

# **DIGNITY DETROIT**

## **CONSTITUTION**

**PREAMBLE:** This organization shall be known as Dignity Detroit. Dignity Detroit shall be a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Michigan.

- A. We believe that Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Straight (hereafter referred to as "GLBTS") Catholics are all members of Christ's Mystical Body, numbered among the people of God. We have an inherent dignity because God created us, Christ died for us, and the Holy Spirit sanctified us in Baptism, making us the temple of God, and the channel through which the love of God might become visible. Because of this, it is our right, our privilege, and our duty to live the sacramental life of the Church, so that we might become more powerful instruments of God's love working among all people.**
- B. We believe that GLBTS persons are able to express their sexuality in a manner that is consonant with Christ's teaching. We believe that all sexuality should be exercised in an ethically responsible and unselfish way.**
- C. As members of Dignity, we wish to promote the causes of GLBTS communities who share the goals, values and mission of Dignity Detroit. To do this, we must accept our responsibility to the Church, to society, and to the individual Catholic.**
  - 1. To the Church we must work for the development of its sexual theology and for the acceptance of all GLBT persons as full and equal members of the one Christ.**
  - 2. To society we must work for social justice and social acceptance of all people through education and reform.**
  - 3. To individuals of the GLBT community we must reinforce their self-acceptance and their sense of dignity, and to aid others in becoming active members of the Church and society.**
- D. Dignity is organized to unite all Catholics, to provide leadership and to be an instrument through which GLBT Catholics may be heard by the Church and society.**

**There are five areas of concern:**

- 1. SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT. We shall strive to achieve Christian maturity through all the means at our disposal, especially Eucharistic Liturgy, the sacraments, personal prayer, and active love of neighbor.**

2. **EDUCATION.** We wish to inform ourselves in all matters of faith as well as all that concerns the GLBTS community so that we may develop the maturity of outlook needed to live fulfilling lives in which spirituality and sexuality are integrated and to prepare for service in the total community at large.
3. **SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICE.** As Catholics and members of society, we shall become involved in those actions that bring the love of Christ to others and provide the basis of social reform.
  - a. Toward individuals . . . We wish to lead a life of service to others, hoping to render visible, the love of Christ and contributing our share to building community love.
  - b. With GLBT friendly groups . . . We wish to work with other GLBT supportive groups for the promotion of a sense of solidarity.
  - c. With religious and secular groups . . . We wish to work with them so they may better understand gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons and recognize present injustices.
4. **SOCIAL EVENTS.** Activities of a social and recreational nature will be provided to promote an atmosphere where friendships develop and mature, and where a feeling of acceptance and dignity for all persons may be nurtured.
5. **WOMEN'S CONCERNS.** We will work to initiate and support outreach efforts to lesbian and concerned women to reinforce within the Church the theology supportive of justice and equality for all oppressed people, particularly women, and to promote cooperative actions between all women and men of Dignity.

## **ARTICLE I**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

- Section 1.** Any person who has attained the age of majority as defined by local statutes, regardless of sex, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or religious preference, who desires to promote the aims and purposes of the organization and the Catholic faith, shall be eligible for membership and enjoy full privileges thereof.
- Section 2.** Application for membership should be mailed to Dignity/USA with chapter preference listed as "Detroit Chapter". Upon reconciliation of the monthly membership roster provided by Dignity/USA, the Treasurer will issue a membership card to any new or renewed member with the annual expiration date clearly stated. The Treasurer will maintain an updated chapter membership list that will be available for verifying membership at general membership meetings.

**Section 3.** Membership in Dignity Detroit entitles the individual to one vote on all issues presented to the general membership for consideration and all materials distributed to members by the chapter.

**Section 4.** Membership in DignityUSA entitles members of the chapter to vote on all issues presented by the national organization. Members will determine how the chapter's allocated votes shall be cast in accordance with ARTICLE VII of this constitution.

### **ARTICLE II**

#### **DUES**

**Section 1.** All members shall be required to pay annual dues as specified by Dignity Detroit.

### **ARTICLE III**

#### **MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

**Section 1.** The general membership will meet at least quarterly, specifically during the month following the end of a quarter, and additionally at the discretion of the Council as defined in Article IV.

