

Reflection Resources

Purpose: *To assist leaders in offering reflections at meetings that cover the new name.*

Action and Timing: *Review and select a reflection to lead your meetings. It may be of use for you as a leader to take time to reflect on what this change means for you personally, to now be part of a healing community named Dignity Health. As you review the following stories, you may also consider looking for individuals and stories from your facility's heritage, founders, and current community that would be useful to share with your teams.*

Dignity and Leadership

Reading: In her book "There Is a Season," Joan Chittister, O.S.B., writes about the merits of being what she calls a spiritual rebuilder: "Rebuilders are those who take what other people only talk about and make it the next generation's reality. These are the superstars of the long haul... They give up prestige and money and being the Peter Pans of the public arena for the long, hard struggle of turning their personal worlds on their small axles. They build the new world right in the heart of the old. Their lot is too often, too plainly a lonely one."

Reflection: I am aware of the solitary inner work it takes to "build a new world right in the heart of the old." In my role as leader here at Dignity Health, this is a call within my larger call—to help those who look to me as a leader to understand and make their peace with our new name, new logo and changes in governance.

Dignity and Identity

Reading: "My identity, my personhood . . . does not depend on whether or not I have a green card, a stock portfolio, a job, a home or even a college diploma. Nor does my identity depend upon whom I am sexually attracted to, or to race, religion, gender, social status, bank account, passport or health insurance, but on my essence as a child of God." - Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York, Chair of the United States Catholic Council of Bishops Address on the Dignity of the Human Person, December 6, 2011

Reflection: Do you feel affirmed and respected at Dignity Health? Do you understand our mission and values and can you say how they reflect or relate to your own values? Do you understand and affirm that there is a calling or spiritual purpose at the center of our lives as leaders, employees, physicians, and volunteers of Dignity Health?

Dignity and Work

Reading: "There is inherent dignity in work done by people, all of whom have inherent worth because that work is to be done to reflect favor on our Creator." - Brother Lawrence

Reflection: There is a way we embody dignity at our workplace. Let's take the story of Brother Lawrence, a lay brother of the Carmelite Order who lived many years ago. His desire to become a monk arose from the mere sight in midwinter of a dry, leafless tree and of the reflection it stirred in him about the change the coming spring would bring. He was

shunned by the ordained brothers of the community because he was not from a noble background; he came into the Order illiterate and poorly socialized. He was left to do the most humble tasks. However, he was filled with a fire inside. He decided to serve as if he were always in the Presence of God. Literally, God was right next to him. Graciously, God chose to be with him in such a convincing manner that all in the community noticed this man's holiness, his basic decency, and his utter commitment to every task he was given. Can we, each of us, give our hearts to serve in exactly this way? Can we open up our interiority, our deepest well of being and share from that place of inherent dignity with others? If we do this, Dignity Health will be utterly transformed in its renewed mission to serve.

Dignity and Justice

Reading: "We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline."
- Martin Luther King, Jr. from his "I Have a Dream" speech, 1963

Reflection: At the very end of Martin Luther King's life, he turned his attention to Vietnam. When he looked at the way the war was being fought, he realized that the Vietnamese people were being objectified as virtually subhuman. He began to preach loudly and bravely that the Vietnamese were human beings fighting a civil war in which our country had mistakenly intervened. By insisting on the basic humanity of the Vietnamese, Rev. King made it possible for this country to negotiate with them as people worthy of respect and possessing dignity. The nature of the demonstrations began to change and the majority of Americans became more compassionate towards the Vietnamese. We see similar tendencies in our war torn world today, to demonize those who we name as terrorists, or who live in countries with whom we are at war. Rev. King gave his life for the brave assertion that all human beings possessed dignity and were worthy of respect. That example has as much moral weight today as it did half a century ago. No one is beneath dignity, either our fellow workers or the people in various kinds of need in the communities in which we serve. Dignity and Justice often work together to align our actions with our principles.

Dignity and Collaboration

Reading: "Death with dignity is to die with grace, in the knowledge that [you] are loved."
- Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Reflection: When Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity began her work Calcutta, when people died, their bodies were left in the streets, and if the neighborhood was lucky a wagon eventually came to pick up their bodies. Mother Teresa and her sisters went out into the streets and respectfully gathered the dying, washed them, fed them by hand, sat with them as they died and prepared them for burial. She insisted on the dignity of even the dead. This changed Calcutta's relationship to death. We have the same invitation to respond with compassion to the unassailable dignity of those in our care who are seriously ill and dying. What helps to keep us awake to the basic dignity of each person we meet and serve in our work with each other, especially in the communities where we all live? How do the values of Dignity and Collaboration help us steward the precious resources entrusted to us as we encounter limitations along the way?

Dignity and Excellence

Reading: “Some people give information but don’t invite you to care. Some move you, but don’t give information to act. The person who does both is a rare treasure.”
- David LaMotte, Peace and Justice Consultant

Reflection: In the balancing act of leadership, excellence in managing people derives in part from our capacity to tap into the different ways diverse people take in information, learn, and are motivated. How can we balance both information and inspiration in the midst of our current changes in order to encourage both wise caring and compassionate action? What helps you reach toward excellence in the service of Dignity?

Dignity and Stewardship

Reading 1: “I am the forest that is being cut down. I am the rivers and the air that are being polluted, and I am also the person who cuts down the forest and pollutes the rivers and the air. I see myself in all species, and I see all species in me.” - Thich Naht Hanh, Buddhist Teacher

Reading 2: “Creator God and Gardener of the world,
Tender of trees, of the field and the grass,
Keeper of forests, woodland,
and wide-open plains,
Fecundity of the waters,
The One who vests our Earth
in its blue breathing veil,

We ask you your blessing on each of us,
and upon all who have the power
to change our destructive ways;
We ask your blessing upon our commitment
to preserve life for all humanity
and for the entire Earth Community.

- Prayer Service, Commission of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

Reflection: In what ways are you aware of the Dignity of the Earth, and the profound interconnections we share with all living beings in the work we do? Are the decisions we make today in keeping with a sustainable future?