

Diocese of Madison Policy on the Human Person: Authentic Human Anthropology, Sexuality, Chastity, and Marriage

In light of divine revelation and natural law, the Catholic Church teaches the beautiful truth of the human person and sexuality that leads to the fullness of authentic freedom and human flourishing. Throughout history, however, the perennial teaching of Christ and the Church regarding human anthropology, sexuality, chastity, and marriage has been challenged in various ways. The Church always distinguishes among the inherent dignity of every human person, the goodness or harmfulness of individual human actions and behavior, and the false ideologies that arise in cultures that harm the human person and the common good. Thus, out of a deep sense of pastoral care and concern for the holiness, health, and happiness of all people in the Diocese of Madison, the following policy guidance is given. The intention of this policy is, first of all, to care for and protect young people, who are often most susceptible to moral manipulation and social influence, and to help them discover and live their bodily existence as a gift, as well as to protect the broader community from all scandal (i.e., an attitude or behavior that leads another to do evil). With this policy, the Diocese of Madison also seeks, without condemnation, to listen to, to accompany, and to teach everyone who is struggling with the challenging issue of human sexuality and its expression in his or her life, especially young people and their parents. This policy is also intended to assist those who lead our Catholic institutions as they serve their communities in a truly Catholic way. Although a policy can never fully encapsulate the Church's loving concern for and desire to protect, bless, and assist everyone to know the Truth which sets us free (John 8:32), it does call us as leaders, teachers, and parents to embrace that Truth so as to live in the freedom of the children of God (John 8:36).

Human Anthropology and Sexuality

All human persons are created male or female as a body-soul unity whose innate male or female sexuality is reflected in the person's biology. This is objectively observable. When we meet someone, one of the first things we typically know about that person is whether the person is male or female. Additionally, when we study human cells, we can discern whether they are male or female. Sacred Scripture confirms what we see in nature and reveals that being male or being female is a gift from God (see Genesis 5:1-2, "When God created human beings, he made them in the likeness of God; he created them male and female."). The Church has always believed and taught that a person's sex, male or female, is a constitutive part of who that person is as created in the image and likeness of God. A particular person does not merely *have* a body: rather, he or she *is* his or her body and soul. In the words of Pope St. John Paul II, the "human body expresses the person." Everyone, man and woman, is called to acknowledge and accept his or her human sexuality.

Chastity and Marriage

Chastity is the virtue that allows us, regardless of our state in life, to do what is right, good, and loving in the area of sexuality and relationships by governing our sexual desires. The Church has

always called all people to chastity, which blossoms into and expresses itself in friendship. This friendship of chastity is a great good for all and leads to spiritual communion. Most people are called to live chastely in marriage, which is a union between one man and one woman, with marital fidelity, indissolubility, and openness to children. For those who are not married, living out a life of chastity requires total abstinence from sexual activity. For all persons, whether married or unmarried, being chaste means not only refraining from non-marital sexual activity, but also not acting on any other sexual disorder or irregularity that violates the natural moral law for the human person and one's baptismal call to chastity and which does not reflect Christ, "the model for all chastity."

Integral Nature of Catholic Teaching

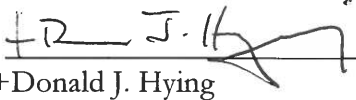
Catholic teaching has an essential unity with an interior coherence, and thus the response of faith does not allow for some particular element of Catholic teaching to be isolated, ignored, or over-emphasized to the detriment of the whole of Catholic teaching. This integral nature of Catholic doctrine extends to Catholic teaching on the moral life, including concern for scandal given by individuals or institutions (see Catechism of the Catholic Church, §§2284-2287), because of the Church's solicitude for the dignity of every human person. Indeed, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a unified whole such that the truth about the dignity of the human person and society might be proclaimed and put into action for the authentic development and virtuous integrity of the human person and the flourishing of human society. As Pope Francis said, "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 freer 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. Without mutual self-giving, neither one can understand the other in depth."

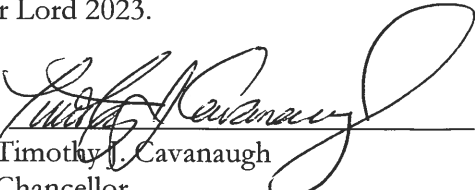
Promulgation

Mindful of my duty to propose and explain the truths of the faith and their application to morals, to protect the integrity and unity of the faith, to promote the common discipline of the Church, and to foster and coordinate apostolic action within the Diocese entrusted to me, I, the undersigned Bishop of Madison, promulgate the following policy as a general executory decree for the Diocese of Madison;

While many aspects of this policy are simple applications of the natural law and are therefore already binding everywhere, the policy will take legal effect on January 1, 2024, and will bind for all diocesan and parochial entities and apostolates, including the diocesan curia and its related offices, parishes, parish schools, and other parish apostolates, groups, and organizations, and is to be reviewed two years after they enter legal force.

