

# BRIDGE MAKERS



Catholic conference on  
LGBT+ in Pune, India



GNRC Madrid assembly



John's Secret

## What's in store?

In this edition, we introduce GNRC's new Strategy Plan and welcome key leaders stepping into new roles. We highlight the launch of dedicated sections for each GNRC region on the website, offering localized news and updates. We revisit the first Catholic conference on LGBT+ and faith in India, hosted by Bridge and Embrace, and reflect on the Suyaquiqui Advent gathering in Iberoamerica. We introduce Tonio's profile and feature a testimony from Africa, a story of struggles and determination.

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## **New beginnnings**

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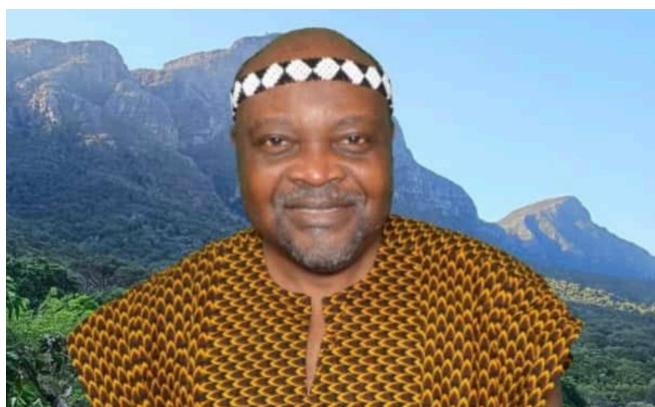
We start the new year with much hope and joy in our hearts. The challenges and difficulties of the past year are behind us as we face 2025 with positive changes opportunities ahead of us.





## Online Assembly

Exciting times are ahead for GNRC, as members have officially approved the new Strategy Plan, setting priorities for funding and projects over the coming years. This plan lays the foundation for essential initiatives aimed at benefiting members across all regions. Now, the hard work begins: transforming these plans into impactful actions that address key needs and opportunities.



We are delighted to welcome two leaders into important roles. Davis Mac-Iyalla, CEO of IDNOWA, joins as our African Representative, bringing invaluable experience and vision to the region. Additionally, Gonzalo Vilchis from Guadalajara steps in as our Regional Officer, ready to enhance collaboration and representation in his area.



Both bring fresh perspectives and energy to GNRC, and we are confident they will help strengthen our network and expand its impact.

## Dedicated Regional blogs

Our wonderful IT guru and specialist in so many different things has introduced an exciting new feature on the GNRC website: dedicated subsections for each region, with its own blog and visuals, allowing unique experiences to shine.

These tailored spaces ensure that important news, events, and updates specific to a region can be found in one place.

These sections (Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, and North America) will serve as hubs for showcasing local news and activities, from grassroots events to larger initiatives. Regional Officers will curate these blogs, ensuring that the content remains fresh and relevant to members. Occasionally, standout articles will also be featured on the GNRC homepage, offering the wide GNRC audience a glimpse into regional activities.

This initiative empowers members by amplifying their voices and giving them a space to connect and share their stories with their followers. It marks a step forward in fostering stronger regional representation while maintaining GNRC's collaborative spirit as a global network.







## BnE Conference

Bridge and Embrace, from the Asia Pacific region, jointly held the first Catholic conference on LGBT+ and faith at Ishvani Kendra Catholic institute in Pune, India.



The three-day event "Gender and Sexual Minorities in India: A Synodal Approach to Pastoral Care and Social Inclusion," brought together over 300 participants, including approximately 80 LGBT+ individuals, members from 70 religious congregations, and representatives from 40 dioceses; it featured diverse voices, including members of the Hijra and Kinner communities, parents from the Sweekar support group, and allies. Esteemed Church leaders extended their support through greetings and blessings. These shared experiences fostered deeper understanding of the challenges faced by LGBT+ individuals within religious contexts, as well as dialogue between the Catholic Church and the LGBT+ community in India.

[Full article](https://rainbowcatholics.org/the-first-national-conference-on-faith-and-sexuality-in-india/)

<https://rainbowcatholics.org/the-first-national-conference-on-faith-and-sexuality-in-india/>

## Suquaiya

The GNRC Iberoamerica community recently came together for their annual Suyaquiqui Advent gathering, held virtually. This cherished tradition celebrates the spirit of Advent through the lens of the region's rich cultural diversity and deep-rooted faith.

