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Human Sexuality in Catholic Education

Catholic education is committed to the pursuit of truth and promotion of the Gospel. Central to its mission is the integral formation of students' minds, hearts, and bodies in truth and holiness.

A significant challenge toward this end is confusion in the common culture regarding the nature of human sexuality. The Catholic Church has a deep and rich understanding of the human person informed by natural law and firmly rooted in Christian revelation, which is its privilege and duty to proclaim and which the culture desperately needs to hear. Errors in understanding human sexuality can lead to errors in understanding human nature, the moral order, and even truth and reality itself.

Catholic education's proclamation of the full truth of humanity requires both sensitivity and courage. It requires clarity, charity, and integrity. It requires loving pastoral responses and clearly articulated beliefs, standards, and policies.

Such pastoral efforts and policies should support the mission of Catholic education, be consistent with Church teaching, and be based on a sound Christian anthropology (i.e., concept of the human person). This concept derives from the overarching biblical vision of the human person, which proposes that we find our deepest identity and happiness only by making a sincere gift of ourselves to others. God made men and women as complementary creatures who are naturally ordered to the special union of one man and one woman in marriage. Central as well to the Christian concept of the human person is that God made both men and women in His image, of equal and immense dignity, existing as a unity of body and soul, and destined for union with Him according to His plan.

To counteract confusion in the common culture and to ensure that Catholic educational institutions fulfill their missions, it is essential to establish policies that foster a true account of the human person and of human sexuality consonant with Church teaching. Such policies justly ensure that employees, volunteers, and students are fully aware of their obligations and the



institution's principles, priorities, and commitments, and they help guard against error and disoriented notions of the human person.

Because modeling and personal witness are essential to the process of education, all members of a Catholic educational community should strive for virtue, guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church. Pastoral and policy practices will therefore necessarily touch on a broad array of activities beyond the strictly academic, in Catholic education's attempts to promote the integral formation of student's minds, bodies, and souls.

This broader goal is served by explicit efforts at developing moral, theological, and academic virtues. Development of these human excellences are critical to human freedom and fulfillment. By modeling moral freedom "grounded on those absolute values which alone give meaning and value to human life,"¹ Catholic schools and colleges fulfill their obligation to be "places of evangelization"² and equip students to be "leaven in the human community."³

It is hard to overstate how radical the sexual revolution has been and how far-reaching and devastating its consequences to the human community. It has physically, morally, and spiritually destroyed countless individuals, families, children, and communities. Catholic educators must be astutely aware of the challenges posed by the sexual culture, prepared to bravely confront it, and equipped with educational principles and policies to deal with the crisis it has created.

The following principles and standards, deeply informed by guidance from the Church, aim to assist in this regard.

Principles

Principle 1: A key aspect of the mission of Catholic education is the integral formation of the human person.

This key aspect of integral formation, especially as it relates to human sexuality, should be reflected in institutional policies. This type of formation is rooted in the Church's philosophy of the human person, who is seen as a complex and multi-faceted being, striving for full human flourishing in their physical, moral, spiritual, psychological, social, and intellectual faculties.⁴

Canon Law affirms:

¹ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School* (1977) 9.

² Congregation for Catholic Education, *Catholic Schools on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997) 11.

³ Saint Paul VI, *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965) 8.

⁴ Congregation for Catholic Education, *Male and Female He Created Them: Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education* (2019) 3; citing Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education* (1983) 5.

Since true education must strive for complete formation of the human person that looks to his or her final end as well as to the common good of societies, children and youth are to be nurtured in such a way that they are able to develop their physical, moral, and intellectual talents harmoniously, acquire a more perfect sense of responsibility and right use of freedom, and are formed to participate actively in social life.⁵

Catholic schools and colleges are also obligated to be “places of evangelization”⁶ to bring students to the fullness of truth and disposing them to salvation in Christ and service to the common good.⁷ The mission includes empowering students to be “a saving leaven in the human community”⁸ through apostolic witness and modeling of a Catholic understanding of moral freedom, which is “grounded on those absolute values which alone give meaning and value to human life.”⁹

Catholic schools and colleges are not simply educational organizations designed to satisfy the intellects of students with academic content. Rather, their “primary responsibility is one of witness”¹⁰ and instruction in the truth of God and the world through complete integral human formation:

The integral formation of the human person, which is the purpose of education, includes the development of all the human faculties of the students, together with preparation for professional life, formation of ethical and social awareness, becoming aware of the transcendental, and religious education.¹¹

In all they do, Catholic educators “must consider the totality of the person and insist therefore on the integration of the biological, psycho-affective, social, and spiritual elements.”¹² This is a distinctly different view of the person than is currently promoted in much of common culture, which presents a disaggregation of these elements in an effort to empower the will, instill a false sense of freedom, and remove the divine.

⁵ Code of Canon Law (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983) 795.

⁶ Congregation for Catholic Education, *Catholic Schools on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997) 11.

⁷ Saint John Paul II, *Ex corde Ecclesiae* (1990) 4.

⁸ Saint Paul VI, *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965) 8.

⁹ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School* (1977) 9.

¹⁰ Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating in Intercultural Dialogue in the Catholic School: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love* (2013) 57.

¹¹ Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (1982) 17.

¹² Congregation for Catholic Education (2019) 3.

Principle 2: Catholic education is founded upon a sound Christian anthropology, which describes the human person as “a being at once corporeal and spiritual,”¹³ made in the image of God,¹⁴ with complementarity and equality of the sexes as male and female.¹⁵

The Congregation for Catholic Education emphasizes that:

In today’s pluralistic world, the Catholic educator must consciously inspire his or her activity with the Christian concept of the person, in communion with the Magisterium of the Church.¹⁶

Some fundamental tenets of a Christian concept of the human person include that God created each person body and soul (Gen. 1:27) and that:

The human body shares in the dignity of “the image of God”: it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit. Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity. Through his very bodily condition he sums up in himself the elements of the material world. Through him they are thus brought to their highest perfection and can raise their voice in praise freely given to the Creator. For this reason man may not despise his bodily life. Rather he is obliged to regard his body as good and to hold it in honor since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day.¹⁷

This bodily nature includes a biological sexual reality that shares in God’s creative plan for the good.

“Being man” or “being woman” is a reality which is good and willed by God: man and woman possess an inalienable dignity which comes to them immediately from God their Creator.¹⁸

The conjugal union of man and woman is naturally ordered toward the good of marriage and family:

In marriage the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sign and pledge of spiritual communion. Marriage bonds between baptized persons are sanctified by the sacrament.

