



**MAY 30, 2016**

## **GNRC NEWSLETTER N°2**

### **Catholic LGBTQI News around the world**

The Apostolic Exhortation "*Amoris Laetitia*" has been released, we have developed a foundational Concept Paper for the GNRC - to be shared and discussed – while we work hard to develop a full operational Network, to promote dialogue with the Church and also build the foundations for the next GNRC Assembly.

As we mentioned in our first issue there is much that we need to do on matters and issues about Catholic LGBTQI persons and their families. This time, we have introduced a *News Section* to give visibility to all those who are part of the gender/sexual diversity that work for Justice and Inclusion in the Church.

You can find the full English version of the **GNRC Newsletter N° 2** attached to this e-mail and also the **Italian, French and Spanish** one.

AN IN-DEPTH WORK OF REFLECTION ON "*AMORIS LAETITIA*" (PAGE 2)

MEET AND DISCUSS THE FIRST GNRC CONCEPT PAPER (PAGE 3)

CATHOLIC LGBTQI NEWS BETWEEN JANUARY AND APRIL (PAGE 5)

COULD YOUR COUNTRY BE THE HOST FOR "*THE SECOND ASSEMBLY*"? (PAGE 6)

JOIN US IN THE GNRC GOOGLE GROUP FOR COMMENTS AND NETWORKING (PAGE 6)

THE GNRC STEERING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES GREET YOU AND WANTS ALL OF US TO GET IN CONTACT THROUGH THE SOCIAL NETWORKS

E-mail:  
[rainbowcatholicassembly@gmail.com](mailto:rainbowcatholicassembly@gmail.com)

Twitter:  
[GNRCatholics](https://twitter.com/GNRCatholics)

Facebook:  
Global Network of Rainbow Catholics 2015 | Rome

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

GNRC SC: Benjamin, Georgina, Fernando, Francis, Michael, Tim, Ruby, Chris, Eros and Joseanne



POST-SYNODAL APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION

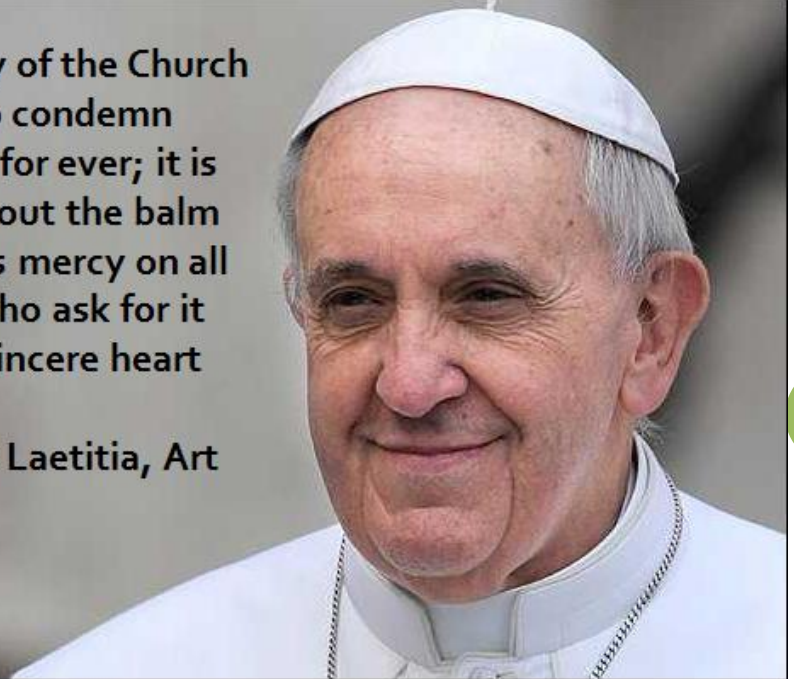
*AMORIS LAETITIA*

OF THE HOLY FATHER  
FRANCIS

TO BISHOPS, PRIESTS AND DEACONS  
CONSECRATED PERSONS  
CHRISTIAN MARRIED COUPLES  
AND ALL THE LAY FAITHFUL  
ON LOVE IN THE FAMILY

**The way of the Church  
is not to condemn  
anyone for ever; it is  
to pour out the balm  
of God's mercy on all  
those who ask for it  
with a sincere heart**

