

JULY 28, 2017

## GNRC NEWSLETTER N°4

Catholic LGBTI News around the world



Hear a Just Cause  
(Psalm 7,1)

欢迎来到慕尼黑      Witam z Munich      Benvenuto a Munich      ويلكؤم الى ميونيخ  
 Welcome to Munich      Добро пожаловать в мюнх      Benvinguda a Munich  
 Hupenda kwa Munich      Willkommen bei München      ミュンヘンへのウエルカム      Bienvenidos a Munich  
 Hupenda kwa Munich      Bienvenue à Munich      Bem vindo a Munich  
 欢迎来到慕尼黑      Witam z Munich      Benvenuto a Munich      ويلكؤم الى ميونيخ  
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 Hupenda kwa Munich      Bienvenidos a Munich      欢迎来到慕尼黑

Global Network of Rainbow Catholics Second Assembly

30 Nov – 3 Dec 2017, Munich - Dachau

The Second GNRC gathering will be held in Munich from November 30th to December 3th on 2017. Isn't that exciting? We will be meeting again!

- We would like to share with you why we acclaim "[Hear a Just Cause](#)" for our next Assembly, but please don't miss the [Invitation Letter](#). If you have made the decision to join us, just click on the [Registration Application](#). Follow the Assembly timeline for application and scholarships in the [GNRC Events Calendar](#).
- The Organizational Development Committee has written a first draft of the [Statutes and Internal Regulations of GNRC](#). Therefore, we want to invite all of you who are connected to GNRC to read the draft carefully and to give us your feedback through this [Questionnaire](#).
- What's the name of your community or group? We have made a global review of them and written [The Chronicle of a Name](#). Meet also other LGBTI pastoral care groups or associations in the new [GNRC Allied Groups](#) list in our Website.
- Did you know that there are at least 200,000 LGBTI among 12.5 million Catholic populations in China? Read the chronicle [Gay Catholics in mainland China](#) about the journey to establish the [China Rainbow Witness Fellowship](#) (CRWF) and the [China Catholic Rainbow Community](#) (CCRC).
- The GNRC Website refreshed its template design and included a lot of new sections and content. Find old and new sections such as [Events](#), [Publications](#), [Press Releases](#), [Multimedia](#) and suggested [Readings](#) as well as [organizational info](#) about the GNRC at [www.rainbowcatholics.org](http://www.rainbowcatholics.org)

We know it was a long while since our last Newsletter, but hope it was worth the wait. And just to remind you how we are all part of the same LGBTI Catholic community, please enjoy everybody's presence in the [Pride 2017 Album](#).

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## GNRC 2017 2nd ASSEMBLY: Nov 30 – Dec 3, Munich - Germany

Join us to claim **"HEAR A JUST CAUSE"** (Psalm 17)

[Chinese](#) / [English](#) / [Español](#) / [Française](#) / [Italiano](#) / [Português](#)

It's been almost two years from the first time the Global Network of Rainbow Catholics gathered, for its genesis in Rome on October 2015 and in parallel to the Extraordinary Synod of the Family. Since then Pope Francis, male and female religious, lay members and our local LGBTI pastoral care groups pronounced diverse speeches or took different actions related to [LGBTI issues within the Catholic Church](#). While some of them are great approaches for justice and inclusion for LGBTI's and their families, there are still many others that sustain the need to keep an open and direct dialogue with the whole Church and society. *"We have made a lot of local efforts, but indeed a single and global voice with our lay Community, the Curia, and the Vatican itself is needed"*, explains Benjamin Oh, member of the GNRC Steering Committee and part of [Acceptance Sydney](#) (LGBTI Pastoral Care Group based in Australia). *"We have made these journeys as independent initiatives, when there are a lot of synergies we can develop together as a Global Network"*, commented Benjamin.

So, recognizing and promoting the importance of GNRC we are pleased to inform you that our **2nd GNRC Assembly** will be held from **30th November to 3th December 2017 in Munich-Dachau** (Germany). The conference title is **"Hear a just cause"** from Psalm 17. *"Our time has come for social justice and our plea must be heard because it is indeed a just cause – and above all, urgent!"* said Joseanne Peregine, also a member of the GNRC Steering Committee and part of [Drachma](#)'s Parents Group (LGBTI Pastoral Care Group based in Malta).



The venue of the Assembly is the International Youth Guest House ([Jugendherberge Dachau](#)) in Dachau, a suburb of Munich.

