

Imago Dei Impact Report



The Imago Dei Planning Team, a subcommittee of the Marianist Social Justice Collaborative's (MSJC) LGBTQ+ Initiative Team, is delighted to share with you the outcomes of Imago Dei, the multi-day assembly held on June 27–30, 2024 at the Bergamo Center in Dayton, OH. This event brought together over 140 participants to honor the 50th anniversary of a 1974 conference centered on pastoral care and outreach for LGBTQ+ Catholics. Imago Dei also explored how we can all continue to respond to the needs of the LGBTQ+ community in our Catholic Church and world today. Imago Dei achieved remarkable success, fostering personal testimonials and vital dialogue about LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Below we share a formal report on the impacts of Imago Dei. Reading participants' reflections has been deeply touching and empowering, so we have shared a select number of direct quotes as well as quantitative impact.





Participant Reflections

Most Meaningful Experiences for Participants:

- Deep listening to the experiences and personal witnesses of LGBTQ+ people present
- All 4 of the plenary sessions
- Prayer services throughout the weekend which were moving and connecting
- Intergenerational body of participants

"This was a phenomenal transformational experience of Church. I have not been in an environment before (as a cis-het) where LGBTQ+ people were centered so directly. I very much valued the presence of so many trans individuals. I was struck by the authenticity of faith for every person present and the joy that was in the space. Those who were there wanted to be there, wanted to engage, believe in building a Church where all are integral. This was an experience of encounter, immersion and inspiration. A Catholic community I felt proud to belong to." – Marie

"The assembly was both incredibly affirming and unapologetically Catholic. I didn't think I would ever find a space that was both." – Martha

"This was the best conference I've ever been to. Everything was planned down to the last detail to be welcoming. This was a highwater mark for my experience as a gay Catholic advocate and minister. THANK YOU!" – Jason

"This conference demonstrated powerfully the genuine hospitality, profound spirituality, and incalculable dignity of queer Christians...At every moment in its gatherings, I was greeted by warmth, humor, sincerity, and wisdom reflecting and refracting the multifaceted Love who is God." – Alex

Articles Written about the Assembly in Catholic Press:

- *Imago Dei assembly reaffirms LGBTQ+ people are made in the image of God* by Imago Dei Participant Yunuen Trujillo
(<https://www.ncronline.org/opinion/guest-voices/imago-dei-assembly-reaffirms-lgbtq-people-are-made-image-god>)
- *Recognizing the Face of God in the Other* by Imago Dei Participant Maxwell Kuzma
(<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2024/08/08/recognizing-the-face-of-god-in-the-other-a-view-from-the-imago-dei-conference/>)



By the Numbers



Planning Team: 8 volunteers and 2 MSJC staff

Participants: 136 registrants; 133 full-weekend participants; 10 additional special guests

- 25 U.S. states/districts represented (AK, AZ, CA, CO, CT, D.C., FL, GA, IL, IN, KY, LA, MA, MD, MI, MO, NE, NJ, NY OH, PA, SC, TX, VA, WI)
- Many diverse identities present: LGBTQ+ persons, parents, vowed religious, allies

Presentations:

- 1 Keynote Speaker – Fr. James Martin, SJ
- 3 Plenary Panels with 14 panelists and moderators
- 14 Concurrent Sessions with 20 presenters

Sponsors:

- 1 Chaminade Sponsor (\$5,000+)
- 5 Adele Sponsors (\$2,500–\$4,999)
- 8 Marie Therese Sponsors (\$1,000 – \$2,499)
- 1 Full Scholarship Sponsor (\$325)
- 54 individual donors contributed a collective \$2,000

Exhibitors: 10

Women Religious: 14; 8 women religious congregations represented

Male Religious: 13 (8 brothers, 4 priests; 1 Episcopal clergy); 5 male religious congregations represented

