

THE OPEN DOOR



GNRC Madrid
Assembly



The Jubilee pilgrimage



Synod summary

What's in store?

In this edition, we celebrate GNRC's 10th anniversary with highlights from the Madrid Assembly and the Jubilee Pilgrimage of Hope in Rome—two milestones uniting members from every region in faith and joy. We introduce the newly elected Board, marking renewal in GNRC's journey. As Advent begins, we reflect on this season of expectation and share a summary of the Italian Synodal Pathway, showing how the Church in Italy is embracing inclusion in its pastoral life. This issue also features Rev. Antonio Ocharo's testimony from Kenya and a portrait of Eros Shaw, whose path from Shanghai to Boston intertwines courage, art, and faith.

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Open Doors

This edition marks an unprecedented threshold but not an arrival, it is time to look back with gratitude and forward with trust. Across these pages you'll find stories of faith shared, communities renewed, and new paths opening before us. The doors are open: let's keep walking together.



Madrid Assembly Rome

GNRC celebrated its 10th anniversary at the colegio de major in Madrid. We were blessed to have our largest Assembly thus far with participants over a hundred members and non members from all our regions.

Our grateful thanks to our member groups Crismhom and Ichthys who planned and hosted the event. Great effort was made to ensure that the key note speakers, Maria Luisa Berzosa and Christina Inogés who spoke in Spanish about their leading roles during the Synodal meetings. Having professional translators at hand for those meetings was indeed a blessing.

Other speakers were James Alison and Renato Lings who kept us fully engaged with their insights and experiences on faith before and after the Synod.

With a diverse mixture of workshops from various committee members, the Assembly was a heady mix of intense sharing, learning and deeply spiritual moments filled with much laughter, good food and libation as well as singing and dancing at a picnic in a park and outdoor prayerful moments topped off with a wonderfully welcoming letter read out to us by Bishop Cobb of Madrid who wished us well in our forward journey to Rome for the Jubilee Pilgrimage of Hope.

New Board

A new Board was elected at the Madrid Assembly, which has some old stalwarts who continue to serve the GNRC family and some new faces. Our new Co Chairs are Paolo Alaqua and Marianne Duddy-Burke. We thank Chris Vella, Victoria Rodriquez, Gonzalo Vilchis and Ruby Almeida for continuing to serve GNRC and welcome to Ines Pujol as Equality and Diversity Officer and Agnes Burg who was co opted.

<http://rainbowcatholics.org/board/>

Advent

As we embark into the season of Advent, let us remember that it is a season of preparation for the good news that is to come. This is when Christians start to prepare spiritually for Christmas through prayer, reflection, and scripture. It is also a time of anticipation where we look forward to the coming of Christ, both his birth and his future return. And, it is important to know that it is the start of the Christian year where Advent is the beginning of the religious calendar, and starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. Let us prepare for and let us anticipate the birth of Christ as the old year ends and the new one begins.





Pilgrimage of Hope

With heartfelt thanks to La Tenda di Gionata, who invited GNRC to join as partner, we were proud and deeply moved to take part in the Jubilee Pilgrimage of Hope, the first pilgrimage for LGBT+ faithful within the Jubilee framework. More than 1,400 pilgrims from every continent walked together through the streets of Rome under a blazing September sun, praying, singing, and sometimes crying as they crossed the Holy Door and gathered for the Vigil and Mass at the Chiesa del Gesù. It was a moment of faith made visible — a Church walking together, at once ancient and new.