Given at Madison this 21st day of November, in the year of our Lord 2023.


+Donald J. Hying
Bishop of Madison


Timothy J. Cavanaugh
Chancellor

**Policy Concerning the Diocese of Madison, Its Affiliates,
Its Parishes, and Its Schools**

1. The Catholic Church is the mystical body of Christ.¹ It is an intentional community of Christian believers, who live, work, and love according to God's call in their lives to make the living Christ present in the world today. To effectively make God's love present in the world, the Church and her members have established numerous apostolates and entities, all working toward perfect charity according to their particular charisms. For many non-Catholics, interactions with Catholic apostolates and entities may be their only experience of or encounter with the Church. It is therefore crucial that Catholic entities always communicate the entirety of the Gospel message in its integrity of Truth and Charity and to avoid all occasions of confusion and scandal.

Accordingly, all public ecclesiastical entities within the Diocese of Madison that are fully and immediately subject to the canonical governance of the diocesan bishop (including the diocese itself, the parishes of the diocese, and all affiliated organizations, departments, apostolates, schools, and subdivisions thereof) shall uphold the integrated teachings of the Catholic Church on human anthropology, sexuality, chastity, and marriage, at all times, as authentically taught and authoritatively interpreted by the Bishop of Madison. In particular:

- 1.1. They shall not engage in, sponsor, or permit on their premises advocacy against the integrated Catholic teachings on human anthropology, marriage, sexual identity, and human sexuality; nor shall Catholic entities engage in the celebration of lifestyles, "gender identity" claims, or sexual relationships inconsistent with the integrated Catholic teachings on human anthropology, sexuality, chastity, and marriage. This includes a prohibition on asking for or stating "preferred pronouns" in entity-related contexts or communications.
- 1.2. They shall at all times respect the biological sex of each human person as given by God and shall apply all policies and procedures in relation to each person according to that person's God-given biological sex.
- 1.3. Official documents of public ecclesiastical entities subject to the canonical governance of the diocesan bishop shall be issued in conformity with the person's biological sex as based upon physical differences at birth. If a person legally changes his/her name, for whatever reason, and requests new versions of his/her official documents, the official documents may be issued in the following format: "Original Name, a.k.a. New Legal Name."

¹ *Mystici Corporis Christi* (1943).

**Policy Concerning Personnel of the Diocese of Madison, Its Affiliates,
Its Parishes, and Its Schools**

2. Individual Catholics are members of Christ's mystical body, the Church, and our Catholic institutions are intentional communities made up of individual people, who carry on the Church's evangelistic and redemptive mission. Each person is called to play a crucial and unique role in helping the Church make the living Christ present in the world. Indeed, all persons are called to live holy lives that reflect and share God's love with everyone they encounter.² It is therefore necessary that the individuals associated with Catholic institutions support, profess, and model the Church's teachings.

All clergy and employees of all public ecclesiastical entities within the Diocese of Madison that are fully and immediately subject to the canonical governance of the diocesan bishop (including the diocese itself, the parishes of the diocese, and all affiliated organizations, departments, apostolates, schools, and subdivisions thereof), shall conduct and present themselves in accord with all of the Catholic Church's integrated teachings on human anthropology, sexuality, chastity, and marriage as authentically taught and authoritatively interpreted by the Bishop of Madison, especially since such roles, by their very nature, necessarily involve supporting, professing, and modeling the Church's teachings. In particular:

- 2.1. They shall conduct and present themselves in accord with their God-given biological sex.
- 2.2. If unmarried, they shall not cohabit with any romantic partner.
- 2.3. If married, they shall not enter into any extra-marital cohabitation with a romantic partner.
- 2.4. If civilly divorced or separated, they shall not enter into nor remain in any new sexual relationship or cohabitation except within a new marriage entered into according to the laws of the Church following the Church's determination that they are free to marry, e.g., due to the death of their first spouse or a declaration of nullity of their previous union(s).
- 2.5. They shall not enter into or engage in any same-sex romantic partnerships.
- 2.6. They shall not teach, advocate, model, support or in any way encourage beliefs and behaviors that are contrary to the integrated teachings of the Catholic Church regarding faith and morals, especially in matters of human anthropology, sexuality, chastity, and marriage.

² [*Lumen Gentium*](#) (1964).