**(Amoris Laetitia, Art  
296)**



**So the day finally came: The Apostolic Exhortation "*Amoris Laetitia*" (Pope Francis – 2016) was released and it got a lot of coverage from different members of the Church!**

Considering the initial call for the *Extraordinary Synod of Bishops* - on October 2014 and 2015 – it centered on new definitions and challenges for the Family in contemporary life. We as LGBTQI Catholics found it a great opportunity to unite and, inspired by the Gospel, to organize an unprecedented meeting in Rome. So we can thank the Synod and the *Extraordinary Assembly*, for providing us with the perfect opportunity to set up the Global Network of Rainbow Catholics. And after two years of work, with a Steering Committee filled with good-willed LGBTQI Catholic people and their families, we have a unique richness and diversity of gifts - full of God's mercy - to give a proper response to the final fruits from Pope Francis "*Amoris Laetitia*".

At the beginning of last April, we were urged to give a quick response to our GNRC members, the Church, the media and the public, our opinions in general, through a discerned Press Release, as well as an extended document on the GNRC Website. Our intentions were not to confront with the Bishops and in particular Pope Francis but indeed to acknowledge those windows opened up for our inclusion. We did this with openness and integrity and expressed honest and constructive comments on how to make the Church a house for everybody. For those who didn't have a chance to read the Press Release you can find it by clicking on each language here [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Chinese](#) or [Italian](#).

We want to thank all the GNRC members that contributed with the discussions, editing and translation of the Press Release, as well as those who "*spread the word*" among their Catholic LGBTQI communities and families.

**We know how challenging yet full of the "*Joy of love*" it can be to be part of the GNRC!!!**

## GNRC Concept Paper

This is the Final Draft from the Steering Committee for the foundational concept paper of the GNRC. We used all the input provided during the Rome Gathering on October 2015 and it is intended to represent all the ideas, discernments and spiritual gifts supplied by the participants.

We request your discernment and internal discussion with your local Catholic LGBTI communities and ask for your feedback before June 22 2016. Please send your comments, clarifications and approval please send them to [rainbowcatholicsassembly@gmail.com](mailto:rainbowcatholicsassembly@gmail.com)

## MISSION

The Global Network of Rainbow Catholics (GNRC) brings together groups and their members who work for pastoral care and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people and their families. The Network works for the inclusion, dignity and equality of this community in the Roman Catholic Church and society.

## ETHOS & VALUES

- 1) GNRC represents diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, sex characteristics, cultures, ethnicities, and backgrounds. GNRC members are united by a shared Christian faith, which calls us to pray and work to ensure that LGBTI persons and their families have full and participative membership in all areas of the Catholic Church.
- 2) Inspired by the Gospel of Jesus and the Catholic social justice tradition, we respect the intrinsic human dignity and equal value of all people, regardless of their sexual orientation, relationship status, gender identity or sex characteristics. We envision a Catholic Church where all God's people can live, work, worship and minister with one another harmoniously and contribute to the health and well-being of everyone.
- 3) Our faith calls us to challenge all discriminatory structures and to advance the equality of LGBTI persons. Civil and church law should value and protect their human rights, not diminish or deny them. Any law or practice which oppresses, restricts, punishes or harms LGBTI persons is contrary to the Gospel.
- 4) We affirm the spiritual gifts and lived experiences that LGBTI persons bring to the People of God. We value open, sincere and respectful dialogue based on the encounter with individual persons and communities in the spirit of reconciliation.
- 5) As members of GNRC we stand in solidarity and prayer with one another through our varied experiences, struggles and opportunities. In that same spirit, we commit ourselves to ecumenical cooperation and interfaith dialogue on LGBTI issues.
- 6) We affirm the goodness and holiness of sexuality as a gift from God to help us become closer to our beloved, to the divine, and to ourselves. We recognize that sexuality touches the most vulnerable parts of our identity and needs to be expressed in ways that are generously loving and compassionate.

## KEY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## 1) PROPHECY &amp; JUSTICE

We acknowledge, support and lift up the voices of LGBTI people, and all who are marginalized in the Catholic Church and in society. These groups include racial, gender, and sexual minorities. We advocate for those who suffer from violence, prejudice, persecution and criminalization because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. We foster a culture of equal rights and acceptance. We promote the equality of women in the Catholic Church.