To accompany the pilgrims: bookmarks, illustrated by the young faithful and artist Sawa, bags and a paper fans, bottles of water, were

<https://www.gionata.org/en/i-miei-colori-per-i-pellegrini-lgbt/>

distributed to all. They were produced thanks to GNRC, Gionata and individual donors' funds. Their sober design, marked by gentle colours and clarity of line, was chosen to express gratitude and welcome without excess: art as humility, beauty as inclusion. The pilgrimage reached its joyful culmination with the **Pilgrims' Rest**, the largest shared dinner of the event, hosted by GNRC at the Episcopal Church of St Paul within the Walls. Around 250 guests filled the church and its garden for an evening of laughter, tears, and immense gratitude. Volunteers, Priests, Pastoral workers, parents, couples, and young people shared tables and stories, discovering that communion begins not with words, but with presence. We were delighted by a surprise guest, the president of Circolo Mario Mieli, and blessing from father Pino Piva. The pilgrimage is a warm memory in our hearts, but it was not an ending, but a beginning. The open doors of the Jubilee invite us to keep walking, toward parishes, communities, and hearts still waiting to be opened. Hope is no longer a distant promise; it has taken flesh among us.

VESO: Prayer Vigils

The journey continues: from Rome's open doors to every local community. GNRC invites you to join, or organise Prayer Vigils for the Overcoming of Homotransbiphobia. The Vigils are moments of prayer, reflection, and public witness where faith becomes solidarity. We invite churches, families, and friends to stand together, in prayer and in hope, affirming that every life is beloved. Follow GNRC and La Tenda di Gionata to learn how to organise one in your city or parish, or join an existing vigil.



Synod summary

Alessandro Ludovico Previti

“Above all, trust in the slow work of God...”

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955):

I want to share some good news with you: the Synodal Pathway of the Italian Church is entering a new phase. Four years of listening and dialogue. More than half a million people across Italy’s 226 dioceses: fifty thousand synodal groups, hundreds of dialogue workshops, four hundred diocesan delegates, a thousand national delegates, and all the Italian bishops. And finally in October the Synthesis Document of the Italian Synodal Pathway was approved. and it was approved with ninety-five percent of the votes. I want to underline that number: 95%.

It has been a time when the Church in Italy chose to listen to itself — starting from the lived experience and words of its people at all levels. The final document gathers seventy-five points and more than 100 proposals, Five proposals addressed the pastoral care of LGBT people, and every one of them was confirmed:

1. That local Churches and Regional Episcopal Conferences promote paths of accompaniment, discernment, and integration within ordinary pastoral life for those who seek greater participation in the Church but remain at its margins because of stable affective or family situations different from sacramental marriage (divorced and remarried couples, heterosexual cohabitations, and same-sex unions, etc.) [95% approval].

2. That local Churches, overcoming discriminatory attitudes sometimes present in ecclesial and social contexts, commit themselves to promoting the recognition and pastoral accompaniment of homosexual and transgender persons, as well as their parents, who already belong to the Christian community [81% approval].

3. That the Italian Bishops’ Conference support, through prayer and reflection, the “days” promoted by civil society to combat all forms of violence and to express closeness to those who are wounded or discriminated against (Days against gender-based violence and discrimination, pedophilia, bullying,

femicide, homophobia, transphobia, etc.) [77% approval].

4. That local Churches ensure and work so that, in all formative contexts (groups, associations, movements, new communities, seminaries, and religious formation programs), there be no forms of psychological, spiritual, or conscience abuse, including in matters of sexual orientation [94% approval].

5. That local Churches, supported by national guidance and with the contribution of youth and family ministries, movements, associations, groups, and civic entities, establish — at least at inter-diocesan or regional level — teams that value existing good pastoral practices and coordinate new pathways of education on relationships, embodiment, affectivity, and sexuality, taking into account sexual orientation and gender identity, especially for adolescents, young people, and their educators [85% approval].

Commenting on these results, Archbishop Erio Castellucci explained that the CEI was not referring to Pride events, but to the initiatives of prayer and awareness. He specifically mentioned the Prayer Vigils against Homotransphobia, events of faith and dignity. The document now goes to the Presidency of the CEI, which will appoint a group of bishops tasked with defining pastoral priorities and the order of implementation of the proposals. It’s not about reopening the debate, but about deciding how and when.

