

LATE PENTECOST, 1980

WHOLENESS IS WHOLESOMELESS

What do gay people want from the Church?
What does the Church want from gay people?

In considering the question Bishop Edward Jones asked in his visit to Integrity/Bloomington in June 1980--"What is it, exactly, that Integrity is seeking?"--I reflected on the fact that there is no manifesto, no ultimatum; nor should there be one. But neither is there an agenda to guide our discussion of the catholicity, the inclusiveness of the Church. I propose the following:

1. Christian love;
2. Honesty;
3. Inclusion;
4. Conversion of life, redemption, and reconciliation;
5. Celebration of the Presence of Jesus Christ our Savior;
6. Building of a Whole Community of Faith;
7. Fidelity to the Incarnation of Christ;
8. Repudiation of human moral sophistries based on natural law;
9. Education; elimination of stereotypes, fear and ignorance; and intention to grow in love and peace together, with respect for the dignity of every person; and
10. Mission to the world, its communities, subcommunities, and demimonde, with the stability of loving Faith and commitment to integrity, worth, and true relationships blessed by God.

None of these can be realized if they remain platitudes, but I intend to deal specifically with the issues as

they become divisive and polarizing threats; the battle then is one not of wholeness--spirit--but of emotion, and the weapons are polemics, intimidation, politics, and innuendo. The only victor is Fear. The casualties are crucified--one to the right and the other to the left: there is, however, One in the middle.

I certainly do not oppose civil rights, nor those who risk their lives and livings to ensure them. I take the same risks. But the arena for political and social justice is political and social. The author of all justice is the only Judge, and it is to that Court I appeal.

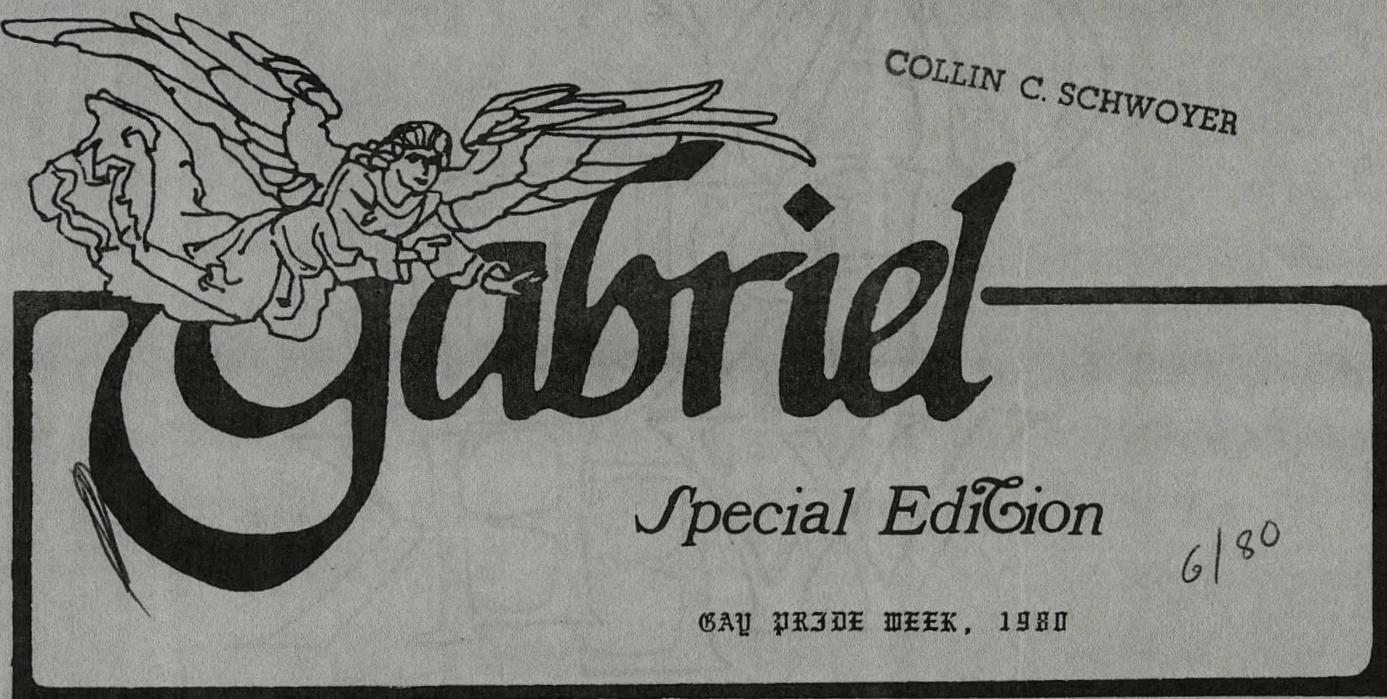
*Teach them to love others in the power
of the Spirit.*