“Sexuality, by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, is not something simply biological, but

¹³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993) 362.

¹⁴ *Catechism* 355.

¹⁵ *Catechism* 355, 369.

¹⁶ Congregation for Catholic Education (1982) 18.

¹⁷ *Catechism* 364.

¹⁸ *Catechism* 362, 369.

concerns the innermost being of the human person as such. It is realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and woman commit themselves totally to one another until death.”¹⁹

This is important, since there are many competing and incomplete views of humanity, particularly as related to issues of human sexuality.

The educative program should work in harmony with a Catholic understanding of the human person and the role of human sexuality, because:

...our sexuality plays an integral part in the development of our personality and in the process of its education: “In fact, it is from [their] sex that the human person receives the characteristics which, on the biological, psychological and spiritual levels, make that person a man or a woman, and thereby largely condition his or her progress towards maturity and insertion into society.”²⁰

Catholic education addresses issues of human sexuality, because it seeks to foster maturity, growth, and the ability of students to respond to God’s vocation for each of them as individuals and as members of society.

The Congregation for Catholic Education warns that our society is in “an *educational crisis*, especially in the field of affectivity and sexuality,” and that prevalent today is:

...an anthropology opposed to faith and to right reason... bringing with it a tendency to cancel out the differences between men and women, presenting them instead as merely the product of historical and cultural conditioning.²¹

This false ideology “creates the idea of the human person as a sort of abstraction who ‘chooses for himself what his nature is to be.’”²² What is at stake is not just isolated discussions about personal sexual preferences or what to do about a small segment of people suffering from gender dysphoria (i.e., transgenderism), but rather what is at stake is this ideology’s “aim to annihilate the concept of ‘nature’”²³ and the surrender of natural law, objective reality, and God’s divine plan to the ravages of materialism and relativism.

In the face of such error and like St. Paul at the Areopagus, teachers must use all legitimate means to promote the truth of human body-soul integrity. Natural law arguments are a good start when explaining the harmony between body and soul and the actions that lead to human

¹⁹ *Catechism* 2360-2361.

²⁰ Congregation for Catholic Education (2019) 4; citing Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Persona Humana: Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics* (1975) 1.

²¹ Congregation for Catholic Education (2019) Introduction.

²² Congregation for Catholic Education (2019) Introduction.

²³ Congregation for Catholic Education (2019) 25.

flourishing. These arguments use reason and are open to all of humanity. But these arguments alone are insufficient and must open to divine revelation in and through the person of Christ who has fully revealed our nature and destiny.

It is important to maintain in teaching and policy the Catholic understanding that, “Biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated.”²⁴ One’s biological sex and gender expression are not to be disaggregated²⁵ but should be seen in harmony, according to God’s plan. One’s gender identity must be rooted in one’s biological sex. As the Church teaches, a biologically-based sexual identity is “a reality deeply inscribed in man and woman”²⁶ and affirms that a person “should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity.”²⁷

The Congregation for Catholic Education reminds educators that “any genuine educational philosophy has to be based on the nature of the human person and therefore must take into account all of the physical and spiritual powers of each individual.”²⁸ Educational programs or policies that promote a false understanding of the human person put the whole educational project at risk.

Principle 3: Catholic education should communicate and support the formation of virtue in order to help students “live a new life in Christ”²⁹ and faithfully fulfill their roles in building up the Kingdom of God.

Key to the area of human sexuality is the virtue of temperance, including the associated virtues of modesty, chastity, purity, abstinence, self-control, and moderation. All of these virtues are proper and important where one’s sexuality is concerned, but chastity, “the successful integration of sexuality within the person,”³⁰ sets the basis for one’s internal integrity of body and soul.

The Church holds that all are called to chastity appropriate to their state in life as single, married, or consecrated religious.³¹ Human sexual behavior is only properly oriented to the ends of love and life in the context of Holy Matrimony. A proper understanding of human sexuality requires personal integrity and full integration of body and soul as created by God. The Catechism emphasizes this need for integrity:

²⁴ Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (2016) 56.

²⁵ Pontifical Council for the Family, *Family, Marriage and ‘De Facto’ Unions* (2000) 8.

²⁶ Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, *Letter to Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and the World* (2004) 8.

²⁷ *Catechism* 2393.

²⁸ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal* (1988) Introduction, 63.

²⁹ Congregation for Catholic Education (1977) 36.

³⁰ *Catechism* 2337.

³¹ *Catechism* 2348.

...the chaste person maintains the integrity of the powers of life and love placed in him. This integrity ensures the unity of the person; it is opposed to any behavior that would impair it. It tolerates neither a double life nor duplicity in speech.³²

Integrity must be modeled by Catholic educational institutions as well. Policies should be clear, consistent, faithful to Church teaching, and protect from anything which might impair an institution's faith-based mission and educational philosophy.

Catholic education cannot condone and must form young people with the desire, habits, and fortitude to avoid offenses against chastity and against God, including but not limited to lust, masturbation, pornography, homosexual activity, and fornication.³³ Students must also be formed with appreciation for the gifts of sexuality and openness toward life in marriage, respect for the sanctity of marriage and for all human life, and the desire, habits, and fortitude to avoid artificial contraception, in-vitro fertilization, and abortion.

Standards for Policies Related to Human Sexuality

In Catholic education, policies involving human sexuality:

- support and protect educational communities of evangelization that promote the salvation of students, teach and witness to truth, and serve the common good;
- ensure a Catholic environment in which students can develop their physical, moral, and intellectual talents harmoniously;
- uphold Catholic teaching according to the magisterium of the Catholic Church, especially in matters of human sexuality;
- are founded on a Christian anthropology which supports the unity of body and soul as part of God's original plan for humanity and understands sexuality as a gift ordered toward the union of one man and one woman in marriage;
- expect all members of the Catholic educational community to strive for a life of chastity in keeping with their particular state of life, emphasizing the importance of chastity to a life of virtue and growth in one's relationship with God;
- provide clear institutional supports for living chastely, such as single-sex dorms and rules regarding clothing and behavior to establish standards and minimize temptation;

³² *Catechism* 2338; Mt 5:37.

³³ *Catechism* 2351-2359.