The chosen scripture, "As soon as the voice of your greeting reached my ears, the creature I carry in my body jumped for joy" (Luke 1:44), highlighted the spirit of connection and the profound sense of community that characterizes Suquaiya.

While the event was virtual, it remained deeply personal and meaningful, as participants shared stories and experiences that reflected their unique regional heritage. The gathering also served as a reminder of GNRC's commitment to fostering community and dialogue, even across geographical and cultural boundaries.





# Jubilee Pilgrimage

Walking Together

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As part of the Jubilee 2025 celebrations, many LGBTQ+ associations will gather in Rome for the pilgrimage *“La tenda di Gionata and other associations”*. This event is a moment of reflection, unity, and spiritual renewal for participants from diverse backgrounds and communities of faith.

The pilgrimage will begin Saturday September 6, 2025 at 3:00 PM in Piazza Pia, where attendees will assemble before embarking on a symbolic journey together. Leading the procession will be the Jubilee Cross, emblem of mercy and liberation, as participants make their way to the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica. Walking through this sacred portal serves as a profound act of faith, renewal, and commitment to inclusion and love within the Christian community.

This pilgrimage is accompanied by the initiative *“Chiesa Casa per Tutti”* (Church, a Home for All), which includes two additional key events:

- **Prayer Vigil:** On Friday, September 5, 2025, at 8:00 PM, a prayer vigil will be held at the historic Church of the Gesù in Piazza del Gesù, Rome. This gathering will offer an opportunity for spiritual preparation and reflection, bringing together participants in a moment of shared prayer and hope.

- **Eucharistic Celebration:** On Saturday, September 6, 2025, at 11:00 AM, a celebratory mass will take place at the Church of the Gesù, emphasizing the themes of inclusion, reconciliation, and shared faith within the global Christian community.

Together, these events reflect a commitment to creating spaces of belonging and dialogue within the Church. They offer a chance to celebrate faith while advocating for a more inclusive spiritual community.

For those interested in joining the pilgrimage or other events, registration is open until June 15, 2025, and further details can be obtained by contacting [progetti@gionata.org](mailto:progetti@gionata.org). Let us walk together in faith, hope, and unity.

# Madrid 5th Assembly

Walking Together: Rainbow Challenges after the Synod

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The fifth Assembly of GNRC will take place in Madrid from August 21 to 25, 2025, focusing on the aftermath of the global Synodal Process. GNRC and its members contributed to the Synod, sharing insights and perspectives on inclusion and dialogue within faith communities. The Assembly will provide a platform to reflect on these contributions and consider the challenges that remain.

The program will include presentations on GNRC's Intergenerational Accompaniment Project, which addresses the needs of different age groups within the LGBTQ+ faith community. The project encourages dialogue between generations and explores how shared experiences can strengthen relationships and create a sense of belonging.

Updates on the Erasmus Plus project will also be presented. This initiative has focused on developing resources and tools to support LGBTQ+ individuals with sensory disabilities and promote accessibility and inclusion across Europe.

This Assembly will also mark the transition of the current Board. An opportunity to celebrate Chris Vella and Ruby Almeida who together have accumulated twenty years of collective service to GNRC.

The gathering will acknowledge their contributions and the impact of their work within the organization. The Assembly will bring members together for discussions, workshops, and opportunities to collaborate, providing space to build on shared efforts and prepare for future work.

Please find an invitation from the Co Chairs, details of the Assembly and the registration form on the links below.

[Letter ENG](http://rainbowcatholics.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/MADRID-Assembly-2025-Invitation-letter-ENG.pdf)

<http://rainbowcatholics.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/MADRID-Assembly-2025-Invitation-letter-ENG.pdf>

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[Form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/)

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## Tonio's Profile

### Tell us a little about yourself

I am Antonio Ortiz, I am a graphic designer, I am 46 years old, I was born and live in Mexico City and I currently work in a school as the person in charge of the design and editing of the School Yearbook and the design area.