It is a reason for joy: for the first time, the pastoral care of LGBT+ persons becomes part of the ordinary journey of the Italian Church, not as a separate topic, but as part of the common life of faith. Yes, it truly is good news, and not only for Italy. It matters that it began here.

The Italian Church walks in direct dialogue with the Vatican, and its pastoral steps often become a laboratory for the universal Church.

Globally this process will unfold at different rhythms, and this is where we have a part to play. It is time to walk peacefully in faith: ring the bell, knock on the door of your local parish, send a letter to your bishops, with love. If one turns away, answer with love and try the next one.

The more this path is lived and shared, the more it will continue to open.

Eros' Profile



1. Tell us a little about yourself, where you live, your age, the work that you do.

I am Chinese, 39 years old, my family lives in Shanghai, and I am currently pursuing a doctorate in Theology at Boston College in the United States.

2. Tell us a little about family and friendship circles and why they are important to you.

My most important family member, my mother, passed away during the pandemic. Five years ago, I ended a six-and-a-half-year relationship. My father and sister have no expectations of me. After experiencing the separation of life and death, I just want to live in the present. I don't have many close friends, and I believe that adults need to get used to being solitude.



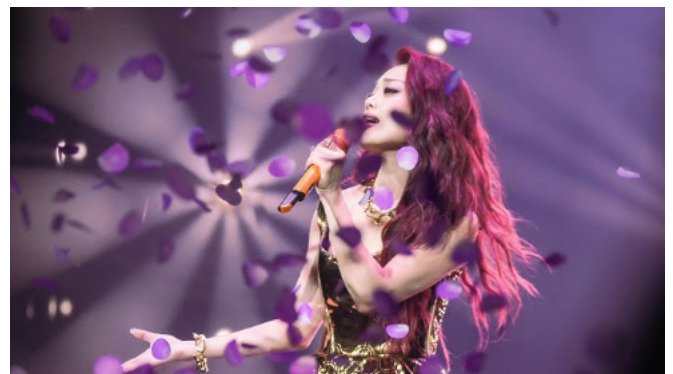
3. What are your hobbies? Why are they important to you?

Currently, playing badminton is my biggest interest. Maintaining a good physical condition can remind me to live in the present moment more alertly.



4. What is your favourite artist and song? Why?

I love Cantonese music and have many favorite singers and songs. I think Cantonese is the most emotional language in the world. My current



favorite song is Joey Yung's "Live in the Moment." The lyrics say, "If you want to go to Tokyo to see the snow and Sakura, don't wait until the unknown future; do it now." So, in 2023, I went to Tokyo to see the snow and the Sakura.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVuXyzS2_og

5. What is your favourite film or tv programme? Why?

Wong Kar-wai's Chungking Express. I also hope to find my own California between dreams and reality.



https://youtu.be/C3NDz_7KP2g

6. What is your favourite food? What feelings does it evoke for you.

Red braised pork belly. Oddly enough, I love the satisfying, yet not greasy, feeling of richness.



7. Your favourite place on earth? Why?

I've always loved Greece, but I haven't been there yet. Of course, I love Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Tokyo. I think liking a place is about feeling free there. The Greek word for "freedom" means a person arrives at a place he likes very much.

8. Who inspires you the most and why?

Simone Weil and Osho. But because I am currently taking a class that requires extensive reading on Dorothy Day, I have been inspired by her courage. So I would say Dorothy Day now. I wish I had her courage. Last week I went to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., where Day prayed in 1932 and met her spiritual and working director, Fr. Peter Maurin. I hope God will continue to lead me.



9. 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?

Everyone needs to be their authentic self. This requires courage and wisdom. I hope to live authentically myself and, if possible, share my insight and courage.

THE AFRICAN CORNER

Rev. Antonio Ocharo

I am Bishop Antonio Ocharo of the Catholic Church in Exile, Diocese of Kenya. I am married with 4 children. I was raised up as a Roman Catholic adherent and later in life I joined a Roman Catholic Seminary pursuing studies in philosophy and theology in preparation for priesthood ordination.

