

# THE Rainbow of God's Creation

LGBTIQA+ Realities and Catholicism



**Trish Hindmarsh**



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Illustration © Alamy p 31 Council of Jerusalem, a conference of the Christian Apostles in Jerusalem, scene of the New Testament, Histoire Biblique de L'Ancien Testament

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It is rare to see such a well-written, straightforward, pastoral and unashamedly Catholic introduction to one of the Church's best kept, but now emerging, secrets. But in addition, this little book is suffused with joy, making it very special indeed.

James Alison is a Catholic theologian, priest, author and global teacher.  
*He is committed to the recognition and pastoral care of LGBTQIA+ people as images of God and variations within humanity, reflecting the diversity of God's Creation.*

The Church is seeking a new engagement with people who identify as LGBTQIA+ and who often feel rejected by the Church. It's not easy to see the way forward, but the journey starts with the ear. We are in search of a new kind of listening to the voices of people who identify as LGBTQIA+. The Church needs to listen to what these, our sisters and brothers, judge to be the truth of their experience. Only once we have listened deeply can we enter into the dialogue that will carry us forward under the influence of the Holy Spirit. How to respond to what we hear from people who identify as LGBTQIA+ and yet be faithful to the Church's understanding of the human person: that's the challenge we face. In what is offered here, Trish Hindmarsh helps us take a step in the right direction on the long journey of dialogue.

Mark Coleridge is Archbishop Emeritus in Brisbane  
*He is also a theologian, scripture scholar, pastor and teacher.  
He is a former Chair of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.*

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Pope Francis wrote,  
‘Discernment is a  
grace from God, but  
it requires our human  
involvement...’

# Using the Guide

The Guide is intended for individual reflection or for use in a group setting to facilitate discernment through dialogue, leading to greater understanding, conversion of heart, and action. The final document from the Synod on Synodality (2024) leaves us in no doubt that Synodality is a ‘constitutive dimension’ of the Church, not an option.

The opportunities for Reflection, Prayerful Conversations and Shared Prayer, offered throughout the Guide are an invitation to practise the ‘synodal’ way of ‘walking together’ towards greater understanding and faith-inspired action.

Pope Francis wrote, ‘Discernment is a grace from God, but it requires our human involvement in simple ways: *praying, reflecting, paying attention to one’s inner disposition, listening and talking to one another in an authentic, meaningful, and welcoming way.*’

(*For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission*, 2.2.  
*Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality*, 2021.)

## LGBTIQA+ Glossary of Common Terms

In this Guide the acronym LGBTIQA+ is used throughout unless quoting from a particular source that favours a different acronym, for example LGBTQ; LGBT or LGBTQIA+. The following offers a descriptor for each of the letters and the symbol in 'LGBTIQA+'.

**Asexual:** a sexual orientation that reflects little to no sexual attraction, either within or outside relationships.

**Bisexual:** an individual who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of the same gender and people of another gender.

**Gay:** an individual who identifies as a man and is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other people who identify as men. The term gay can also be used in relation to women who are sexually and romantically attracted to other women.

**Intersex:** an umbrella term that refers to individuals who have anatomical, chromosomal and hormonal characteristics that differ from medical and conventional understandings of male and female bodies.

**Lesbian:** an individual who identifies as a woman and is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other people who identify as women.

**Queer:** a term sometimes used to describe a range of sexual orientations and gender identities, in former times often a derogatory term.

**Transgender/Trans:** umbrella terms used to refer to people whose assigned sex at birth does not match their gender identity.

+ (**Plus**) *Represents others not included here.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Based on The Australian Institute of Family Studies comprehensive listing and description of terms used in relation to LGBTIQA+ realities. Found at the LGBTIQA+ glossary of common terms, Australian Institute of Family Studies, aifs.gov.au, October 30, 2024.

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The significance of the  
‘rainbow’ ... is explained  
as a beautiful, shared  
symbol of promise and  
fidelity...

*+ Vincent Long Van Nguyen, OFM  
Conv.  
Bishop of Parramatta, Australia*



## Foreword

In early 2024, at the invitation of Rainbow Catholics Australia, I attended their 'Inter-Agency' meeting as a 'straight' person, listening and learning in preparation for drafting this Guide. Their commitment to be true to themselves and to their Catholic Faith, the source of sacramental 'graces' they rely on from their 'spiritual home', touched me more deeply than I can say. The experience galvanised me to begin this work, and profoundly alerted me to the urgency for their voices to be heard and believed by the Catholic Church.

The last encyclical from Pope Francis '*Dilexit Nos*' ('*He Loved Us*'), was published during the writing of this guide and struck me like lightening as a timely grace from God – for myself, for the Church and for humanity, as we respond to what Pope Francis recognised as a 'change of era', united within the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Francis wrote:

The heart is the locus of sincerity, where deceit and disguise have no place. It usually indicates our true intentions, what we really think, believe and desire, the 'secrets' that we tell no one: in a word, the naked truth about ourselves. It is the part of us that is neither appearance nor illusion, but is instead authentic, real, entirely 'who we are'.

Pope Francis, *Dilexit Nos* (5), 2024

## THE RAINBOW OF GOD'S CREATION

I have also been energised by the motto of the Sisters of Charity, '*Caritas Christo ugit nos*' ('The love of Christ impels us') in attempting to write this Guide. The Sisters were among the first Catholics in Australia to publicly recognise and honour the human dignity of gay men, as we see in the Introduction.

### Dialogue with LGBTIQA+ people

Pope Francis demonstrated that there is much to discover from open-hearted dialogue with LGBTIQA+ people regarding the limitless love of God, expressed in the diverse gifts of Creation. There remains much for the Catholic Church to learn about the human struggle they daily face for justice and full recognition of their humanity, wherever bigotry and ignorance are allowed to continue. We can open our eyes and hearts to those who identify as 'Rainbow' people, seeing them as gifts of God's infinite creativity and our 'siblings' within the human family. They too are invited to share the 'Feast' in the Kingdom Christ Jesus came to announce.

– Trish Hindmarsh, September 2025