Host groups are [Homosexuelle und Kirche](#) (HuK), Homosexuals and Church, and the [Katholischer Queergottesdienst München](#), Catholic Queer Service from Munich. *"We appreciate and would like to thank them for their commitment as we know that logistics and planning of this kind of task requires a lot of energy and good will"*, expressed Ruby Almeida, one of the two GNRC co-chairs and Chair of [Quest](#) (Pastoral Support for LGBT Catholics based in UK), and then added *"We'd like to thank those other LGBTI groups that, like HuK, showed interest in being hosts and considered the many needs such as inclusivity, accessibility, capacity, as well as all the human resources involved, for this event"*.

The main agenda will be the review and approval of our Statutes, which includes Concept Paper, GNRC official foundation plus membership incorporation. Also, we will develop workshops for internal sharing and discussion on LGBTI Catholic issues on a global level.



A momentous highlight of the program will be a visit to the Christmas Market in Munich, a visit to the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial, a Eucharist service in the "Bürgersaalkirche" in the city of Munich and a Bavarian dinner.

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*"We are pretty excited about gathering again. Last time we had the chance to learn and empathize about the wide experiences of our brothers and sisters in countries from Asia, Africa, the Americas and East Europe, where LGBTI inclusion and justice is far removed from the achievements reached in the rest of the Western World",* added Georgina Adhiambo GNRC representative for Africa and part of [Vowwek](#) (Women's organization in Western Kenya).

More information about general registration (including terms, conditions and payments) can be found [here](#). Journalists and the Media are welcome, so please note the dates in your diary now. Scholarships for assistance are limited and the deadline for submission of applications is 15th August.

## GNRC Statutes and Internal Regulations

[Chinese](#) / [English](#) / [Español](#) / [Française](#) / [Italiano](#) / [Português](#)

After dozens of Skype meetings, the Organizational Development Committee (Chris Vella, Benjamin Oh, Eros Shawn, Fabio Regis & amp; Michael Brinkschroeder) has written a first draft of the [Statutes and Internal Regulations of GNRC](#). These are the most important documents for the GNRC as an organization. They can only become a helpful tool if we find a good balance between the different bodies of GNRC. Therefore, we want to invite all of you who are connected to GNRC to read the Statutes and Internal Regulations carefully and to give us your feedback through this [Questionnaire](#). Deadline for this first round of feedback is 15 September 2017. Every voice is valuable in this process of finding the right balance!

Based on your responses and suggestions, the Steering Committee will develop a 2nd draft and circulate it before the Assembly. During the Assembly, a special working group has the task to make final revisions and present them to the Assembly. Our goal is to approve the final version of the Statutes and Internal Regulations during the Assembly in Munich.

**Ruby Almeida**

**Michael Brinkschroeder**

GNRC Steering Committee Co-chairs

## Our Identity, Our Community: The Chronicle of a Name

*"The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out." (John 10:3)*

[Chinese](#) / [English](#) / [Español](#) / [Française](#) / [Italiano](#) / [Português](#)

As our Network continues its development and construction we have made contact with many LGBTI Catholic Communities worldwide. Many of them have been around for more than 20 years and some are less than 5 years old, but each of them share something: The need of a special and representative name. *"It's like your ID and it's also related with its Charisma. It gives a name, a special color, and signs a common north. That's how you can distinguish us from other communities or collectives, each one with an identity and a meaning, but all able to converge in different ways of communion",* says Anibal Liberal from [CaDiv](#) (Caminhar na Diversidade / To Walk in Diversity in English).

A common trend is recognized in each particular story. Nameless, they considered that they did not have a sense of belonging or an identity, till the maturity of the group or community finally claimed for one. Brainstorming for the election usually considers to include a statement, cryptic or not, about its shared mission inside and outside the Catholic Community. Why is it important to have a name that says everything about an organisation? *"At the time our group was founded a very popular and successful stage musical was running in London called The Man from La Mancha. A hit song from the musical was [The Impossible Dream](#) (The Quest). This song seemed to say so much about what these founders hoped to achieve when they got together to start a group for gay men and women.",* refers Ruby Almeida from [Quest](#).