**Section 2.** Special meetings may be called by the Council not less than seven (7) days written notice of such meeting. Special meetings may be called upon the petition of twenty-five (25%) percent of the membership.

**Section 3.** A quorum for a meeting of the general membership, shall be understood to be those members present at any meeting. No less than three (3) members of Council **MUST** be in attendance.

**Section 4.** The agenda for a general membership meeting shall be drawn up by the Council. Any member may raise an issue for discussion or vote after the presented agenda has been completed.

**Section 5.** At a meeting of the general membership, motions shall pass by a vote of a simple majority of the members present.

**Section 6.** Any decision of the Council may be reversed by a simple majority vote of the members present at a properly called meeting of the general membership.

**ARTICLE IV**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, AND ELECTIONS**

- Section 1.** The elected governing body of Dignity Detroit shall be the Council.
- Section 2.** The Council shall consist of six (6) elected members. The elected members shall be: President, Vice-President/Pastoral Ministries Coordinator, Secretary, Treasurer, Community Involvement Coordinator, and Social Coordinator. All elected members of the Council shall have one vote. The President may also cast a tie-breaking vote.
- Section 3.** To be eligible to run for Council office, a candidate must be a member as of March 1 of the calendar year.
- Section 4.** The term of office for Council members shall be for two (2) years. President, Treasurer and Social Coordinator shall be elected in even years thereafter. The offices of Vice-President/Pastoral Ministries Coordinator, Secretary and Community Involvement Coordinator shall be elected in odd years. The term of each elected candidate shall begin on the first day of July following their election. There shall be no restrictions on the number of terms a member may serve on the Council.
- Section 5.** Each year the current Council will appoint an election committee by March 1. The committee shall consist of not less than three (3) current members, who will conduct the election of the new Council officers in accordance with the guidelines stated in Section 6. No member of the election committee shall be a candidate for an office. No member of the Council in mid-term may file as a candidate in the alternate cycle without first resigning his/her current position.
- Section 6.** Council election guidelines:
- a. Each Candidate shall file an "Intent to Run" form that will include a short biography, qualifications, and reasons for running for the intended office.
  - b. **CUT-OFF DATE FOR THIS FORM SHALL BE THE SECOND SUNDAY OF APRIL.** At this time, the slate of candidates will be finalized and this information shall be included in the May newsletter.
  - c. The election committee will accept nominations and verify membership of all candidates as of March 1 of that calendar year by checking the master printout secured from the current membership coordinator/Treasurer.

- d. **Beginning on the first Sunday after March 1, and each Sunday thereafter, the election committee will give to the Secretary to be published, a list of all members who have filed "Intent to Run" forms.**
- e. **The election committee will prepare the ballots listing all registered candidates. In the event there is only one candidate for each office, the election of the slate of candidates may be approved by a majority vote at a general membership meeting in June specifically called for the purpose of election by acclamation by the majority of the members present. If the slate of candidates fails to receive a majority vote when offered to the membership at that meeting, the members will vote for each office separately. Any individual office not receiving a majority vote at that meeting will be considered vacant and shall be filled in accordance with ARTICLE V, Section 5.**
- f. **The Dignity Detroit Council elections for contested offices will be conducted by mail only. Ballots will be mailed to the last address recorded by the Membership Coordinator/Treasurer on March 1. If the address on record is not correct or if a member does not receive his/her ballot, the election committee shall not be held responsible. Included in the mailing will be a self-addressed, stamped envelope for returning the ballots. Ballots must be POSTMARKED on or before May 31 and MUST be RECEIVED at the Dignity Detroit post office box no later than June 7. Any ballots not received by mail or after June 7 will be void.**
- g. **Anyone who is a current member as of March 1 will be eligible to vote in the election.**
- h. **Names of those elected to the Council will be announced by a member of the election committee on the second Sunday of June.**