## 2) DIALOGUE

We work to connect LGBTI Catholics with one another and with the wider church. We promote dialogue with theologians, Church leaders and lay people to facilitate pastoral practice, theological reflection and doctrinal development.

## 3) INCLUSION

We respect the different cultural experiences that LGBTI people encounter across the globe. We aim for fair representation of peoples from all regions, nations and cultures in church, society and our own network. We develop a culture of inclusivity and understanding in our network. Among our members, we support collaboration, developing resources, and sharing ideas and best practices.

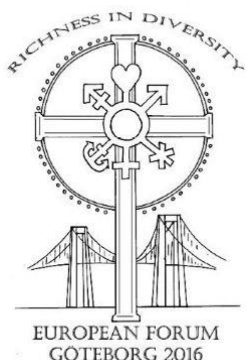
## 4) SPIRITUALITY and FAITH DEVELOPMENT

We share our spiritualities, sensibilities and faith with one another, with other LGBTI people and the whole church. We strive to educate Catholic leadership, institutions, and audiences about the spiritual gifts that LGBTI people bring to the Church. We encourage the church to support and welcome pastoral activities that respect the diversity of LGBTI spiritualities and reach out to LGBTI people who feel alienated from the church.



Let's remember the love and commitment that came from **Pedro Labrin SJ from Chile**, **Sr Jeanine Gramick from USA** and the **Bishop Raul Viera from Mexico** during the conference "*The Ways of Love*". With their experience, knowledge and open heartedness for LGBTQI Pastoral Care, they supported and encouraged the fraternal discussion and discernment during our First Assembly in October 2015.

## CATHOLIC LGBTQI NEWS WORLDWIDE (FROM JANUARY TO APRIL 2016)



**SWEDEN:** The European Forum of **LGBT Christians** had its annual conference from 5-8 May in Gothenburg (Sweden). It started with a Catholic pre-conference on Tuesday (4 May) at 17h whose subject was a critical analysis of the "Anti-Gender-Movement" in Europe, its history, rhetoric and counter-measures. The Vatican, especially the Pontifical Council for the Family has a high stake in this

movement which is directed against feminism as well as LGBT movement. For more information, about the Forum's results and feedback please get in contact with our GNRC Steering Committee member Michael Brinkschroeder [michael.brinkschroeder@web.de](mailto:michael.brinkschroeder@web.de).

Padist<sup>†</sup>



meeting at the CVX-CLC House. There the LGB members and their families had the chance to share their inner feelings and thoughts of being part of a family where sexual diversity and faith are mixed in a common living experience. For many members of the group this is one of the most significant milestones during the year as they can see their own dreams, fears, doubts and Joys through the eyes of their beloved ones.



**KENYA AND NAMIBIA:** Voices of Women in Western Kenya, VOWWEEK, have petitioned the Government to decriminalize the penal code 162-165 that criminalizes homosexuality. It's important to remember how legal discrimination is faced by our LGBTQI brothers and sisters and,

even worse, how these kind of State policies are in some cases supported by the local Catholic Churches. In a similar situation LEGABIBIO, an LGBTQI Organization from Namibia, was officially registered after an appeal by the Government to de-register it. On these cases Pope Francis call, for avoiding any kind of violence against LGBTQI people, must be extended to advocacy and the true expression of mercy in the figure of Bishops and other leaders of the Church.



**USA:** Many LGBTQI Catholic Communities expressed their opinions before and after the release of "Amoris Laetitia". This wide diversity of statements moved from hope, deception and/or peace but all having the common link of faith and the search of inclusion and recognition inside the Church. Find a consolidated list of the most relevant letters, press releases and other articles *Dignity USA*, *New Ways Ministry* and other groups linked to the Catholic LGBTQI Community on Michael J Bayley blog called [The Wild Reed](#).



**FRANCE:** The French Christian LGBT group **David and Jonathan** has published the dossier "[The international scene. Being a religious believer and Lesbian, Gay, Bi or Trans around the world](#)". There is a long version (approx. 80p) in French and a shorter version (23p.) in English available. Michael Clifton has interviewed many participants from our assembly in Rome who are represented by quotes throughout the French version.



