



ST. JOSEPH PARISH
THE JESUIT PARISH IN SEATTLE

Pride at St. Joe's: The Body of Christ

You may have noticed a rainbow banner hanging on the breezeway at St. Joe's. This is the [Progressive Pride](#) flag, personalized with the parish logo and our message about inclusion: Everybody Belongs.

At the urging of parishioners, and with support from the Parish Pastoral Council and the St. Joe's LGBTQ+ ministry, the parish decided to be proactive in welcoming our LGBTQ+ siblings, and making it clear that God, and our parish, accepts everyone, and that not only is everyone simply welcome, but every person indeed belongs.

The banner is not an endorsement of any one organization, or event, but rather a statement of support for LGBTQ+ people, parishioners or not. The idea that everybody belongs is rooted in the Catholic principle of the dignity of the human person, that every person has inherent dignity as they are created in the image and likeness of God. This belonging is rooted in who we are as a church, as the church Christ founded was and is a church of inclusion. (It is also church teaching that every baptized person is a member of the Body of Christ, which is the church!)

It is essential that everyone who walks through our doors feels like they belong here, and that may mean we have some growing to do, ourselves. If you have questions or misgivings, we invite you to educate yourself on what Pride month represents, what the banner represents, and what it means to belong to the body of Christ. The parish staff invites you to reach out to us for conversations on these subjects, as well.

It has also become clear to us that we needed to make a public statement to our youth and to our parishioners that we condemn all forms of violence and harassment based on gender or sexual orientation, just as we condemn violence against our black and brown sisters and brothers.

As a parish we have joined dozens of other parishes and Catholic organizations (including Jesuits USA) in signing ["God Is on Your Side: A Statement from Catholic Bishops on Protecting LGBT Youth,"](#) a statement facilitated by the Tyler Clementi Foundation.

All forms of violence, harassment, and bullying are an affront to the dignity of the human person and go against the teachings of Christ, who asked us to *"love another as I have loved you."*

As the Synod revealed, many of our LGBTQ+ siblings have been, and still are, excluded from active participation in the life of the church. We must actively work to create a culture of inclusion to build bridges to everyone. We are moved by our LGBTQ+ parishioners' faith and love of the Eucharist, their commitment to charity and justice, their incredible contributions to our liturgies, and the love that they embody in relationships and family life.

Everybody Belongs.