project has arguably saved many souls, and sparked a new level of global awareness around LGBT issues.

Deb Word at Fordham

<http://www.fortunatefamilies.com/Newsletters/Oct2011Newsletter.pdf>

Deb Whalen Word of Fortunate Families gave a terrific presentation in September at the conference at Fordham University, also part of the More than a Monologue series. Be sure to read the entire talk, which is published in the October issue of the Fortunate Families newsletter. Here are a few excerpts:

We assumed that Chris was gay by the time he was into his late teens. His brother collected Playboy (under the mattress), Chris bought Men's Health magazines. Shawn said girls were hot, Chris said they were sweet! Mothers figure these things out. We love Chris, and never once thought about changing who he is, but worried that he might have a harder life.

This was the first time I began to figure out that I needed to trust God in ways the Catholic Church does not.

Fast forward to a family vacation in the gulf a few years later... there were five of us, Shawn and his wife, Chris and his dad and I holding onto each other's rafts, floating peacefully. I said I think this must be what heaven is like. Chris said quietly, "except I won't be there with you." "Son, where do you get this stuff?" Mom, it's your club, you know the rules. I asked later if this was why he didn't tell us sooner.??? Yeah mom, I had to deal with the going to hell stuff first.

Chris attends church with us when he visits, but says a sermon that lumped together 'the gay lifestyle, abortion and murder' in his senior year has made it too uncomfortable, too dangerous to attend mass in his college town. I have hope that he will return to the church. He says he still feels Catholic, but ... I don't know. And I wonder... why do I stay in a CLUB that my child feels is 'dangerous to his soul'????

By the way, he said to tell you he prays, and he says the rosary; he is Catholic in a way that church doesn't get in the way.

Dolan's 'Freedom' Committee

The newest anti-gay committee serving the U.S. bishops is the Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty. It was established by Abp. Timothy Dolan after consultation with the national bishops' Administrative Committee which met in Washington in September. Bp. William Lori of Bridgeport will be its chair. The committee will be supported by two full-time staff members at the U.S.

Catholic Conference of Bishops, one a lawyer with expertise in the issue of religious freedom, and the other an anti-gay lobbyist “who will handle both religious liberty and marriage issues.” In a letter to the bishops announcing the committee, Dolan stressed recent supposed assaults on Catholic religious liberty, including marriage equality in New York.

Anti-DOMA Petition

By Tom Luce

http://www.signon.org/thanks.html?petition_id=6502&id=-1497721-VTfH8H

Archbishop Timothy Dolan (New York City), President of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued on September 20, 2011 an official plea to President Obama to “push the reset button” on his Administration’s approach to the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). The Archbishop speaks on behalf of the U.S. Bishops in requesting that the President vigorously defend the measure, even if his Justice Department believes it to be unconstitutional.

We the undersigned practicing Catholics wish to support President Obama with all due respect to our bishops and the “millions of citizens” Archbishop Dolan invokes as supporting him.

We, the undersigned members of the Catholic Church:

- wish to express our conscientious support of President Barack Obama as he moves to have DOMA declared unconstitutional;
- believe in conscience that same gender-oriented people (SGO's) are equal morally and civilly to opposite oriented people (OGO's);
- consider the relentless campaign of our church leadership and their supporters not only continues to condemn SGO's as “intrinsically disordered” if they follow their God-given nature, but also seeks to deny their civil rights to marriage;
- regret that this campaign is not a neutral campaign but carries with it moral condemnations that add to the public damage to SGO's, leads the young to suicide and abets violence against so many;
- firmly believe that like so many fundamental issues that our church has vehemently fought against, homosexuality will become an accepted, natural way of being, endowed with the capacity for holiness as valid as OGO's;
- assure our bishops of our respect for their position and their right to bear witness to it in the public arena;
- publish our opinion invoking Canon 212 par. 3, stating that the faithful, “have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to their sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church,” in no way intending to rend any of the fabric of our communion, but rather intending to bring our communion to a fuller, open examination of the issue;
- request all church authorities to respect our consciences and to find a just process for all the faithful to dialog about this issue without fear of retaliation as we seek now to do the least harm to our SGO's, sisters and brothers, and eventually find salvific unity on this issue.

Anti-Bullying Petition

By Equally Blessed

<http://www.equally-blessed.org/civicism/petition/sign?sid=1>

News stories have highlighted the growing epidemic of violence perpetrated against transgender people, of suicides among lesbian/gay youth who are ostracized by their peers, and of the deadly impact that silence about these trends is having. As Catholics, we believe that each and every one of us is a beloved child of God, and that each of us reflects the Divine Image. We are one family, one body, each of us a part of the other.

