



## PRESS RELEASE

### **WAYS OF LOVE** **Snapshots of Catholic Encounters** **with LGBT people and their families**

**Inclusive Pastoral Projects at the First Assembly of LGBT Catholics**  
**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2015**  
**from 15.00 – 19.00**

**Centro Pellegrini "Santa Teresa Couderc"**  
**Via Vincenzo Ambrosio 9/11**  
**Rome**

*Participants include*

**Mary McAleese**, former President of the Republic of Ireland,  
interviewed by **Robert Mickens**, Director of Global Pulse

*and*

**Sr Jeannine Gramick (USA), Pedro Labrín SJ (Chile), Martin Pendergast (UK), Pino Piva SJ (Italy), Rungrote Tangsurakit (Thailand), Sr. Anna Maria Vitagliani (Italy)**

*concluding with*

**Bishop Raúl Vera OP (Mexico)**

**Moderator:**

**Gabriella Caramore** – Radio Rai 3 "Men and Prophets"

(Rome 09/09/2015) Voices, living witness and proposals of Catholic pastoral leaders from eight countries worldwide, will demonstrate that a pastoral approach works better than an ideological one in promoting peaceful and fruitful relationships with LGBT people in the day to day life of Catholic communities.

Dialogue and frank exchanges during the international conference entitled: "**WAYS OF LOVE: Snapshots of Catholic Encounters with LGBT people and their families**", sponsored by the **European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups** will take place within the programme of the first **Assembly of the Global Network of Rainbow Catholics (GNRC)** to be hosted in **Rome from 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> October 2015** – coinciding with the opening weekend of the **2015 Synod on the Family**.

Group delegates coming from more than 30 countries will take part in the **GNRC Assembly**, in order to found the first worldwide network of organisations and persons involved in the pastoral care of, and search for justice for, LGBT people and their families within the Catholic Church and wider society. The Network will operate by means of common projects, mutual support and the exchange of good practices as well as by seeking dialogue and gently confront Catholic communities and institutions.

Pastoral leaders will come together for the debate and meeting, which will take place on **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2015 from 15.00 until 19.00 at the Centro Pellegrini "Santa Teresa Couderc", Via Vincenzo Ambrosio 9/11**. They will concentrate particularly on one topic (which will also surely be addressed within the Synod on the family): how to welcome LGBT people within the Church, and Catholic communities. During the course of the Symposium, the former President of the Republic of Ireland **Mary McAleese** will be interviewed by **Robert Mickens**, director of Global Pulse.

*"Taking our inspiration from Pope Francis' second encyclical **Laudato Sii**", conference spokespersons **Andrea Rubera** and **Martin Pendergast** explain: "we think that the time has now come for all of us to build up, and take care of, our common home, the Church, with the full dedication of each member of the Roman Catholic community. Our common home has no need of divisions or fights. Every member of the people of God, including LGBT members, must find their proper place."*

**Sr. Jeannine Gramick (USA), Pedro Labrín SJ (Chile), Martin Pendergast (UK), Pino Piva SJ (Italy), Rungrote Tansurakit (Thailand), Sr. Anna Maria Vitagliani (Italy)** will contribute with their insight and their witness by giving synthetic snapshots of their lived experiences of welcoming and including LGBT people within their Catholic communities. These are very diverse, ranging from support for HIV-positive people in Asia, to pastoral support for gay people in Africa, to accompanying LGBT groups and people and their families in North and South America, to total inclusion within a London parish community, and tracking new pastoral experiences in the existential peripheries of Italy.

The meeting will be closed by **Raúl Vera OP**, a Catholic Bishop from Mexico, well known for his dedication to human rights and social justice, including those of LGBT believers.

*"The experiences which we will bring to Rome for the **Ways of Love** conference," spokespersons Rubera and Pendergast conclude, "show that pastoral work with and on behalf of LGBT people is already a reality in various parts of the world without any problems for the communities in which they take place. The cue which we would like to offer to the Bishops meeting in Rome for the Synod is that we can –and should – find new ways of disseminating these pastoral models more widely, as well as developing new ones."*

The **Global Network of Rainbow Catholics (GNRC)** is an international network of organisations aiming to support those involved in the pastoral care of, and search for justice for, LGBT people and their families. By means of joint projects, mutual support and exchange, the Network strives for the inclusion, dignity and equality of LGBT people, their parents and their families, within the Catholic Church and wider society.

Representing as they do a great variety of sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, cultures, ethnicities and backgrounds, the members of GNRC are united in a common Catholic Faith which leads them to pray and to work so that LGBT people may be guaranteed full and equal belonging in all sectors of the Catholic Church; and for the protection by both civil and ecclesiastical law of their human dignity, rights and equality of treatment.

Deeply rooted in the Catholic Social Justice tradition, they promote the equal and intrinsic value of each person, independent of sexual orientation, relationship status or gender identity.

They long for a Catholic Church in which ALL the people of God – LGBT and heterosexual people – can live, pray and offer their own service together in harmony.

**Organizing Secretariat of the Rainbow Catholics Assembly**  
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**#rainbowcatholics #waysoflove2015**

**Facebook Event** <https://www.facebook.com/events/1616333885308527/>

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**NOTE**

An international network of 13 organizations of/with LGBT Catholics met for the first time during the Family Synod 2014 in Rome and since then we have worked together to initiate a global network of LGBTQI Catholics, their parents and families.

**Global Network of Rainbow Catholics - Founding Members:**

European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups

Associació Cristiana de Gais i Lesbianes de Catalunya (ACGIL) (Spain)

Detle Resources Foundation (Zambia)

DignityUSA (USA)

Drachma (Drachma LGBTI and Drachma Parents Group) (Malta)

Ichthys christian@s lgtbh de Sevilla (Spain)

LGBT Catholics Westminster Pastoral Council (UK)

New Ways Ministry (USA)

Nuova Proposta (Italy)

Ökumenische Arbeitsgruppe Homosexuelle und Kirche (Germany)

Pastoral de la Diversidad Sexual (Chile)

Wiara i Tęcza (Poland)