After completing priesthood formation I opted to join the Anglican Church of Kenya for ordination where I worked for 10 years before resignation from active Church ministry for personal reasons. The said personal “reasons” was the exclusive doctrines. I later found a home in the Catholic Church in Exile which is an affirming Church.

LGBTQIA+ activism in Kenya faces severe challenges including legal restrictions on same-sex relationships, pervasive social stigma, violence, and a lack of protection from law enforcement and the government. Activists navigate a hostile environment characterized by widespread discrimination in healthcare, housing, and employment, alongside risks of harassment, forced confessions, and persecution, particularly for transgender individuals and LGBTQIA+ refugees. The situation for LGBTQ+ people in Kenya is marked by legal criminalization of same-sex intimacy, which carries a penalty of up to 14 years in prison. This leads to significant social stigma, discrimination, and violence, including blackmail, extortion, hate crimes, and denial of services like housing and healthcare. While a 2023 Supreme Court decision allowed LGBTQ+ organizations to register, ongoing legal and social challenges, fueled by conservative political and religious views, create a hostile environment for the community.

LGBTQIA+ refugees face ongoing persecution, violence, and threats, with a systemic failure by authorities to provide safety or opportunities for resettlement.

In Kenya, the LGBTQ+ community faces significant challenges due to laws that criminalize same-sex acts, leading to legal risks, discrimination, and violence. While the Supreme Court upheld the right for LGBTQ+ organizations to register in 2023, the community still deals with social stigma, lack of legal protections, and limited access to



services. Law enforcement occasionally arrests individuals using broader statutes like 'loitering'. The Penal Code, a colonial-era law, makes same-sex sexual activity illegal, carrying a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison.

While prosecutions are not always frequent, law enforcement can use laws against "gross indecency" or "carnal knowledge against the order of nature". LGBTQIA+ individuals can also face arrest and harassment under other laws, such as those concerning "loitering" or "impersonation". There are no laws that permit transgender people to legally change their gender, and they can be targeted by laws criminalizing same-sex activity. The LGBTQIA+ community experiences widespread discrimination and violence, including hate crimes, blackmail, and extortion. Social stigma is prevalent in healthcare settings, leading to discrimination and making it difficult for many to access non-stigmatizing services.

LGBTQIA+ refugees face particularly high rates of violence, including attacks, robbery, and arson, especially in camps like Kakuma.

Activists continue to challenge discriminatory laws and work towards greater equality. Deeply embedded social stigma, fueled by conservative rhetoric from religious, political, and cultural leaders, leads to widespread lack of acceptance and ostracization. Many LGBTQIA+ individuals face rejection and isolation from their own families. The LGBTQIA+ Community experiences widespread violence, including physical attacks, insults, extortion, rape, and forced anal examinations.

This environment of violence and abuse takes a severe toll on the mental health of LGBTQIA+ individuals, leading to stress, trauma, depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. Openly identifying as LGBTQIA+ or engaging in activism requires constant awareness of one's environment, speech, and associations, limiting the ability to express oneself freely.

Kenyan society is highly conservative, and a large majority of people hold negative views of LGBTQIA+ people.

WAY FORWARD

I came up with undercover programs in reaching out to LGBTQIA+ communities in Kenya. I visit individuals in their localities and where possible

gather them in small groups and share with them message of encouragement and offer counselling services. The family rejects their own, the community considers them as social misfits and to make matters worse, the church classifies them as worst sinners and excommunicated them!

We pray for support from the Global LGBTQIA+ Groups and individuals to help us establish a rescue centre for empowerment purposes before releasing them to the community. Also we have limitations in reaching out to swelling number across Kenya. We have a challenge in facilitation.

Email: nyandoro69@gmail.com





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.





The Corner © Global Network of Rainbow Catholics

An invite to a prayer

"I am the door. Whoever enters through me will be saved; they will come in and go out and find pasture."

(John 10:9)

"Knock, and it will be opened to you"

(Mt 7:7)

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