Christian love. In spite of saccharine admonitions to love others selflessly, in sermon after sermon and hymn after hymn, we are always confronted by self. It is when one can love one's self that one can begin to love one's neighbor; and the learning to love self is the realization of God's love of us all. Gay people are taught again and again that they are not lovable as they are. Scriptures, sermons, prayers, witness, weddings (and wedding rings!), Parish Registers, and statements from the House of Bishops all conspire to "prove" our unlovability and even our incapacity to love. An experience is worth more than an argument. Yet the collective experience of two hundred generations of countless gay women and men has not dis-proved" the lie. One wonders why. If it were true that gay people were unlovable, then the primary intent of our Creator would be frustrated and God would be the absolute hypocrite. Still, the lie is preached. And still

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COLLIN C. SCHWOYER



GAY PRIDE WEEK WITH INTEGRITY . . .

Many programs of INTEGRITY/BLOOMINGTON have expanded our understanding of the dimensions and richness of gay experience, through the centuries and throughout our culture. The greatest reward of such wider perspectives is a lessening of fear, which is the message we are trying to give the world. Gay pride can, of course, undermine our trustworthiness by self-conscious flaunting of ridiculous stereotypes. But Gay Pride can--and must--demonstrate our acceptance of our selves: bodies, minds, hearts, and souls; our integration of individuality, diversity, and worth; our championing of the rights and dignity of every person; our earnest combat of oppression wherever it emerges; our freedom and our responsibility. No one can take from any of us the gift God gave in creating us--our worth in spite of ourselves. The saddest plight of gay people is not the venom spat out by fearful, hate-filled antagonists (Anita Bryant was the best thing possible for an emerging gay coalition); the saddest plight is the fear, guilt, and shame which haunt gay people themselves. Jesus Christ has freed us all from captivity to sin and death. Every one of us, straight and gay, female and male, rich and poor, black and yellow and brown and red and white and blue, is a recipient of that freedom. Gay Pride Week is a symbolic way of asserting the dignity which is ours by the simple fact of our being. It asserts the dignity of all humankind. Our job is to accept and to honor those values, to share in the celebration, and to thank God our Creator who gives them to us all. We hope for a time soon to come in which marking out a single week to demonstrate Gay Pride will be unnecessary because every day of every year will proclaim not only the pride gay people have in being themselves, but also the dignity which every person accepts and respects in every other person. Meanwhile, it is wonderful to BE who we are, and to BE so proudly!

LEAD, FOLLOW, OR GET OUT OF THE WAY!

Charles R. Forker
James K. Taylor+
Co-Convenors



Easter, 1983 iv.i

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EASTER, PASSOVER, AND HOPE

The whole Bible is a story of Exodus: a story of people being set free from slavery of whatever kind to become responsible citizens of the world which is God's Kingdom. I know, I know, it is not chic to refer to the Kingdom of God with all its masculinist imagery and paternalist history--but the historic word is Kingdom, and, even with all its baggage, it is the word for dominion, for reign, for the concept of the Monarch who holds all power and authority. We rebel against authority:

From the primal elements you brought forth the human race, and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill. You made us the rulers of creation. But we turned against you, and betrayed your trust, and we turned against one another.

(Canon C)

But we mortals have not shown a very competent sense of power or authority when we tried and tried to replace God's absolute might. In the place of creativity, we have achieved untold destructivity; in the place of love we have quaked with fear; in the place of abundance for the whole earth we have done violence--in every level of relationship from the most intimate to the most global--even cosmic.