Proposed names are usually connected with their local experiences with the Church and witnessing lives, as a group or as individuals. Pretty democratic or discernment process seems to be the regular method for final election, not without major reviews (which remind us how we are part of the same church that calls for Councils). *"When the name was discussed, many elements were important. One point was that the founder wanted to put emphasis on homosexual people instead of homosexuality as an issue",* comments Michael Brinkschroeder from [Homosexuelle und Kirche](#) (Homosexuals and the Church). As a result, once we read the global map of LGBTI Catholic groups, we can also recognize that there are at least 3 major names categories:



**This is who we are:** [Comhoca](#) (Comunidad de Homosexuales Católicos / Homosexual Catholics Community), [Diversidade Catolica](#) (Catholic Diversity) and [Vowwek](#) (Voices of Women in Western Kenya) are mostly acronyms but also summarize a simple, honest and clueless reference to their origin and essence. *"We must be real witness of Jesus and bring the Gospel inside the Church but also to the LGBTI collective. As well as we can't deny the historical incomprehension and discrimination suffered by LGBTI, we can neither deny who we are",* refers Oscar Manuel from [Crismhom](#) (Comunidad de Cristianos Homosexuales de Madrid / Madrid's Homosexual Christians Community).



**A Dream and a Vision:** These communities describe their search as a constant walking inspired by Jesus himself, who moves from town to town to the meet of people. They see this journey as a process of constant and continual conversion, inside their communities, the Church and Society. "Our founders took the phrase 'New Ways' from a pastoral letter entitled 'Sexuality: God's Gift' and applied it to the ministry of justice and reconciliation established in 1977", explains Francis de Bernardo from [News Ways Ministry](#). [Acceptance Sydney / Melbourne](#), [Dignity USA](#), [niji TOMO](#) (Candle and Rainbow), [Cammini di Speranza](#) (Path of Hope) and [Wiara i Tecza](#) (Faith and Rainbow) are representative of this group.



**Based in the Gospel and the Tradition:** [David et Jonathan](#), [Efeta](#), [Ichthys](#) or [Logos](#) are words that are more than easy to remind Christians that they have a meaning connected with the LGBTI witnessing. "The inspiration for this name came from the Biblical text in Luke 15, 1-2; 8-10, when the woman found her lost coin and called her friends to rejoice with her. For the first members, the lost coin, the Drachma, represents those people who have been side-lined because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and the eventual discovery of the joy of belonging and integration.", said Chris Vella from [Drachma](#).

What's the name of your community or group? Do you think its name is part of the referred examples? Check out other LGBTI pastoral care groups or associations in the GNRC Allied Groups list in our Website.

## GNRC PRIDE 2017 ALBUM

We are all part of the same LGBTI Catholic community, please enjoy everybody's presence in the [Pride 2017](#).

We would like to thank to all the people and groups that contributed in the development of this album. If your group wants to be part of it, please do not hesitate to send pictures via email at [rainbowcatholicsassembly@gmail.com](mailto:rainbowcatholicsassembly@gmail.com). They may include complementary information such as: date, group name, allocation and any inspirational idea or feeling you shared on that date.

## GAY CATHOLICS IN MAINLAND CHINA

Eros Shaw's experience and others

[Chinese](#) / [English](#) / [Español](#) / [Française](#) / [Italiano](#) / [Português](#)

**By Eros Shaw** – Chinese missionary, activist of the Chinese Catholic LGBTQ Group China Catholic Rainbow Community (CCRC), GNRC Steering Committee member and participant of the China Rainbow Witness Fellowship.

This introductory article has been our intention since we began planning for the book *May your lips kiss mine: Chinese Tongzhi (LGBT) Catholics Tales* (Chinese version available and under translation into English through a future cross founding campaign). This chronology of events leading to this publication is a necessary reminder for us of the journey we have taken as Deng Xiaoping said "crossing a river by groping at the stones". It is based on my participation in establishing the *China Rainbow Witness Fellowship* (CRWF) and the *China Catholic Rainbow Community* (CCRC), respectively an ecumenical body with Catholics participating and a platform only for Catholics. I felt it was important to sketch my experience for readers who desire a glimpse of this journey.

There are at least 200,000 homosexuals among 12.5 million Catholic populations in China. What are their experiences? Who will listen to them when they suffer because they are gay? There is still a lot for us to do. Although this is a heavy responsibility to shoulder, we will not stop our mission even if there are repeated frustrations.