**Section 7. There shall be no absentee ballots.**

**Section 8. The election shall be by secret ballot.**

**Section 9. Council members shall be elected by simple majority of votes cast.**

**Section 10. In the event of a tie, a re-vote will take place for that specific office.**

**Section 11. In the event that no candidate seeks the office of President, the newly elected Council shall determine the President from amongst themselves. The new President shall seek to fill the newly vacated office as directed in ARTICLE V, Section 5 of this Constitution.**

**Section 12. Council members may be subject to recall and removal from office.**

- a. A petition to recall a Council member or members, signed by twenty-five (25%) percent of the general membership, will be presented to the Vice-President/Pastoral Ministries Coordinator at a general membership meeting. Upon certification of the signatures by the Treasurer, the recall vote will be included in the agenda for the next general membership meeting or at a duly called special meeting of the general membership as set forth in ARTICLE III, Section 2 of this Constitution.**
- b. A simple majority of all members present and voting shall be sufficient for recall.**
- c. If a Council member shall be absent at two or more consecutive Council meetings without previous notification of the Chair or without valid health reason prohibiting such notification, the President, with the consent of Council, may declare the position vacant and shall fill such vacancy as designated in ARTICLE V, Section 5 of this Constitution.**
- d. In the event a member of Council fails to attend to his/her duties as described herein, a formal complaint may be signed by ten (10%) percent of the membership and filed with the Council. The complaint shall outline the allegations of dereliction of duties. A copy of the complaint shall be filed with the Secretary and copy given to the Council member charged. The President shall call a special meeting of the Council within twenty (20) days of receipt of the complaint to hear evidence of the charge and allow the Council member to present testimony on his/her behalf. A representative of the accusing members must be present at this meeting or the charge will be dropped. Upon hearing the evidence, the Council, by simple majority vote, may remove the charged Council member from his/her position. The accused member may not vote on this issue. If the position is vacated by will of the Council, the President shall move to fill the vacancy as outlined in ARTICLE V, Section 5 of this Constitution.**

**Section 13. The Council shall also serve as the Board of Directors in accordance with section 501(c)3 corporations of the Internal Revenue Code.**

**ARTICLE V**

**DUTIES AND POWERS OF THE COUNCIL AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Section 1.** The Council will conduct all business of the chapter.

**Section 2.** The President and Treasurer shall submit at the July General Membership meeting, an operating budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1 and runs through June 30 the following year. The budget shall delineate anticipated revenues and expenses. Once approved by a majority vote of the members present at the General Membership meeting, deviations from that budget shall be handled as follows:

- 1. Council has the authority to approve disbursements of funds from the operating budget that exceed budgeted amounts up to \$750.00. Council shall have the responsibility of adjusting other budget categories to compensate for the amount that exceeds the original budgeted amount.**
- 2. Membership may present disbursement proposals at a General Membership meeting. The proposal must include the dollar amount (not to exceed \$2,500) and the name of the 501©3 tax exempt organization and the rationale for proposing this donation. This proposal shall be voted on by members present at that General Membership meeting. No more than \$2,500 may be disbursed at any given Membership meeting.**
- 3. Membership disbursement proposals made at a General Membership Meeting in excess of \$2,500 will be decided by a mail-in ballot to the entire membership with a clearly defined two week response deadline. The Treasurer and at least one other Council member will coordinate the ballot process. Decisions will be made by a simple majority of ballots returned.**
- 4. Membership sponsored disbursements shall not exceed \$10,000 per fiscal year (July 1 – June 30).**

**Section 3.** The Council shall meet monthly and a quorum of the Council shall consist of sixty (60%) percent of the Council membership. At the first meeting of the Council after July 1, a regular date of future regularly scheduled meetings of the Council shall be determined. In the event a meeting cannot be held on its regularly scheduled date, the President shall notify each member of the Council, in writing, of the time, date, place and tentative agenda two weeks prior to the rescheduling of the meeting. If two or more members of the Council indicate an inability to attend the meeting, the President shall reschedule the meeting to a more convenient date. Two acceptable forms of written notice are e-mail to the email address on record or facsimile notice to the facsimile number on record of each Council member. Response to said notice of the inability to attend may also be provided by email or facsimile to the email or facsimile address of record for the President. The established postal system is also an option for such notifications.

