



Matthew Barcus, M.A.
Program Manager- LGBTQ+ Education & Support



June is recognized as LGBTQ+ Pride Month as a way to honor the memory of the 1969 Stonewall Riots, a turning point for contemporary LGBTQ+ activism led by a coalition of transgender women of color and working class gay, lesbian, and bisexual folks of all races. For nearly 50 years Pride events have been conducted across the United States, but most of the celebrations planned for this summer have been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Around the world, we are seeing yet again how a novel and unchecked virus serves to disproportionately harm marginalized communities, leaving many feeling hopeless. Although it may be problematic to compare COVID-19 to the AIDS pandemic, we—especially those of us who are younger—can now better empathize with those who previously experienced the effects of a novel and deadly virus. Perhaps it helps to remember that human beings have endured many trials and tribulations throughout the life of our species, and alongside these challenges we consistently find various expressions of resilience. Fortunately for us, LGBTQ+ communities have historically personified models of persistence in the face of adversity.

Many lives have been and continue to be lost, but we must fight to honor those who pass, minimize the loss of life, support the survivors, and persist in our pursuit of life, liberty, happiness, and love for all God's creation. Gonzaga University's Lincoln LGBTQ+ Resource Center and wider GU community continues to work towards equity, affirmation, cura personalis, and belonging grounded in a Jesuit understanding. As an LGBTQ+ Resource Center, we strive to emulate an understanding of Jesuit values provided by Magis. Along with Fr. James Martin, S.J. in his book *Building a Bridge*, we call for members of the Catholic and LGBTQ+ communities to come together with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Although we may not be able to gather in person to celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride this June, we can use newer technologies along with our histories of resilience and spirituality to gather together from a distance so that we may honor the sacrifices and persistence that LGBTQ+ people and their allies fought so bravely for, and continue fighting for, as well as affirm our victories, and our commitment to a better future. Let us all—regardless of identity—reflect and find encouragement in the wise words from an LGBTQ+ elder, Alice Walker, "Freedom, after all, is like love: the more you give to others, the more you have."