- provide instruction and reading material, such as Catholic books and pamphlets, that offer practical guidance for living chastely;
- ensure that all human sexuality materials and instruction are carefully vetted for complete fidelity to Church teachings, taught by qualified and committed Catholics, modest and pure, targeted to the appropriate age and developmental stage of the student with respect for a child's latency period (lasting up until puberty),³⁴ and available in advance to parents who may choose to opt a minor student out of the program;
- ensure that all speakers, vendors, third-party services, and materials are in harmony with the Catholic moral formation of students;
- ensure that the arts, movies, and literature on campus or in the curriculum are not an affront to a student's purity or a proximate cause of sinful thoughts or actions;
- relate to all members of the school or college community according to their biological sex at birth and maintain appropriate distinctions between males and females, especially in issues of facilities use, athletic teams, uniforms, and nomenclature;
- prohibit advocacy of moral behavior at odds with Catholic teaching and activities that tend to encourage immoral behavior, especially on issues related to chastity;
- prohibit displays or promotion of vulgar, promiscuous, or same-sex attracted behavior;
- prohibit actions or activities which promote or encourage students to disaggregate gender from sex; and
- prohibit bullying and ensure that the dignity of all is respected.

Operationalizing the Standards

Definition of Terms

“Chastity” is the virtue of sexual self-control and is an aspect of the cardinal virtue of temperance; as a religious virtue, chastity motivates and enables us to use the gift of our sexuality in complete accordance with God's plan. Chastity makes possible the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of the person in his bodily and spiritual being.³⁵

³⁴ The Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality* (1996) 60.

³⁵ *Catechism* 2337.

“Gender” was commonly used synonymously with the word “sex,” but over time has been changed to mean a person’s socio-cultural role apart from their biological sex. The Church is opposed to this division and views gender (one’s outward manifestation of sexuality) as inseparable from one’s biological sex.³⁶

“Gender dysphoria” is the psychological condition given to a person who experiences a conflict between their biological sex and the gender in which they identify.³⁷

“Marriage” is the lifelong union of one man and one woman for the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children. Jesus Christ raised this union between baptized persons to the dignity of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.³⁸

“Sex” means the biological condition of being male or female.³⁹

Specific Areas and Types of Policies

Catholic education policies related to human sexuality are needed within many areas of a school or college’s operation. The Cardinal Newman Society is committed to identifying principles of Catholic identity and policy standards particular to all key aspects of Catholic education through the work of its Catholic Identity Standards Project. For each area below, be sure to check with the Newman Society for more specific policy guidance that incorporates the human sexuality standards and other relevant concerns.

Admissions policies help target admission to students and families who can benefit from the educative and formative approach of the Catholic education program and not hinder the institution’s faith-based mission. Admissions policies should also ensure that students and families understand they are entering a faith-based institution and have an obligation to support its religious mission.

³⁶ Synod of Bishops, “Synod15 – Final Relatio of the Synod of Bishops to The Holy Father, Francis,” (October 2015) 58. Accessed July 20, 2020 from <http://www.lancasterdiocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Final-Relatio15-Final.pdf>

“According to the Christian principle, soul and body, biological sex as well and the social-cultural role of the sex (gender), can be distinguished, but not separated.” See also Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (2016) 56.

³⁷ American Psychiatric Association. *What is Gender Dysphoria?* Accessed 7/17/20.

<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/gender-dysphoria/what-is-gender-dysphoria>.

³⁸ *Catechism* 1601.

³⁹ Physical differences at birth include chromosomal levels. In the unlikely event that a biological sex determination made at birth is uncertain or inaccurate chromosomal levels may need be taken into consideration. Statistics show that such disorders of sexual development (DSD) occur between 1 and 4,500 – 5,500 births (.02%). See Lee, P.A., et al. “Global Disorders of Sex Development Update since 2006: Perceptions, Approach and Care,” *Hormone Research in Paediatrics*. Vol. 85 (April 2016). Accessed July 20, 2020 from <https://www.karger.com/Article/Fulltext/442975>

Athletics policies protect biological females and ensure fair play by having students participate on sport teams consistent with their biological sex.

Bullying policies prohibit bullying of any kind and support the common good and Christian justice and charity by affirming the dignity of all persons.

Chastity policies encourage all members of a Catholic educational community to strive for a life of chastity, appropriate to their vocation as single, married, or consecrated religious. The policies require modesty in language, appearance, and behavior.

Dance policies, consistent with the goal to form virtuous and Christ-centered persons, require students to refrain from any immodest, impure, or sexually suggestive behavior both on and off the dance floor.

Dress code/uniform policies, in order to maintain uniform appearance, modesty, and proper comportment throughout the school day and at school events, require all students, staff, and faculty to follow the dress code expectations of their biological sex while on campus and while representing the institution at outside functions.

Employment and volunteer policies, among other things, ensure that all employees and volunteers uphold the Catholic faith and morals—including sexual morality—in their teaching and other duties and by their personal witness. The policies ensure that employee benefits are provided in a manner that does not violate Catholic teaching, including prohibiting insurance coverage for abortion, artificial insemination, contraception, in-vitro fertilization, and drugs and procedures intended to change a person’s biological sex.

Facilities use policies require all adults and students who are on campus to model chaste behavior and observe modesty when using changing facilities, locker rooms, showers, and restrooms, and ensure that such facilities are only shared by those of the same biological sex. Facilities use policies should also prohibit use for any purpose or cause that is contrary to Catholic teaching or otherwise opposes or is opposed by the Catholic Church.

Formal titles and names policies ensure that students address all adults by their proper titles and names and that personnel address students by the original name with which the student was registered (or its common derivative) and correlating pronouns.

Health services, counseling, and programs policies ensure that health services personnel, counselors, and other medical and psychological student programs support a Christian anthropology and that parents, as primary educators of their children, are apprised of all conversations and concerns related to the child’s social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and physical well-being and safety, unless restrained otherwise by law. The policies ensure that the institution will not support a student or employee in any type of “transitioning” of gender or

allow medications used for “transitioning” to be administered on campus or by school or college personnel.

Hiring policies ensure that all candidates are properly vetted for their adherence to Catholic teaching especially in the areas of moral expectations as articulated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Housing services policies ensure that students are assigned housing based on their biological sex, are prohibited from engaging in sexual immorality, and preserve the privacy of bedrooms from opposite-sex visitors. Housing policies should support chastity.