The Exodus began at the Passover, when the ancient People of God escaped slavery and torture at the hands of Pharaoh's armies. Our fathers and mothers in the Faith wandered in the wilderness for forty years on the way to the Promised Land. And even once there, such conflicts and tensions as now appear on the front pages of today's papers began, never to end. But the redemption of God's People lay in their Exodus at the Passover--the gift is in the freeing, not in the destination.

The Exodus continued at the Crucifixion of Jesus, who led ALL people through the darkness of the world's sin and death into new life. When he rose to life, standing in the midst of death, he brought all of us with him:

You, Christ, are the king of glory,
the eternal Son of the Father.
When you became man to set us free
you did not shun the Virgin's womb.
You overcame the sting of death
and opened the kingdom of heaven
to all believers.

(Te Deum)

The Exodus continues for us: When we Come Out we are heirs and heiresses of the Exodus: we Come Out of slavery to suspicion and fear and sin and stereotype; we come out of dark little closets into the world of reality and life; we come out of captivity even to our own bad self-esteem into honesty and hope. The gift is in the freeing, not in the destination. We still have a long way to go in the wilderness, but we're free!

While I was recuperating from my heart attack, in spite of the 1,680 cards and letters of get well wishes and great love--for which my overwhelmed and humble thanks--I lost myself in self-pity and concern for people I have offended and hurt in my life. I worried especially about all the people who "misunderstood" me, who feared me; who hated me. Suddenly, as a gift from God it seemed, I turned around my self-pitying phrases and I saw what I might be doing to "them":

Your freedom is not determined by my ignorance.
Your honesty is not dependent upon my prejudice.
Your behavior is not limited by my fear.

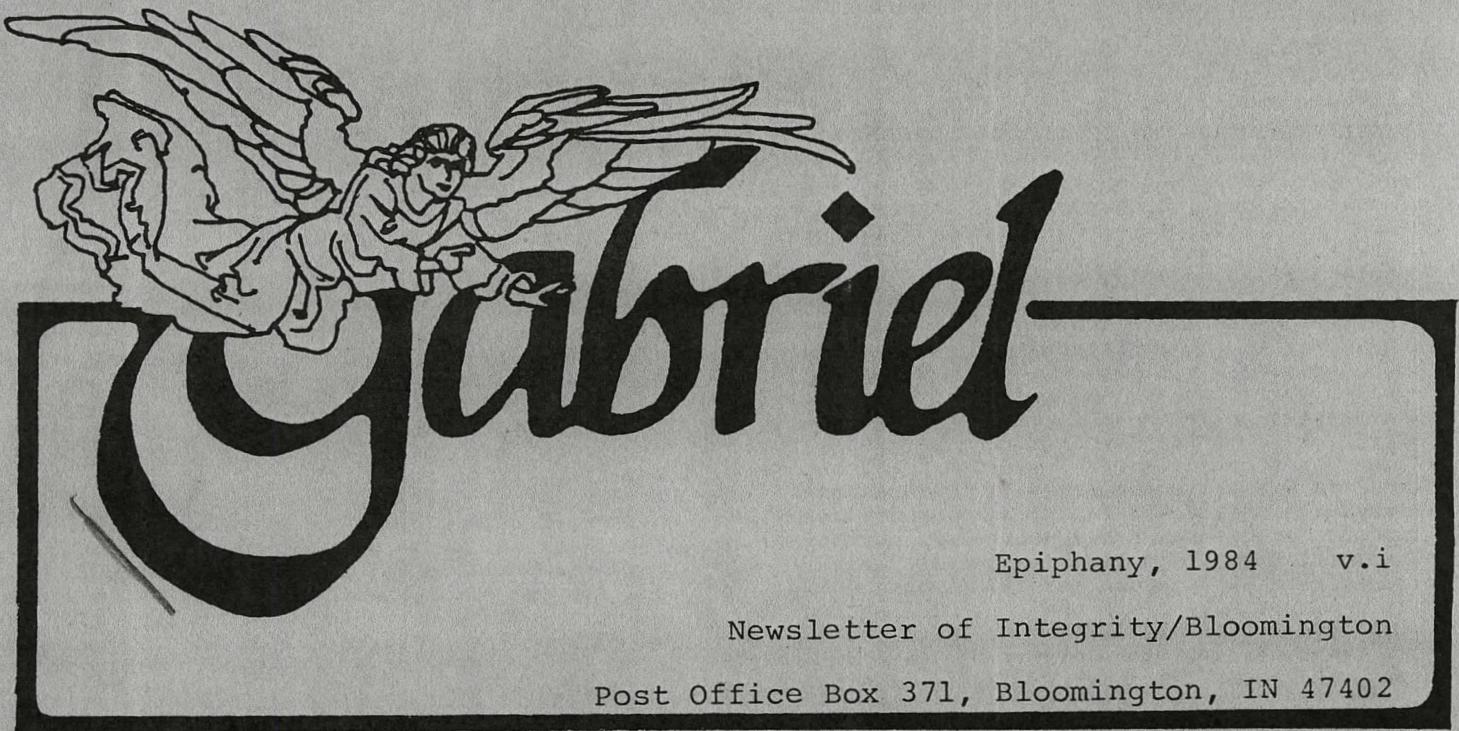
Help me to know you for my sake,
For my freedom is dependent upon yours.