It is in that spirit that we once again decry the continued bullying of children and youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT), or who are perceived to be LGBT. When any of us is harmed or tormented, the entire Body of Christ is wounded. Therefore, we rededicate ourselves to the continued work of building a culture of love and support for all young people. We reject hurtful words that can be seen as justifying violence and bullying.

We call upon our Catholic bishops, who meet November 14-16, 2011 in Baltimore, to make an end to bullying and violence a priority. We urge them to end their silence about the tragedy of bullying endured by LGBT youth, and to put our Church firmly on the side of those who have been targeted.

Let our Church not be seen as complicit in the pain endured by thousands of young people, who suffer so much that many consider, attempt, or actually commit suicide. This is agony that no child, no family should ever endure again.

By signing this petition, I pledge to raise my voice against bullying and to encourage others to do likewise. I call on the US Catholic bishops to join me in working for an end to bullying and violence against LGBT Youth.

MLGC Anniversary Mass

As reported in an October 28th article by Robert Dellinger in the *Tidings* (also covered in the *Los Angeles Times*), the 25th anniversary of the archdiocesan Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Catholics in L.A. was marked October 22nd with a special anniversary Mass at Blessed Sacrament Church in Hollywood. The church was almost filled for the Saturday evening event. Speaking at the event, MLGC coordinator Arthur Fitzmaurice described the history of the ministry, which was called forth in a sermon given by Abp. Mahoney at an HIV/AIDS service at Blessed Sacrament in 1986.

On February 2nd, 1986, then-Archbishop Roger Mahoney presided at a Mass for those with AIDS and their caregivers. Right here in Blessed Sacrament, he addressed the congregation with these words: 'The current AIDS epidemic ... places upon the Church and its members a pastoral obligation ... to respond with care and compassion to the individuals suffering from this disease. The heart of this response must be unqualified respect for the value of human life and for the dignity of the human person.'

Candles were placed by representatives of HIV/AIDS ministries, Spanish-speaking ministries, parents' ministries, and Sophia's Circle. Fitzmaurice, a doctoral student at Cal Tech, also described MLGC's latest project to train catechists to address LGBT issues in a more positive way consistent with the U.S. bishops' 1997 pastoral, *Always Our Children*. Since last year teams have given 21 workshops in English and 16 in Spanish, for about 1,000 people.

Always Our Children coordinator Jenny Naughton of St. Denis related that a mother had come to visit her at the MLGC booth at the religious education congress last spring, concerned that her son was contemplating suicide. She also talked about a young man who had contacted her to ask about a parish where he would be accepted. "My heart sank," she said, "because all I could tell him was, 'You're not going to be any more comfortable than you are at most other parishes, including my own.' But my goal in life is if a person wants to go to a Catholic church, they don't have to call in advance to make sure it's a safe place to be."

Breadless Turkey Stuffing

By Marvin Vergara

1 and 1/2 heads of cauliflower
1 bunch of celery
2 bunches of Italian Parsley
1 bunch of Cilantro
2 eggs
1 huge handful of pistachios
1 huge handful of chestnuts
4 large table spoons of olive oil
1 head of garlic
2 medium size red onion
3 links of spicy sausage like chorizo
6 strips of smoked bacon
2 handfuls of shitake mushrooms
1 handful of dried apricots
1 handful of dried cherries
1 handful of dried cranberries
dried sage
dried rosemary
ground black pepper
chicken stock
4 large gala apples

Step 1

Roast pistachios in shell or get de-shelled pistachios which would make life much easier for you. Roast chestnuts and de-shell. Fry up sausages and bacon and keep the drippings. Cut up in small pieces. Lightly sauté the shitake mushrooms in bacon and sausage drippings and set aside.

Step 2

In a food processor, add the olive oil, parsley, cilantro and roasted pistachios. Pulse so that pistachios are still small nutty bites, not creamy. Continue process until all the parsley, cilantro and pistachios are all chopped up into a crunchy nutty paste.

Step 3

In a large pot, sauté garlic and onion in olive oil. Chop up celery into small pieces and add to sauté. Add a generous amount of dried sage and rosemary, until sauté becomes very aromatic. Add ground black pepper to taste. Continue to sauté until celery is half cooked. Add chicken stock, just enough to cover sauté. Sauté shouldn't be too wet with stock since celery produces a lot of liquid as well. Simmer for a few minutes and turn off burner.