Instructional material policies for schools ensure that students are not exposed to materials that are an affront to purity; do not include explicit discussion, presentation, or description of sexuality, sexual activity, or sexual fantasy; and are not a proximate cause of sinful thoughts or actions. The policies ensure that all human sexuality materials are carefully vetted for complete fidelity to Church teachings, taught by qualified committed Catholics, targeted to the appropriate age and developmental stage of the student, respect a child’s latency period, and are available in advance to parents who choose to opt their student out of the program.

Mission integrity policies ensure that the institution exercises its responsibility to teach Catholic faith and morals in all fullness and especially as expressed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. These policies should also articulate that openly hostile, public defiance and challenge of Catholic truths or morality are signs that a student, parent, staff member, or faculty member may not be a good fit for a Catholic institution’s primary evangelical mission.

Nondiscrimination policies, crafted together with legal counsel to protect students and employees, should assert the institution’s Catholic identity and legal right to act according to its religious beliefs; avoid terms that can be broadly or falsely interpreted in ways that conflict with Catholic teaching, especially with regard to sexual identity; and stick to the minimal language required by law to avoid unnecessary legal implications.

Public displays of affection policies maintain a professional atmosphere of learning and for K-12 schools prohibit romantic displays of affection, such as romantic hugging, kissing, and handholding.

Same-sex attraction policies emphasize that because the Catholic Church teaches that same-sex attraction is inherently disordered⁴⁰ and that sexual activity is only appropriate for the purposes of love and life within Holy Matrimony,⁴¹ individuals experiencing this disordered inclination are called to a life of chastity and may not advocate, celebrate, or express the disordered

⁴⁰ *Catechism* 2357.

⁴¹ *Catechism* 2360.

inclination in the context of classes, activities, or events. Such policies should use the term “same-sex attraction” in discussing homosexual inclinations, since there is only one proper sexual orientation: that which orients a man to a woman in the bonds of matrimony.

Sexual harassment policies, crafted together with legal counsel to protect students and employees, use language that upholds Catholic anthropology and morality.

Sexual identity policies clarify that the institution will provide pastoral care for any student working through challenges related to the integration of their sexual identity but will interact with students according to their biological sex as based upon physical differences at birth and will direct students to work with their parents, pastor, and other trained licensed professionals who might best assist them in clarifying and defining issues of self (and sexual) identity in accord with Catholic teaching and natural law.

Single-sex program policies allow for participation of students in particular activities based on their biological sex.

Speaker policies ensure that speaker presentations do not conflict with Catholic teaching and a Catholic worldview.

Student clubs policies ensure that all student clubs operate based on a Christian anthropology of the human person, and that no clubs advocate or celebrate gender transitioning or sexual behavior contrary to Church teaching.

Student pregnancy policies commit to helping a student-parent re-establish a life of chastity, prohibit abortion, and support students in their affirmation of the gift of life under all circumstances.

Third-party vendor policies regulate the hiring of outside contractors (such as after-school providers, Title II tutors, and counseling services) to ensure that their programs and personnel do not work against the educative and formative mission of Catholic education.

Possible Questions

Question: Don’t we need to be concerned about illegally discriminating against those who identify as “LGBTQ”?

Response: Under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and America’s tradition of respect for the natural right of religious freedom, faith-based institutions have a legal right to base hiring, admittance, and other decisions on clearly articulated and consistently applied faith and moral criteria. Increasingly, however, religious freedom has been threatened by local, state, and federal measures, and conflicts with government authorities or lawsuits by employees and students may bring serious challenges. Catholic educators can and must defend their religious

freedom and, more importantly, must never violate the mission of Catholic education by compromising Catholic teaching on human sexuality.

Question: Even though it's not illegal, isn't it unjust and uncharitable not to conform to the wishes and behaviors of those who identify as "LGBTQ"?

Response: Relating to students and employees truthfully and with desire for their moral growth and purity is charitable and just. Catholic education strives to serve and respect the human dignity of all members of its communities. It does not single out anyone for correction, but it justly addresses concerns about sexual morality in accord with the gravity of the situation and the degree of scandal to its students. Catholic educational institutions have a right to expect employees and students to adhere to a code of conduct designed to create an educational environment capable of effectively carrying out Catholic formation and faith-based education. Publicly unchaste or scandalous behavior, or the presentation of sinful behavior as a good to be pursued, works against this mission.

Question: We don't dismiss "heterosexual" students who are unchaste, so why do we seem to have a double standard for those who identify as "LGBTQ"?

Response: In fact, Catholic educators should be prepared to dismiss any student whose unchaste behavior is scandalous to other students and who is unlikely to be reconciled to Christ by conformity to Catholic teaching. An isolated non-scandalous incident of unchastity is usually not enough for removal, but an especially scandalous incident may require dismissal, as may repeated and persistent activity. Catholic educators must make distinctions between a student who falls while striving for chastity and a student who claims that unchaste activity is not a sin and acts, celebrates, or publicly encourages others to act accordingly.

Question: Don't politeness, respect, and civility require addressing transgendered people by their preferred names and pronouns and allowing them to present as whatever gender they wish?

Response: In an entirely adult environment, there may be some logic to this approach, given the complex social fabric of the modern adult world and adults' heightened ability to distinguish between labels and the true nature of the human person. Still, embracing a false perception of a person is unhealthy for the individual and for observers, and the potential for scandal must be weighed against the demands of civility. Our focus here is on Catholic educational institutions intended for young people; they seek to integrally form students harmoniously in mind, body, and spirit, and encouraging or accommodating gender dysphoria works against this goal. Significant data also shows that about 80 percent of youth experiencing gender dysphoria see the inclinations dissipate in adulthood.⁴² In addition, Catholic teachers are in the truth-telling

⁴² Riittakerttu Kaltiala-Heino et al. "Gender Dysphoria in Adolescence: Current Perspectives," *Adolescent Health, Medicine and Therapeutics*, Vol. 9 (March 2018) 31-41.

business and cannot blindly support student error, which in this case is a disconnect between the mind and reality.

Question: Since studies show that “LGBTQ” identifying students suffer higher rates of depression and often feel they are socially excluded, should Catholic schools and colleges actively promote “LGBTQ” support groups, “LGBTQ” pride groups, and groups of “LGBTQ” allies?