**Section 4.** The responsibilities of the Council in conducting the affairs of Dignity Detroit will be to designate the duties of each office, other than as outlined below:

**PRESIDENT:** The duties of the President include the following:

1. Be leader and sole official spokesperson of the organization (unless delegation is given to another individual for a specific purpose).
2. Call and chair all regularly scheduled meetings of the Council.
3. Report to the membership monthly.
4. File any written complaints received with the Secretary of Dignity Detroit
5. Appoint all official representative(s) to other religious and community organizations.
6. Call and chair all meetings of the General Membership.
7. Recruit members for and oversee the duties and responsibilities of all ad-hoc committees

**VICE-PRESIDENT/PASTORAL MINISTRIES COORDINATOR:** The duties of the Vice-President/Pastoral Ministries Coordinator include the following:

1. Act as President-Pro-Tempore in the absence of the President.
2. Assume the office of President in the event that the office of President is vacated.
3. Recruit members for and oversee the duties and responsibilities of the Pastoral Ministry Team.
4. Review and approve for submission to the President and Treasurer the budget suggested by the Pastoral Ministry Team.



**SECRETARY:** The duties of the Secretary include the following:

1. **Oversee the business correspondence of Dignity Detroit.**
2. **Prepare and distribute minutes of all meeting to all Council members within one week following the meeting; and disseminate a summary of the Council meetings in the monthly newsletter.**
3. **Oversee and be responsible for the publication and distribution of Sunday bulletin and monthly newsletter.**
4. **Prepare and submit a budget(s) for the assigned publications stated in this article at the request of the President and Treasurer.**

**TREASURER:** The duties of the Treasurer include the following:

1. **Serve as the financial and business officer of the organization.**
2. **Collect and distribute all funds.**
3. **Keep and maintain all financial records.**
4. **File all local, state and federal tax forms, and other related financial information as required.**
5. **Provide quarterly financial reports to the Council and General Membership.**
6. **Verify that all checks are countersigned by another designated member of the Council.**
7. **Recruit members for and oversee the duties and responsibilities of the Membership Committee.**
8. **Prepare and submit a budget for the Dignity Detroit organization.**
9. **Obtain bonding insurance for all assets of the organization.**

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COORDINATOR:** The duties of the Community Involvement Coordinator include the following:

1. **Recruit members for and oversee the duties and responsibilities of the Community Involvement Committee.**
2. **Serve as representative of Dignity Detroit to various community charities and social concerns organizations.**
3. **Prepare and submit the budget of the Community Involvement Committee at the request of the President and Treasurer.**

**SOCIAL COORDINATOR:** The duties of the Social Coordinator include the following:

1. **Recruit members for and oversee the duties and responsibilities of the After Mass Social Committee.**
2. **Recruit members for and oversee the duties and responsibilities of the Special Celebrations Committee(s)**
3. **Prepare and submit the budgets for the After Mass Social and Special Celebrations Committee(s) at the request of the President and Treasurer.**

- Section 5.** Vacancies on the Council, should they occur, shall be filled by the President with a majority vote of Council. The term of office shall expire at the time of the next general election for that specific office.
- Section 6.** The Council shall be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the office of Dignity Detroit.
- Section 7.** All agenda items affecting Dignity Detroit must be cleared by the President or two members of the Council, should the President be unavailable. All business conducted by a standing committee must be cleared with the Council member responsible for that committee's operation. In the event a standing committee is unable to receive approval for official business, it may request that the issue be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Council.
- Section 8.** The Council shall develop, maintain, and update, as appropriate, job descriptions for all chairpersons of standing committees.

