



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on October 30, 2024

Anime: the New Face of Catholicism?

The Vatican has released a new “[official mascot](#)” named Luce.

Her name means “light,” and she’s the talisman for 2025 Jubilee, a holy year of pilgrimage [announced](#) by Pope Francis last May. Its [motto](#) is “Pilgrims of Hope,” which explains why Luce is wearing a raincoat and muddy boots.

She’s leading a group of similarly clad friends on a pilgrimage. First stop — the Lucca Comics and Games [convention](#) in Italy this week, “where the Vatican’s Dicastery for Evangelization will host a space dedicated to ‘Luce and Friends.’” The [Catholic News Agency](#) says this marks “the first time that a Vatican dicastery participates in a comics convention.” The manga-styled cartoon characters will also highlight the Holy See’s [pavilion](#) in Osaka, Japan, at [Expo 2025](#) next year.



YouTube
Luce figurine

Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the Vatican’s jubilee organizer, unveiled the blue-haired, soulless-eyed cutie at a [press conference](#) on Monday. He described Luce as part of the Vatican’s youth outreach, attempting to engage in “the pop culture so beloved by our young people.”

Luce and Friends

Her friends are a purple-haired Chinese girl named Xin, and two boys, one Hispanic name Fe and one African named Sky. All of their names are gender-neutral, a fact not lost on Megan Peters of [ComicBook.com](#), who writes, “From *her* big eyes to *his* rosary, Luce is definitely adorable...” (Emphasis added.) But for clarity and sanity’s sakes, we’ll continue assuming there are two boys and two girls.

The boys are wearing pants; the girls’ legs are bare, and Xin has a bandage on one knee. The [escaloped shells](#) in their eyes mimic a templar icon familiar to pilgrims at the Shrine of Saint James in Spain: Santiago de Compostela.

Each carries a [stang](#), or forked staff, commonly associated with the [horned god](#) of witchcraft. The characters are wearing a rainbow assortment of jackets, and rainbow-colored rosaries hang around their necks. The colors are hardly surprising considering that the artist who designed Luce and Friends is Simone Legno. His company, [Tokidoki, markets](#) “Pride” products and celebrates “Pride Month.”

“Showing people how to love one another, no matter what their differences may be!” the company website gushes. “Tokidoki spreads the light of love with the world!”

This is not the only time observers have linked Vatican promotion of 2025 Jubilee to LGBTQ activism. The event [logo](#), pictured here,



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caused Italian journalist [Mario Adinolfi](#) to comment: “Here is the logo for Jubilee 2025. But, damn it, is it the Jubilee or a Gay Pride? Did they really have to choose the rainbow in the logo?” (The jackets that Luce and her friends are wearing bear a small monotone copy of the emblem.)

Anime and the Trans Movement

Moreover, there is an alarming link between anime and the trans movement. Canadian psychologist and former University of Toronto professor Dr. Ray Blanchard got himself canceled on social media in 2018 for suggesting the relation, though his credentials include work on the American Psychiatric Association’s Subcommittee on Gender Identity Disorders, and work as a member of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health. Specifically, he once retweeted this [post](#), recommending it as an “essay on the possible relations among anime, gender dysphoria and autogynephilia.” The piece begins harmlessly enough: “Anyone who spends a lot of time with the transgender debate will notice sooner or later that there are a ton of young trans-identifying males who are into anime, using anime girls for their social media avatars, sharing memes related to cute anime girls, and so on.”

Backlash was swift and harsh, to which Blanchard sarcastically replied: “I recently upset a lot of people by casually retweeting an essay about trans* and anime. I didn’t realize that cloying cartoon depictions of pubescent girls symbolized the hopes and dreams of so many stalwart young people.”

Blanchard failed to defend himself with mention the number of LGBTQ characters in anime (see examples [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)). Maybe he would have if he hadn’t been canceled.

Now, Luce has stirred up a flurry of controversy on social media. Here are some examples, and feel free to leave your comments below.



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