Response: Catholic schools and colleges should be prepared to offer discreet and robust pastoral services to students who may be struggling with sexuality, but public support groups on campus are inappropriate, as they may prematurely encourage a student to ascribe to a temporary struggle or attraction to a lasting sense of personal identity. They could lead peers to pigeon-hole a student into a category of errant sexuality. Additionally, such support groups, especially if tied to national “LGBTQ” movements, embrace a false notion of the human person and human sexuality which is antithetical to a Christian anthropology, and therefore they are harmful to the students we are trying to integrally form in truth and love.

This document was developed with substantial comment and contributions from education, legal, and other experts. Lead authors are Denise Donohue, Ed.D., Director of the Catholic Education Honor Roll at The Cardinal Newman Society, and Dan Guernsey, Ed.D., Senior Fellow at The Cardinal Newman Society and principal of a diocesan K-12 Catholic school.

Appendix A: Examples of Diocesan and School Policies

This Appendix includes examples of policies in use at the time of publication. These are presented in alphabetical order by category and are not necessarily exemplary in all possible areas.

Chastity

Marian High School, Mishawaka, Ind.

The Catholic school upholds and supports God's plan for sexual relations by promoting chastity and a respect for human life. Sexual union is intended by God to express the complete gift of self that a man and a woman make to one another in marriage, a mutual gift that opens them to the gift of a child. Therefore, all students are expected to live a chaste lifestyle and to abstain from sexual relations.

Gender Identity

Catholic Bishops of Minnesota⁴³

Application of Guiding Principles

The aforementioned Guiding Principles are practically applied in Catholic schools. Catholic schools in the Diocese of [insert] will relate to each student in a way that is respectful of and consistent with each student's God-given sexual identity and biological sex. To this end, below are some examples of how these Guiding Principles apply to organizations that teach children and youth in the name of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of [insert]:

1. All school policies, procedures, resources, employee training, and assistance given to families are consistent with the Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person, including human sexuality. Reflective of a commitment to a culture of transparency and understanding, these policies will be made available in writing to members of the school community by way of inclusion in relevant handbooks, agreements, and statements.
2. Student's name and pronouns usage will correspond to his/her sexual identity (see definitions).
3. Student access to facilities and overnight accommodations will align with his/her sexual identity.
4. Eligibility for single-sex curricular and extracurricular activities is based on the sexual identity of the child.
5. Expressions of a student's sexual identity are prohibited when they cause disruption or confusion regarding the Church's teaching on human sexuality.

⁴³ Full text can be found at <http://www.mncatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/20.0304-Sexual-Identity-Guiding-Principles-FINAL.pdf> (accessed 5/20/20). See also the Diocese of Little Rock, AR. Policies and Procedures Manual (2019) found at https://www.dolr.org/sites/default/files/documents/policy_manual_students_20.pdf (accessed 5/20/20) #4.40 for excellent wording and citations.

6. The consciences of students and employees will be respected with the assurance of their inviolable right to the acknowledgement that God has created each person as a unity of body and soul, male or female, and that God-designed sexual expression and behavior must be exclusively oriented to love and life in marriage between one man and one woman.
7. Schools communicate with parents or guardians about their child's behavior at school and inform them of any concerns relating to the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual health, safety, or welfare of their child, except when advised otherwise by law enforcement or a social service agency.

Definitions

1. Sex refers to a person's biological identification as male or female based upon physical characteristics present at birth.
2. Sexual identity refers to a person's identity as male or female that is congruent with one's sex.
3. Sexual binary refers to the God-given gift of the human family created male or female in the image and likeness of God.
4. Transgender or gender non-conforming is an adjective describing a person who perceives his or her sexual identity to be different from his or her sex and publicly presents himself or herself as the opposite sex or outside the sexual binary. Such public expressions that are intended to communicate a sexual identity different from one's sex include, but are not limited to, utilizing pronouns of the opposite sex, changing one's name to reflect the cultural norms of the opposite sex, wearing a uniform designated for the opposite sex, and undergoing surgery to change the appearance of one's reproductive or sexual anatomy.

Diocese of Springfield in Illinois⁴⁴

§650.1 General Policy Concerning Gender Identity

While the Church has a duty to teach the truth about the human person (anthropology) and human sexuality, and incorporate this teaching into her policies and procedures, the Church has compassion and empathy toward all her members who suffer from confusion about their identity, including their sexual or gender identity.

650.1. Policy: It is the policy of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois that all Catholic agencies, including parishes, schools, institutions, departments, or other entities, shall respect the biological sex with which a person is born and shall apply all policies and procedures in relation to that person according to that person's biological sex at birth.

Procedures: *(portions omitted)*

- c) Examples of this policy in practice include the following:
 1. All persons will be addressed and referred to with pronouns in accord with their biological sex;

⁴⁴ Full text can be found at <https://www.dio.org/policy-book/77-650-gender-identity/file.html> (accessed 5/20/20).

2. All correspondence, documents, and records will reflect the subject person's biological sex;
 3. All persons will use bathrooms and locker rooms that correspond with their biological sex while on Diocesan or Parish property.
- d) The Diocese also supports and encourages counseling for those who suffer from or are diagnosed with gender dysphoria by licensed counselors or other medical professionals who hold a correct Christian anthropology of the human person and who understand and adhere to Catholic teaching.
- e) While the Catholic Church does not support transgender therapies and/or surgeries that assist a person in "transitioning" his or her gender, the Church recognizes that appropriate medical care may be necessary in rare cases of true genetic or physical anomalies, such as hermaphroditism or intersex.

§650.2. Specific Policy Concerning Employees and Volunteers

650.2 Policy. Employees and volunteers are expected to live virtuous lives guided by Gospel values and the teaching of the Church. Employees and volunteers shall conduct themselves in accord with their biological sex at all times. Likewise, all employees and volunteers shall perform their duties, and tailor their interactions with other persons, in accord with the Diocese's general policy concerning gender identity (650.1).

Procedures:

- a) Examples of this policy in practice include the following:
1. All employees and volunteers will be addressed and referred to with pronouns in accord with their biological sex;
 2. All employee or volunteer correspondence, documents, and records will reflect the employee's or volunteer's biological sex;
 3. All employees and volunteers will use bathrooms that correspond with their biological sex while on Diocesan or Parish property.
- b) Violation of this policy by any employee may include immediate corrective action, suspension, and possible termination of employment.
- c) Violation of this policy by any volunteer may include immediate corrective action, suspension, and possible termination of volunteer status.

§650.3 Specific Policy Concerning Students

650.3. Policy. Students and their parents are expected to live virtuous lives guided by Gospel values and the teaching of the Church as described in the Family School Agreement (BK3§404.1). Students shall conduct themselves in accord with their biological sex at all times.