I currently live with my couple, his name is Berto and we have lived together for 5 years, we met at Efeta, my prayer group, we have 3 cats: Jeremías, Oberana and Catriona. I have a very close relationship with my parents and my brother, who is also my best friend and is also gay. My best friends are like my family, I have different groups of friends that are very special to me: those I met in my faith group, those who have met in my apostolate (and who are from different parts of the world), others I met at work, and one more that I met on TikTok. With each group I have a different life dynamic, and I love to always keep an eye on them

### What are your hobbies?



My favorite hobby is definitely going out for coffee with my friends. I like and value the time I spend with them, I learn from their experiences and we can share life

### What is your favourite artist and song?

My favorite artist is called Lucero, she is a Mexican singer but my favorite song is by Mika, it is called "[Love Today](#)" and it is very representative for me, because I love



dedicating songs to the people I love, and my therapist recommended me to look for a song that I would like to dedicate to myself, and this song speaks a lot about who I am.

### What is your favourite movie or tv programme?

My favorite movie is Dirty Dancing since I was like 10 years old. There I met my first gay crush (Patrick Swayze) and I also loved the dance scenes. Currently I love dancing and I do it quite well.





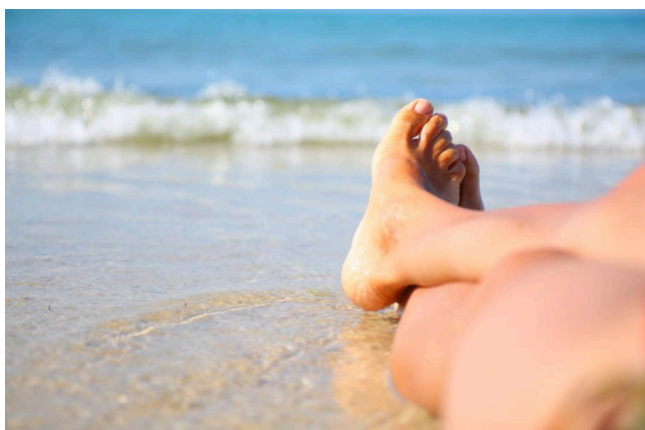
### **What is your favourite food?**



I definitely love carbs, and more than food it's a dessert, in Mexico we make what we call "pan de dulce" (sweet bread), there are different options and always a bread accompanied by coffee can put me in a good mood.

### **Your favourite place on earth? Why?**

The sea... every time I can sit by the sea, feel the breeze and how the water touches my feet it gives me so much peace, and always recharges me with the best energy.



### **Who inspires you the most and why?**

Jesus. If there is any reference to an authentic person it is him. Beyond the beautiful doctrine that I have learned about his life, what I admire most is his coherence and the way he enjoys life, with faith and without fear. Understanding love from his vision helps me break with the

patterns that life, society and religion have imposed on us, in order to live in fullness and freedom.



### **What one thing or person could change the world for better for our LGBT+ global community? What could you do to help bring about that change?**

We should remove the stigma of what it means to be LGBT+ and accept and embrace our reality as true humans and children of God. Most of the time our LGBT+ movements are driven by resentment and pain in the face of injustice, which sometimes blinds us and makes us act in the same way that we judge so much. If we could see our reality from a place of love, spread unity, collaboration, leaving aside ego and protagonism, we could achieve great changes.

The best way to do something to generate that change in my case is to seek to be coherent and embrace others, even when I do not agree with their ways.





# THE AFRICAN CORNER

## From Africa

Welcome to "The African Corner," the section in The Corner dedicated to sharing the stories, opinions, and reports directly from our community in Africa, a continent where being LGBT often means facing profound challenges and risks.

Each edition is curated by "*Anon*," an author who has chosen to remain anonymous. This decision speaks volumes about the realities of being LGBT in Africa—where simply living authentically can place one's life in danger. The curator's anonymity is a powerful statement, reflecting the precariousness and courage of those who continue to advocate for their rights and share their truths in a world that often seeks to silence them.

Through "The African Corner," you will be introduced to the lives of individuals who navigate these challenges daily. You will read personal stories that reveal the complexities and resilience of LGBT Africans, narratives of struggle and stories of hope, solidarity, and the relentless pursuit of dignity.

We invite you to engage with this new section as readers, as allies. The voices you will encounter in "The African Corner" are a call to action—reminding us all of the ongoing fight for equality and the universal right to love and be loved without fear.