**Policy Concerning Students of the Diocese of Madison, Its Affiliates,
Its Parishes, and Its Schools**

3. In founding the Catholic Church, Jesus Christ issued a mandate to proclaim the mystery of salvation to all mankind and to restore all things in Christ.³ The Church therefore has a role in the progress and development of education, to help each baptized person recognize his or her identity in Christ, as a beloved son or daughter of God.⁴ Catholic schools exist not only to prepare students to do good in the world, but they also prepare them “for service in the spread of the Kingdom of God, so that by leading an exemplary apostolic life they become, as it were, a saving leaven in the human community.”⁵

Any diocesan school, and all parishes and their schools within the Diocese of Madison therefore partner with families to educate and form students in a manner that is consistent with the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church, and so families are expected to live in accord with Catholic moral principles, as authentically taught and authoritatively interpreted by the Bishop of Madison. In particular:

- 3.1. Students shall conduct themselves in accord with their God-given biological sex. A student who is confused about his or her sex, who rejects his or her biological sex, or who is diagnosed with gender dysphoria should not be denied admission to a Catholic school or parish religious education program on that basis as long as the student and his or her parents or guardians agree that the parents/guardians and child will abide by this policy and relevant diocesan, school, and/or parish policies and agreements, including those specifically related to school life and events, that protect the common good, foster proper respect for the Catholic Church’s teachings on human anthropology, sexuality, chastity, and marriage, and avoid scandal. Parents and those taking the place of parents are to be informed that the child will be instructed in accord with the Church’s integrated teachings on human anthropology, sexuality, chastity, and marriage in an age-appropriate manner.
- 3.2. Students under the care of persons living in an irregular sexual relationship or situation (see 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5, above) are not to be denied admission to Catholic schools or parish religious education programs on that basis as long as the student and his or her parents or guardians agree that the child and parents or guardians will abide by this policy and relevant school or parish agreements, and they continue to abide therewith. Parents and those taking the place of parents are to be informed that the child will be instructed in accord with the Church’s integrated teachings on human anthropology, sexuality, chastity, and marriage in an age-appropriate manner.
- 3.3. Respectful, critical examination of Catholic teaching in the classroom is acceptable, particularly at the secondary level, as long as its intent and objective content /

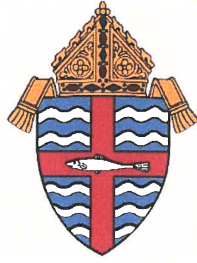
³ *Gravissimum Educationis*, Introduction (1965)

⁴ *Gravissimum Educationis*, Introduction (1965).

⁵ *Gravissimum Educationis*, 8 (1965).

direction are to help the student progress toward deeper conversion and understanding, in accord with the teaching of the Catholic Church, particularly since Church teaching safeguards and promotes the full dignity and authentic freedom of the human person as created by God.

- 3.4. No person, for any reason, should be subject to unjust discrimination, intimidation, or harassment. Pastoral accompaniment is to be exercised to help students embrace and live according to the Church's integrated teachings on human anthropology, sexuality, chastity, and marriage.
- 3.5. Diplomas, transcripts, school records, and any other official documents of a school ("official school documents"), shall be issued in conformity with the student's biological sex as based upon physical differences at birth and at the time of a student's enrollment. Official school documents are also historical documents and, as such, must accurately reflect the name and identity of the alumnus/alumna during the time in which he/she was enrolled at and graduated from the school. If after graduation an alumnus/alumna legally changes his/her name, for whatever reason, and requests new versions of his/her official school documents, the official school documents may be issued in the following format: "Original Name, a.k.a. New Legal Name."



Resources

In prudently implementing this policy, the circumstances of a case could be so particular that it may demand the advice of experts. Some specific cases may not find an answer in this document. This is why a list of resources is offered.

Pastoral Implementation

a) For questions regarding the contents of this policy, associated issues regarding Catholic morality, or implementation of this policy in a Catholic school, to review resources, or to request an updated list of Catholic therapists and other behavioral resources within the Diocese of Madison, please refer to <https://madisondiocese.org/humanperson> or contact Damian Lenshek at 608.821.3134 or humanperson@madisondiocese.org.

Supplemental Resources

- a) *Male and Female He Created Them*, Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education (Feb 2019).
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20190202_maschio-e-femmina_en.pdf
- b) *Guidance to Catholic Health Care Institutions on Respecting the Fundamental Order of the Human Body*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Doctrine (Mar 2023).
<https://www.usccb.org/DoctrineGuidanceToCatholicHealth>
- c) *Pastoral Letter on Human Sexuality*, Bishops' Conference of the Nordic Countries (Mar 2023).
<https://coramfratribus.com/archive/letter-on-human-sexuality/>
- d) *Catechesis and Policy on Questions Concerning Gender Theory*. Archdiocese of Milwaukee (2022).
<https://www.archmil.org/ArchMil/attachments/2022GenderTheoryfinal.pdf>
- e) *A Catholic Response to Gender Identity Theory: Catechesis and Pastoral Guidelines for the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon* (Jan 2023).
https://files.ecatholic.com/12494/documents/2023/1/EN_A%20Catholic%20Response%20to%20Gender%20Identity%20Theory_FINAL2023.pdf
- f) *Compassion and Challenge: Reflections on Gender Ideology*, Archbishop Robert J. Carlson (June 2020).
<https://www.archstl.org/compassion-and-challenge>
- g) The Person and Identity Project, an initiative of the Catholic Women's Forum at the Ethics and Public Policy Center. <https://personandidentity.com/featured-resources/>