Procedures:

- a) A student diagnosed with gender dysphoria should not be denied admission to a Catholic school as long as the student and his or her parents agree that the child will abide by the Family School Agreement and this policy.
- b) Respectful, critical questioning of Catholic teaching in the classroom is encouraged as long as its intent is to help the student progress toward greater awareness and understanding.
- c) Examples of this policy in practice include the following:
 1. All students and their parents will be addressed and referred to with pronouns in accord with their biological sex;
 2. All school correspondence, documents, and records will reflect the student or parent's biological sex;
 3. Students will participate in competitive athletics in accord with their biological sex;
 4. Catholic schools will not allow, or otherwise cooperate in, the administration of puberty-blocking or cross-sex hormones on school property;
 5. All students will use bathrooms and locker rooms that correspond with their biological sex. Students who have been clinically diagnosed with gender dysphoria, however, may request the use of a single-person, unisex facility. Such requests will be assessed on an individual basis by the appropriate school administrator.
- d) A student of any Catholic school who insists, or whose parents insist, on open hostility toward, or defiance of, Church teaching, or who otherwise intentionally violate this policy, may be expelled from the school pursuant to this policy and the provisions of BK3§404.1.3.

Diocese of Steubenville

Policies regarding Transgender Students in Catholic Schools

1. In Catholic schools of the Diocese of Steubenville, all curricular and extra-curricular activity is to be rooted in, and consistent with, the principles of Catholic doctrine.
2. Catholic schools, and individuals employed with Catholic schools, shall not sponsor, facilitate or host such organizations, events or activities that would promote views contrary to Catholic doctrine regarding human sexuality and gender, either on or off the school campus, or through social media.
3. Students enrolled in Catholic schools who suffer from gender dysphoria shall be treated with sensitivity, respect, mercy, and compassion.
4. The sexual identity of students enrolled in Catholic schools shall be in accordance to the student's biological sex, as determined by an original state issued birth certificate (or an official copy thereof).
5. Catholic schools shall:

- a) Require that participation on/in school athletic teams and all other school sponsored extra-curricular activities, where applicable (*i.e.*, *school dances*) be in accordance with biological sex.
 - b) Require that the use of names and pronouns be in accordance with the person's biological sex.
 - c) Designate Catholic sex education, school and athletic uniforms, and appropriate dress, bathrooms, locker rooms, showers, and sleeping accommodations on trips according to biological sex.
 - d) Maintain names in school records according to the student's biological sex.
 - e) Provide reasonable accommodation to a private bathroom for use by any student who desires increased privacy.
6. In the case of a specific request, the school shall consider in a compassionate way, on a case-by-case basis, the physical and psychological needs of a student based on the following questions:
- a) What is the specific request of the student and/or parent?
 - b) Is the request in keeping with the teaching of the Catholic Church?
 - c) Is the school reasonably able to accommodate the request?

Schools shall make a reasonable effort to inform and instruct school personnel, parents, and students (where appropriate) concerning these policies. School personnel shall be made aware of "Exhibit B.1" (*Catechetical Statement*) regarding students who identify as transgender. Parents and high school grade students shall read and sign Exhibit B.2 upon enrollment in a Catholic school.

Modesty in Dress

Holy Family Academy, Manchester, N.H.

As the body reflects the soul, so one's dress reflects one's attitudes. Modesty is crucial in the dress of each student: dressing with dignity is uplifting, it encourages growth in virtue and character, and prepares the student to engage in the noble activity of liberal education. As such, students are always neat, clean, and well-groomed while at school and at all school-related functions. At all school events, it is important that students keep in mind that they serve as ambassadors of Holy Family Academy in the larger community.

The Highlands School, Irving, Tex.

Pope St. John Paul II called modesty the boundary that protects "the intimate center of the person." Dances and all school sponsored events (sports banquets, other social activities) should reflect the philosophy of our school (Blazer Spirit) and the moral teachings of the Catholic faith. Out of respect for their own dignity and others' as children of God and temples of the Holy Spirit, The Highlands School asks all students and guests to dress with modesty, following school guidelines.

Pregnancy

Bishop England High School, Charleston, S.C.

Pro-Life Policy: It is understood that we, as Catholic educators, are convinced of the value and dignity of human life. We hold a pro-life stance which enables us to bring to our students the realization that a Christian code of morality based on the Gospel should give their lives direction and that thorough instruction should help them understand their own sexuality. While we do not condone contraception or premarital sex, once a young couple becomes responsible for the conceiving of human life, we believe every effort must be made and every measure must be taken to preserve this life. In all instances, the student(s) will be treated with charity. In keeping with these beliefs, the following guidelines will be applied whenever female or male students become involved in a pregnancy:

1. As soon as possible after learning of the pregnancy, the student(s) and their parents will meet with the Principal to inform the school of the situation.
2. A female student will obtain a medical statement from her doctor giving her due date and her medical fitness to remain in school. The statement must include any medical problems of which the school should be aware. When it is deemed necessary by the administration, she will proceed to an alternative educational program. At that time, the male student will also proceed to an alternative educational program.
3. Female and male students must follow a bona fide program of counseling which their church or other religious support agency offers. The name of the counselor must be given to the Principal.
4. During the time of the pregnancy and after the birth, participation for both the mother and the father in all co-curricular activities, as well as graduation, is at the discretion of the Principal.
5. After the birth, the students and their parents must schedule an interview with the school administration to determine the feasibility and conditions of returning to school.

In addition, we believe that abortion at any stage of pregnancy is the taking of the life of an innocent human person. Therefore, a female student who attempts to procure an abortion or a male student who enables this attempt must withdraw from the school immediately.

Academy of Our Lady, Marrero, La.

A young woman's life is forever changed with the conception and birth of a child. Her new condition takes precedence even over her role as a student. In order to foster a complete "pro-life" stance, when a pregnancy becomes known the parent/guardian(s) and student must inform the principal, and the student will be required to follow the guidelines set out by the Archdiocese of New Orleans. In accordance with Archdiocesan policy, the student may be allowed to return to Academy of Our Lady after the birth of her child if she agrees to abide by the conditions for returning and remaining in school. The administration will meet with the student and her parents/guardians to explain the conditions for returning and remaining in school. The principal determines attendance at school functions. A student who does not disclose her pregnancy to school administration and continues to attend classes is subject to immediate dismissal.