#### **ARTICLE VI**

#### **STANDING COMMITTEES — APPOINTMENTS, DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Section 1.** The standing committees are established to serve the needs and create the impetus of Dignity Detroit. The committee chairpersons shall be the Council member responsible for the committee's operation as outlined in this Constitution or his/her designee. A designated committee chairperson shall work with the Council member responsible for recruiting volunteers for the committee.
- The standing committees are: Pastoral Ministry Team — the responsibility of the Vice-President/Pastoral Ministries Coordinator; Community Involvement — the responsibility of the Community Involvement Coordinator; the After Mass Social and Special Celebrations Committees — the responsibility of the Social Coordinator; Membership — the responsibility of the Treasurer; and the Special Concerns Committee — the responsibility of the President.
- Section 2.** With the approval of the designated responsible Council member and confirmation by the Treasurer of the availability of funds, committees may disburse funds as appropriated by the budget for their operation. Disbursement of funds exceeding the budget must first be approved by Council in accordance with **ARTICLE V**, Section 2.
- Section 3.** Committee Chairpersons may establish rules they deem necessary in order to function effectively. These rules are subject to Council review and approval.

**Section 4. Committee Chairpersons may request to be placed on the agenda of any Council meeting pursuant to the guidelines established by the Council.**

**ARTICLE VII**

**NATIONAL CHAPTER VOTES**

**Section 1. The casting of Chapter votes in national elections/issues will be determined by a polling of the general membership by mail.**

**Section 2. The Chapter will mail each member information regarding the vote, a position statement from Council (unless the vote centers on an election for the Board of Directors), and a ballot on which to record his/her preference.**

**Section 3. Member ballots must be returned according to the guidelines contained in the information packet in order to be considered valid.**

**Section 4. Two or more Council members will be assigned to tabulate and report the results to Council and the General Membership. Council will cast the Chapter votes according to the results of the poll.**

**ARTICLE VIII**

**BEQUESTS**

**Section 1. In the event that the organization receives a bequest from a member in excess of \$500.00, Council shall decide how to invest the funds after reviewing all investment opportunities (unless otherwise stipulated by the donor). One hundred dollars (\$100.00) shall remain in the treasury as permanent recognition of the individual's generosity. The Donor's name and amount held in reserve shall become part of the monthly and quarterly budget reports.**

**ARTICLE IX**

**AMENDMENTS**

- Section 1.** Dignity Detroit may adopt such amendments to this Constitution as found to be necessary.
- Section 2.** Amendments may be proposed by the Council or by petition presented and signed by twenty-five (25%) percent of the membership at a general membership meeting. The amendment and accompanying rationale will be mailed to all members no less than 2 weeks prior to a general membership meeting. The amendment will then be voted on at that general membership meeting pursuant to **ARTICLE III.**
- Section 3.** Amendments may be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the membership present at the general membership meeting.
- Section 4.** Amendments to this Constitution must be published and distributed to all members of the organization and kept in the official records of the organization.
- Section 5.** All amendments to the Constitution adopted before October 26, 2003 are hereby NULL and VOID.

**ARTICLE X**

**REGULATIONS**

- Section 1.** Dignity Detroit shall be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order* as amended wherein this Constitution does not specifically cover the subject. Council should have ready a current copy of *Robert's Rules of Order*, in the event that a question of procedure may occur.
- Section 2.** In the event there is a challenge to procedures followed, the interpretation of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be by the Secretary, or in his/her absence, any Council member designated by the President, to the best of his/her ability.

**ARTICLE XI**

**RATIFICATION**

- Section 1.** This constitution shall be ratified by an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members voting at a meeting of the general membership where the vote is part of the published agenda.

**ARTICLE XII**

**RESIDENCE**

- Section 1.** The certified residence of the Organization shall be Marygrove College 8425 McNichols, Detroit, MI 48221.
- Section 2.** The official mailing address of the Organization shall be P. O. Box 558, Royal Oak, MI 48068-0558.

**ARTICLE XIII**

**STATUS**

- Section 1.** Dignity Detroit is incorporated by the State of Michigan as a nonprofit organization.
- Section 2.** In the event of the dissolution of the Organization, after payment of any just debts, any remaining assets shall be distributed by vote of the active membership present at that meeting to a 501©3 organization(s) whose purpose is consistent with the goals, values and mission of Dignity Detroit.