**AUSTRALIA:** Founded in 1973, Acceptance is a gay Catholic group in Sydney Australia and a member of the GNRC. Acceptance proudly participated in the 2016 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade held on 5 March, with the theme "Equally Blessed". The Mardi Gras parade started as a protest march in 1978. Acceptance members marched in 1978 and they continued to participate each year. The annual march became the Mardi Gras parade, and in the mid-1980s Acceptance organized a float for the first time and marched under the Acceptance banner.

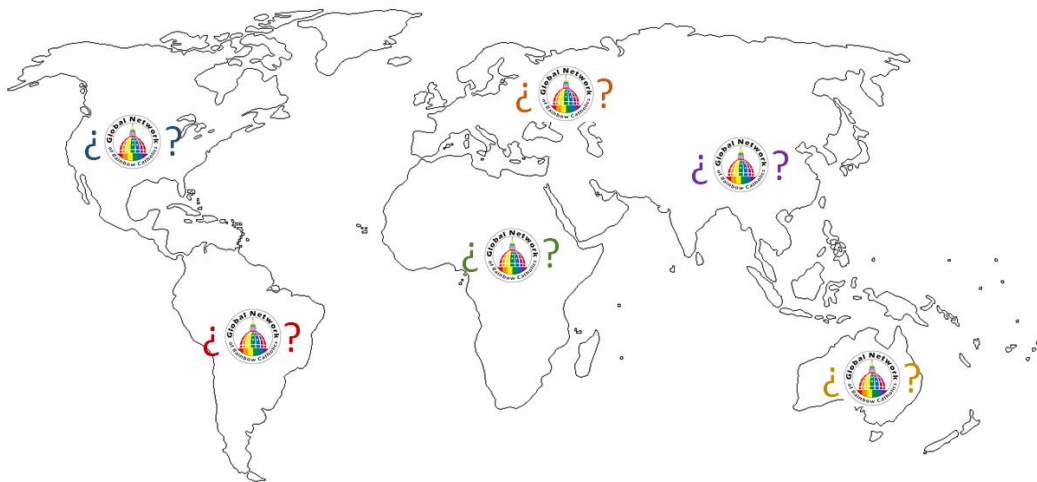


**POLLAND:** Wiara i Tęcza (Faith and Rainbow) Group of Polish LGBT Christians is organizing a safe space during the World Youth Day in Krakow this year. Between Tuesday, 26 July, and Sunday, 31 July, the group invites all LGBT participants of the major celebration of Catholic youth (as well as any allies and friends) to join them for a time of prayer, celebration, and fellowship at one of Krakow's central cultural centers and cafés. Due to security considerations, full programme of open and closed events at the LGBT safe space during the WYD week will be provided upon request at [wyd.lgbt@gmail.com](mailto:wyd.lgbt@gmail.com).

## IF WE DID SUCH AN AMAZING WORK ON OUR FIRST ASSEMBLY, WHY DON'T WE KEEP IN TOUCH???

In the next few days, we shall be sending an email to all individuals and groups that attended the *Rome Assembly* with an invitation to join the "GNRC Google Group". If you accept this invitation, you will automatically start receiving emails and notices from GNRC as well as participate in email discussions within the Group. The GNRC Steering Committee would like to use this digital space to keep the various members of the GNRC connected and continually informed about developments within the GNRC. You may also regulate your membership of the Google Group, deciding on the frequency of the emails received from the GNRC Google Group.

If you did not attend the Rome Assembly in October 2015, but would still like to join the GNRC Google Group, kindly send an email to [rainbowcatholicsassembly@gmail.com](mailto:rainbowcatholicsassembly@gmail.com), indicating your interest. If you do not receive the email invitation from us within the next seven days, please contact us on the above email and we will get in touch with you.



## AND EVEN BETTER... LET'S MEET AGAIN IN 2017!!!

We are looking for a new place to hold our Second Assembly, date to be agreed between September and November in 2017. We had a great time sharing and bonding in Rome, but we must consider that this kind of gathering has also many requirements like hosting/meeting/conference rooms, food service and inclusive conditions like disabled and impaired access. Also easy logistics and cost-effectiveness is a must, due to the high costs of international travel.

We, as the Steering Committee, are working to fundraise but any practical help and economic support, from local associations or groups that sympathize with Catholic LGBTI persons and their families would be greatly encouraged to help the potential hosting country. If you think that your country, hometown, community, organization or family would value this, and has the resources to support the visit of a lot of people of God, please contact us and share your thoughts and ideas with us at the same GNRC e-mail account.