Same-Sex Attraction Policy

Archdiocese of New Orleans

The Archdiocese of New Orleans respects and follows the teachings of the Catholic Church as we minister to youth who face the complexity of cultural and personal issues of today. As they grow in their understanding of their identity and sexuality, we will provide guidance and parameters founded on the truth that they, as male and female, are created in the image of God and redeemed by Jesus. We will teach respect for the dignity of the human person, recognizing the importance of chastity as we guide our youth in discovering their identity as children of God. We will not tolerate hatred or bullying at any level in our parish or school programs. We set boundaries and policies that help us teach young people to live with relational integrity, showing respect for themselves and one another. Out of respect for the confidentiality of our students and their families, we will not address specific questions regarding a parish/school situation. We will continue to minister to our youth and members of their families during times of struggle as they develop in their understanding of their identity and sexuality.

Appendix B: Selections from Church Documents Informing This Topic

Bodily Integrity

The human body shares in the dignity of “the image of God”: it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit:

Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity. Through his very bodily condition he sums up in himself the elements of the material world. Through him they are thus brought to their highest perfection and can raise their voice in praise freely given to the Creator. For this reason man may not despise his bodily life. Rather he is obliged to regard his body as good and to hold it in honor since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 364.

The Holy Scripture reveals the wisdom of the Creator’s design, which “has assigned as a task to man his body, his masculinity and femininity; and that in masculinity and femininity he, in a way, assigned to him as a task his humanity, the dignity of the person, and also the clear sign of the interpersonal communion in which man fulfils himself through the authentic gift of himself.” Thus, *human nature* must be understood on the basis of the *unity of body and soul*, far removed from any sort of physicalism or naturalism...

Congregation for Catholic Education, *Male and Female He Created Them: Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education* (2019) 32.

Sexuality affects all aspect of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concern affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others.

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2332.

By creating the human being man and woman, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity.

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2393.

In [St.] Paul’s eyes, it is not only the human spirit...that decides the dignity of the human body. But even more so it is the supernatural reality [of] the indwelling and continual presence of the Holy Spirit in man—in his soul and in his body—as the fruit of the redemption carried out by Christ. It follows that man’s body is no longer just his own. It deserves that respect whose manifestation in the mutual conduct of man, male and female, constitutes the virtue of purity.

Pope St. John Paul II, General Audience, *The Virtue of Purity Is the Expression and Fruit of Life According to the Spirit* (February 11, 1981) 3.

A sexual education that fosters a healthy sense of modesty has immense value, however much some people nowadays consider modesty a relic of a bygone era. Modesty is a natural means whereby we defend our personal privacy and prevent ourselves from being turned into objects to be used. Without a sense of modesty, affection and sexuality can be reduced to an obsession with genitality and

unhealthy behaviours that distort our capacity for love, and with forms of sexual violence that lead to inhuman treatment or cause hurt to others.

Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (2016) 282.

Yet the contemporary way of exalting the body is deceptive. Eros, reduced to pure “sex,” has become a commodity, a mere “thing” to be bought and sold, or rather, man himself becomes a commodity. This is hardly man’s great “yes” to the body. On the contrary, he now considers his body and his sexuality as the purely material part of himself, to be used and exploited at will.

Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* (2005) 5.

...human sexuality [is] being regarded more as an area for manipulation and exploitation than as the basis of the primordial wonder which led Adam on the morning of creation to exclaim before Eve: “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Gen 2:23).

Pope St. John Paul II, *Letter to the Families* (1994) 19.

Frequently, sex education deals primarily with “protection” through the practice of “safe sex.” Such expressions convey a negative attitude towards the natural procreative finality of sexuality, as if an eventual child were an enemy to be protected against. This way of thinking promotes narcissism and aggressivity in place of acceptance. It is always irresponsible to invite adolescents to toy with their bodies and their desires, as if they possessed the maturity, values, mutual commitment and goals proper to marriage. They end up being blithely encouraged to use other persons as a means of fulfilling their needs or limitations. The important thing is to teach them sensitivity to different expressions of love, mutual concern and care, loving respect and deeply meaningful communication. All of these prepare them for an integral and generous gift of self that will be expressed, following a public commitment, in the gift of their bodies. Sexual union in marriage will thus appear as a sign of an all-inclusive commitment, enriched by everything that has preceded it.

Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (2016) 283.

Sexual Complementarity

Man and woman have been created, which is to say, willed by God: on the one hand, in perfect equality as human persons; on the other, in their respective beings as man and woman. “Being man” and “being woman” is a reality which is good and willed by God: man and woman possess an inalienable dignity which comes to them immediately from God their Creator. Man and woman are both with one and the same dignity “in the image of God.” In their “being-man” and “being-woman,” they reflect the Creator’s wisdom and goodness.

Catechism of the Catholic Church 369.

Sexuality, by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, is not something simply biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such. It is realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and woman commit themselves totally to one another until death.

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2361.

Sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman. In marriage the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sign and pledge of spiritual communion. Marriage bonds between baptized persons are sanctified by the sacrament.

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2360.

Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out.

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2333.

Homosexuality refers to relations between men or women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2357.

Connected with *de facto* unions is the particular problem concerning demands for the legal recognition of unions between homosexual persons, which is increasingly the topic of public debate. Only an anthropology corresponding to the full truth of the human person can give an appropriate response to this problem with its different aspects on both the societal and ecclesial levels. The light of such anthropology reveals "how incongruous is the demand to accord 'marital' status to unions between persons of the same sex. It is opposed, first of all, by the objective impossibility of making the partnership fruitful through the transmission of life according to the plan inscribed by God in the very structure of the human being. Another obstacle is the absence of the conditions for that interpersonal complementarity between male and female willed by the Creator at both the physical-biological and the eminently psychological levels. It is only in the union of two sexually different persons that the individual can achieve perfection in a synthesis of unity and mutual psychophysical completion." Homosexual persons are to be fully respected in their human dignity and encouraged to follow God's plan with particular attention in the exercise of chastity. This duty calling for respect does not justify the legitimization of behaviour that is not consistent with moral law, even less does it justify the recognition of a right to marriage between persons of the same sex and its being considered equivalent to the family.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2004) 228.

The complementarity of man and woman, the pinnacle of divine creation, is being questioned by the so-called gender ideology, in the name of a more free and just society. The differences between man and woman are not for opposition or subordination, but for communion and generation, always in the "image and likeness" of God.