## John's secret

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John had always been a faithful Catholic. Growing up in a tight-knit black community, the Church had been a cornerstone of his family's life. John's parents had instilled in him the values of compassion, forgiveness, and love, and he had always felt a deep connection to his faith.

But John had a secret. He had known he was gay since he was 14, and he had struggled to reconcile his faith with his identity. He had prayed for God to "fix" him, to make him straight, but as he grew older, he began to realize that he couldn't change who he was.

One fateful Sunday, John's secret was exposed. He had been seen kissing his boyfriend, Michael, at a school event, and the news had spread like wildfire through the Church community. John's parents were devastated, and his priest, Father David, called him into his office for a meeting.

"John, my son, I'm worried about your soul," Father David said, his voice dripping with concern. "Homosexuality is a sin, and if you continue down this path, you risk eternal damnation."

John felt a wave of shame and fear wash over him. He had always been taught that the Church was a place of love and acceptance, but now he felt like an outcast.

"I'm sorry, Father," John said, trying to hold back tears. "I didn't mean to disappoint you or my parents."

Father David placed a hand on John's shoulder. "You're not a disappointment, John. You're just lost. And it's our job to guide you back to the right path."

But John knew that he couldn't change who he was. He couldn't pretend to be someone he wasn't, no matter how hard he tried. And so, with a heavy heart, he made the difficult decision to leave the Church.

It wasn't easy. John's parents were heartbroken, and his friends from the Church community shunned him. But John knew that he had to be true to himself, even if it meant losing the people and the institution he loved.

As he walked away from the Church, John felt a sense of sadness and loss. But he also felt a sense of liberation and freedom. He knew that he would always carry his faith with him, but he also knew that he couldn't stay in a place that didn't accept him for who he was.

John's journey was just beginning, and he knew that it wouldn't be easy. But he was determined to find a community that would love and accept him for who he was and to live a life that was true to himself.









# Make a Difference One Donation at a Time

## GNRC

Every day, the Global Network of Rainbow Catholics tirelessly works to foster inclusion, acceptance, and love within our diverse community. We stand with our LGBTQ+ siblings, ensuring they feel heard, loved, and supported within our faith. Our network spans worldwide, breaking barriers, and advocating for equal treatment in all aspects of Catholic life.

However, we cannot do this alone.

As you flip through the last page of this edition, we invite you to join our mission. GNRC is currently unfunded and we rely on the good will of our members to carry on the day to day work of the organisation. Your kind donation, no matter how small, will make a profound difference to our work. The Accompaniment Project, our flagship project for the next few years, our work on the Synodal Process, our work on Diversity and Equality, our work on Youth as well as our Media output all require much needed funds. Every donation made will go towards these good works of GNRC and will help to foster a more inclusive, loving Church that honours the dignity of all of our members.

Stand with us. Donate today.



**Global Network of  
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LINK

<https://rainbowcatholics.org/donate-to-gnrc/>

## One Family

DignityUSA has established the One Family Fund to provide crucial support to LGBTIQ Catholics facing hardships due to anti-LGBTIQ laws and societal discrimination. This fund has been instrumental in offering essentials such as food, rent assistance, and computers to those who have been forced to flee their homes or have suffered from violence. Emphasizing rapid response and effective aid, the fund welcomes contributions of any size, each making a tangible difference in someone's life. You can make a difference by donating at Dignity USA's One Family Fund.

Even modest donations can have a profound impact. For example, 8.50 can feed three people for a day, 20 can feed someone for a week, 50 can provide medicine for a refugee, 100 feeds 3 people for 2 weeks, 150 covers rent for a month for up to 3 people, \$300 can provide a second-hand computer, opening up employment opportunities.

This initiative offers a practical way to extend help and solidarity to those in urgent need.

For additional information or to address any inquiries, please contact [info@dignityusa.org](mailto:info@dignityusa.org).



**DIGNITYUSA**

**DIGNITY USA**

[info@dignityusa.org](mailto:info@dignityusa.org)

LINK

<https://dignityusa.app.neoncrm.com/forms/one-family-fund>






The Corner © Global Network of Rainbow Catholics


## An invite to a prayer

*"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."*

*(Ephesians 4:3-6)*

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