The experiences of founding the China Rainbow Witness Fellowship and the China Catholic Rainbow Community are inseparable. Many would like to know the history of *Rainbow Witness Fellowship* and I think it is necessary to [recall briefly here](#) (full extension of this article at the GNRC Website). Darren, Xiao Mi and I were the founders and core members. I was at the beginning responsible for coordinating the group in Beijing. Xiao Mi took up my duty when I had to leave Beijing. In 2012, Darren and I started the *Shanghai Rainbow Witness Fellowship*. Darren also gave his support to the founding of *Hangzhou Rainbow Witness Fellowship* by our companion, nicknamed Shuizhixing (Since then, Fellowships started in Wuhan and Changsha.). Meanwhile, Brother Xiao Bei had already started his ministry of gathering gay Catholics. Based on my experience of running the Fellowship, I therefore joined Brother Xiao Bei to found the *Catholic Rainbow Community*.

There are plenty of platforms on the Internet for gay Christians, such as Weibo, Weixin, QQ group and other websites, but they are mostly for Protestants while ours is one of the few that serves gay Catholics. There is another QQ group where gay Catholics join together to pray the Rosary. There may be other groups in those platforms but I have not participated in them.



China Catholic Rainbow Community (CCRC) is an inter-regional mutual aid organization for Chinese Roman Catholic LGBT people. They provide counseling and spiritual companionship for LGBT Catholic believers.



China Rainbow Witness Fellowship (CRWF) is a LGBT Christian fellowship grounded in love and faith. The fellowship was established in 2009 in Beijing, with further groups established in Shanghai and Hangzhou.

## GNRC WEBSITE 2.0

[Chinese](#) / [English](#) / [Español](#) / [Française](#) / [Italiano](#) / [Português](#)

Have you met a long lost friend but found him with a brand new face? The GNRC Website has a refreshed design and has a lot of new sections and content. We maintain our commitment to support and give visibility to the hard work of many LGBTI Catholics and their families through our written and visual legacy. Find old and new sections such as [Events](#), [Publications](#), [Press Releases](#), [Multimedia](#) and suggested [Readings](#) as well as organizational info about the GNRC at [www.rainbowcatholics.org](http://www.rainbowcatholics.org). Redesigned site description:

### Global Network of Rainbow Catholics

*"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved You" – John 15:12*

[About](#) [GNRC 2017 Second Assembly](#) [Events](#) [Publications](#) [Press Releases](#) [Multimedia](#) [Readings](#) [Contact Us](#)

- **About:** General information about the GNRC such as the Mission / Vision / Objectives and the Steering Committee composition, our allied groups (if your LGBTI Catholic Community is missing, or information needs to be amended, or you would rather not to be displayed here, please let us know )
- **Second Assembly:** You'll find the Save the Date message, the Invitation Letter and the Application Link (including the request for scholarships).
- **Events:** Previous (e.g. Ways of Love / 1st Assembly) and Upcoming events (2nd Assembly) will be presented here. If you have a local event for sharing the GNRC community, please don't hesitate to request it. We are also displaying an Event Calendar in the Right Side of the Page for an easier display of the earlier ones.
- **Publications:** Main Library of content and materials developed by the GNRC and compiled in the GNRC Newsletter. You can also find specific articles linked to Witness, Letters and Reflection
- **Press Releases:** Consolidated list of the GNRC PR's in English, Italian, Spanish, French and Portuguese (some exceptions can be found in Chinese too).
- **Multimedia:** The GNRC Library including Videos and Press mention of GNRC.
- **Readings:** Recommended lectures for teaching and learning about LGBTQI issues and the Catholic Church.

GLOBAL NETWORK OF RAINBOW CATHOLICS 2017®

Website: [www.rainbowcatholics.org](http://www.rainbowcatholics.org)

Mail: [rainbowcatholicsassembly@gmail.com](mailto:rainbowcatholicsassembly@gmail.com)

Twitter: [GNRCatholics](#)

Facebook: [GlobalNetworkofRainbowCatholics](#)

*The Global Network of Rainbow Catholics (GNRC) brings together organizations and individuals who work for pastoral care and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, questioning, and intersex (LGBTQI) people and their families. The Network works for inclusion, dignity and equality of this community in the Roman Catholic Church and society. The GNRC was founded in October 2015 at the Rome conference, "Ways of Love", with 80 participants from 30 countries. To date, the GNRC represents 25 groups of LGBTQI Catholics, their families and friends from all continents.*