Pope Francis, *Address to the Bishops of Puerto Rico* (June 8, 2015).

The Christian vision of man is, in fact, a great “yes” to the dignity of persons called to an intimate filial communion of humility and faithfulness. The human being is not a self-sufficient individual nor an anonymous element in the group. Rather he is a unique and unrepeatable person, intrinsically ordered to relationships and sociability. Thus the Church reaffirms her great “yes” to the dignity and beauty of marriage as an expression of the faithful and generous bond between man and woman, and her no to “gender” philosophies, because the reciprocity between male and female is an expression of the beauty of nature willed by the Creator.

Pope Benedict XVI, *Address to the Pontifical Council “Cor Unum”* (January 19, 2013).

Femininity in some way finds itself before masculinity, while masculinity confirms itself through femininity. Precisely the function of sex [that is, being male or female], which in some way is “constitutive for the person” (not only “an attribute of the person”), shows how deeply man, with all his spiritual solitude, with the uniqueness and unrepeatability proper to the person, is constituted by the body as “he” or “she.”

Pope St. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. M. Waldstein, (Pauline Books and Media, 2006) 10:1.

There is a need to reaffirm the metaphysical roots of sexual difference, as an anthropological refutation of attempts to negate the male-female duality of human nature, from which the family is generated. The denial of this duality not only erases the vision of human beings as the fruit of an act of creation but creates the idea of the human person as a sort of abstraction who “chooses for himself what his nature is to be. Man and woman in their created state as complementary versions of what it means to be human are disputed. But if there is no pre-ordained duality of man and woman in creation, then neither is the family any longer a reality established by creation. Likewise, the child has lost the place he had occupied hitherto and the dignity pertaining to him.”

Congregation for Catholic Education, *Male and Female He Created Them* (2019) 34.

Social Ideology

These words lay the foundation for what is put forward today under the term “gender” as a new philosophy of sexuality. According to this philosophy, sex is no longer a given element of nature that man has to accept and personally make sense of: it is a social role that we choose for ourselves, while in the past it was chosen for us by society. The profound falsehood of this theory and of the anthropological revolution contained within it is obvious. People dispute the idea that they have a nature, given by their bodily identity, that serves as a defining element of the human being. They deny their nature and decide that it is not something previously given to them, but that they make it for themselves.

Pope Benedict XVI, *Address to the Roman Curia* (December 21, 2012).

The process of identifying sexual identity is made more difficult by the fictitious construct known as “gender neuter” or “third gender,” which has the effect of obscuring the fact that a person’s sex is a structural determinant of male or female identity. Efforts to go beyond the constitutive male-female sexual difference, such as the ideas of “intersex” or “transgender,” lead to a masculinity or femininity

that is ambiguous, even though (in a self-contradictory way), these concepts themselves actually presuppose the very sexual difference that they propose to negate or supersede.

Congregation for Catholic Education, *Male and Female He Created Them* (2019) 25.

In this perspective [i.e., that of gender ideology], physical difference, termed sex, is minimized, while the purely cultural element, termed gender, is emphasized to the maximum and held to be primary. The obscuring of the difference or duality of the sexes has enormous consequences on a variety of levels. This theory of the human person, intended to promote prospects for equality of women through liberation from biological determinism, has in reality inspired ideologies which, for example, call into question the family, in its natural two-parent structure of mother and father, and make homosexuality and heterosexuality virtually equivalent, in a new model of polymorphous sexuality.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (2004) 2.

The profound falsehood of this theory and the anthropological revolution contained within are obvious. People dispute the idea that they have a nature, given by their bodily identity, that serves as a defining element of the human being. They deny their nature and decide that it is not something previously given to them, but that they make it for themselves. According to the Biblical creation account, being created by God as male and female pertains to the essence of the human creature. This duality is an essential aspect of what being human is all about, as ordained by God. This very duality as something given is now disputed. The words “male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27) no longer apply. No, what now applies is this: it was not God who created them male and female—hitherto society did this, now we decide for ourselves.

Pope Benedict XVI, *Address on the Occasion of Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia* (December 21, 2012).

Yet another challenge is posed by the various forms of an ideology of gender that “denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family. This ideology leads to educational programmes and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female. Consequently, human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time.” It is a source of concern that some ideologies of this sort, which seek to respond to what are at times understandable aspirations, manage to assert themselves as absolute and unquestionable, even dictating how children should be raised. It needs to be emphasized that “biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated.” ...It is one thing to be understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life, and another to accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality. Let us not fall into the sin of trying to replace the Creator. We are creatures, and not omnipotent. Creation is prior to us and must be received as a gift. At the same time, we are called to protect our humanity, and this means, in the first place, accepting it and respecting it as it was created.

Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (2016) 56.

The crisis of the family is a societal fact. There are also ideological colonializations of the family, different paths and proposals in Europe and also coming from overseas. Then, there is the mistake of the human mind—gender theory—creating so much confusion.

Pope Francis, *Pastoral Visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to Pompeii and Naples* (March 21, 2015).

The underlying presuppositions of these theories can be traced back to a *dualistic anthropology* separating body (reduced to the status of inert matter) from human will, which itself becomes an absolute that can manipulate the body as it pleases. This combination of physicalism and voluntarism gives rise to relativism, in which everything that exists is of equal value and at the same time undifferentiated, without any real order or purpose...The effect of this move is chiefly to create a cultural and ideological revolution driven by relativism...

Congregation for Catholic Education, *Male and Female He Created Them* (2019) 20.

Faced with theories that consider gender identity as merely the cultural and social product of the interaction between the community and the individual, independent of personal sexual identity without any reference to the true meaning of sexuality, the Church does not tire of repeating her teaching: "Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral and spiritual difference and complementarities are oriented towards the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life...." According to this perspective, it is obligatory that positive law be conformed to the natural law, according to which sexual identity is indispensable, because it is the objective condition for forming a couple in marriage. [Emphasis in original and internal citation omitted.]

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2004) 224.

In the process that could be described as the gradual cultural and human de-structuring of the institution of marriage, the spread of a certain ideology of "gender" should not be underestimated. According to this ideology, being a man or a woman is not determined fundamentally by sex but by culture. Therefore, the bases of the family and inter-personal relationships are attacked.

Pontifical Council for the Family, *Family, Marriage and "De Facto" Unions* (2000) 8.