Step 4

In a large slow cooker, layer some cauliflower chopped in small florets. Add some of the pistachio, parsley and cilantro mix. Add some of the celery, garlic and onion sauté. Add some of the bacon and sausage that have been cut up in small pieces with scissors, along with some of the drippings. Add some of the apples that have been sliced into small wedges. Add some of the lightly sautéed and barely cooked shitake mushrooms.

Mix and toss these 6 layers together. Repeat above process until all ingredients have been tossed up in this mixture. There should be about an inch of liquid at bottom of mixture.

Once all ingredients have been used, add the eggs that have been whisked to this tossed mixture in the crock pot. Cook in crock pot at high temp for approx 3 hours, continually checking to see that cauliflower is not over done and is still somewhat crunchy. Periodically mix and stir mixture while cooking.

In the last half hour add the dried cherries and dried cranberries and the dried apricots that have been cut up into small pieces. Fold into the mixture.

Let the stuffing set and cool in fridge over night.

Once you are ready to serve stuffing, sprinkle some of the remaining dried cherries, dried cranberries and chopped roasted chestnuts and small pieces of dried apricots on top of mixture, creating a pretty color. Reheat stuffing. Sprinkle some left over chopped roasted pistachios when ready to serve.

Enjoy this scrumptious breadless turkey stuffing that was a hit at Thanksgiving Dinner in Vancouver & it was my very first time making it.

Communion of Saints Long Beach November 1

<http://www.comunidadlb.org/pdfs/ComunidadNews1111.pdf>

Are there saints in the Roman Catholic canon that were LGBT? Comunidad member John Lasseigne, M.Div., will present a discussion of the theological concept of the communion of saints, LGBT saints, and their application to our lives on Tuesday, November 1st at 7 p.m. in the Fr. Ge-

rald Meisel Parish Hall at 672 Temple Avenue in Long Beach. Laseigne has also written a nice essay on the subject in the November issue of the *Comunidad* newsletter.

LGBT Students Group Berkeley November 2, 16

www.calnewman.org

The Newman Student LGBT group meets every other Wednesday from 7:30-9 pm at the Newman Center in Berkeley. The group aims to provide a safe space for those who struggle with their sexuality or simply want to learn more about what it means to be gay and Catholic. We'll share personal experiences of coming out, family, and learn about the Church's stance on homosexuality. Come join us next on Wednesday, Nov. 2nd, in the seminar room.

LGBT Parish Group Berkeley November 3

www.calnewman.org

In the spirit of the feasts of all saints and all souls, let us recall the saints in our lives, both personal and historical, and those who have gone before us. Please join us for an evening of reflection and sharing as the Spirit of God is upon us. We meet Thursday, Nov. 3, 7:30 p.m. - 9 p.m., in the lounge of the Newman Center in Berkeley. For more information on the group or to get on our email list, contact Antonio Salas at (510) 663-6302 or email LGBT_Newman@yahoo.com.

CTA Conference November 4-6

<http://www.cta-usa.net>

Call to Action will host its annual conference in Milwaukee, November 4-6. This year's theme is "Living the Gospel of Love." Featured speakers include Prof. Marcus Borg, Prof. Ada Maria Isaasi-Diaz, NCR columnist Jamie L. Manson, and author Kenneth Hardy. There will be a Friday pre-conference session (9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) entitled "What does the Holy Family look like in the 21st century?" to be led by Marianne Duddy-Burke of Dignity USA, and Casey and Mary Ellen Lopata of Fortunate Families. Saturday workshops include "Celebrating Lesbian Catholics and Their Friends," led by Prof. Mary E. Hunt and Diane Neu.

Dignity Prayer Group SF November 17

The inaugural prayer group on a recent Thursday evening consisted of six members. We reflected on Fr. Bernard Lynch's beautiful article in Dignity's *Quarterly Voice* concerning the sacredness of our sexuality, and responded with further reflections on *Psalms 139* which confirms God's presence in every aspect of our lives. God even threw in an earthquake for us and the room shook! We concluded with prayers for our intentions and the recital of the Lord's Prayer. We will meet again at 7:30 pm, on November 17th upstairs at the Seventh Avenue Presbyterian church in San Francisco.

Catholics for Marriage Equality was established in June 2009 to advance civil marriage equality through prayer, presence and education. Address newsletter submissions and correspondence to co-editors Eugene McMullan (wmcnullan@ses.gtu.edu) and Kara Speltz (kara4peace@aol.com).