(And, thanks to Saint Francis,)
It is in loving that we are loved.
It is in forgiving that we are forgiven.
It is in becoming that we can be.

Let me help you to become more you, not me.

Happy Eastertide!

Fr Jim Taylor+



Epiphany, 1984 v.i

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MIDWEST REGIONAL MEETING

Frustrations and confusions of dealing with national Integrity in recent months boiled up at the Midwest Regional Conference which met September 2 - 4, 1983, at the Cathedral Church of Saint James, Chicago. About 36 representatives, 6 of them women, attended from chapters in Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, and Indiana--including both Indianapolis and Bloomington. Nonvoting representatives attended from Toronto, Connecticut, and Philadelphia as well as Pittsburgh, from which national Vice President Juli Beatty came. Juli took the heat for the lack of response from the national office in Pasadena and for unpopular actions and inactions of President Marsha Langford.

Juli pointed out that almost all the actions of the national Board being so strongly questioned followed from formal votes and informal discussions at last year's national convention. Decisions not to have a national convention this year, to lease an office in Pasadena, and to pay the president a salary were based on conversations at the convention and on proposals by past President John Fortunato.

Juli, however, supported the general criticisms of the president, observing that she seemed reluctant to share power or information. The board was not clear on details of moving the *FORUM*, the national newsletter, to Pasadena and was not satisfied with explanations from the president. No board meetings had been held since January, 1983, for lack of money for travel expense. No chapter had been assessed during the year.

In the frank and honest (translation: brutal) discussions that followed, board members were criticized for taking major actions without formal

approval of the membership and for allowing the president to run the office on her own. Few officers were left to serve as targets, however. Bill Giles and Lee Westerhof both had resigned, and the national secretary, Richard Younge, was planning to resign after distributing ballots for a national election. That left Juli and Marsha.

Fr. Grant Gallup, representative from Chicago, called for the return of grassroots control of INTEGRITY. Representatives from Michigan and Bloomington presented a list of proposals to that end. The need was also recognized for local responsibility and for prompt communication between chapters when problems arise.

In formal action, Sam Dorr was elected the new Midwestern Regional Representative to the national Board. Sam was recently fired from his job of 19 years with the First National Bank of Louisville because of his public visibility with INTEGRITY.

Nominations were also made for the National Board. Nominated for president were Juli Beatty, the Rt. Rev'd Otis Charles, and Jim Toy; for vice president, Bob Colsher and Juli Beatty; for secretary, the Rev'd Grant Gallup, Michelle Barney, and the Rev'd Richard Younge; for treasurer, Mike Mullens, Bill Giles, and Michelle Barney.

The keynote address at Mass on Saturday was given by Ron Wesner, a past president of INTEGRITY and inactive priest who is seeking reinstatement. "The price we pay for hating others," he said, "is loving ourselves less." He hoped for a world and church in which gay people can "be both known and loved . . . through their sexuality."

Story by J. M. Matthew based on a report by Sheila.