

Policy on Concerning Gender and Human Dignity

1. PREFACE

“Every human person possesses an infinite dignity, inalienably grounded in his or her very being, which prevails in and beyond every circumstance, state, or situation the person may ever encounter. This principle, which is fully recognizable even by reason alone, underlies the primacy of the human person and the protection of human rights.”¹

“Let us love one another because love is from God.”² Christ’s words to his disciples call Christians in every age to embrace the truth of *who we are* as children of God, for only in embracing this truth can we be set free. This is Christ’s promise to which Catholics assent with mind and heart, and this promise is the foundation of the Church’s moral teachings.

The Second Vatican Council stated that, “inspired by no earthly ambition, the Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. And Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served. To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings, and its often-dramatic characteristics.”³

Each generation presents moral challenges to which the Church must respond as mother and as teacher.⁴ It is ever the duty of the Church both to listen patiently to the struggles of her children and also to instruct them clearly on the path to the fullness of life and freedom.⁵ As St. Paul VI writes, “It is an outstanding manifestation of charity toward souls to omit nothing from the saving doctrine of Christ.”⁶ In the past decade, there has been increased attention paid to gender dysphoria and gender discordance, especially among young children and adolescents, coupled with the widespread notion that the solution to such dysphoria is to affirm one’s “experienced gender” over and against one’s biological sex. This prompts the Church to provide catechesis and policy for all the faithful, and especially for Church employees, personnel, our students, teachers, and all others who work in parishes, organizations, and institutions of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Beaumont.

2. CATECHESIS

2.1 The Church teaches that the human person, created in the image and likeness of God, is a “unified creature composed of body and soul.” The soul is the spiritual principle of each human person and the “subject of human consciousness and freedom.”⁷ Yet only when “body and soul are intimately united.”⁸ is the person their truest self. The human person is not a soul or a mind that *has* a body merely as a biological accessory. Rather, the human person *is* a body formed by a soul.⁹ Human life and love are “always lived out in body and spirit,”¹⁰ and thus the body is a “vital expression of our whole being.”¹¹ So integral, in fact, is the body to who we are as human beings that the body and soul *together* are fashioned and “destined to live forever.”¹² The creed expresses our belief in the “resurrection of the body,” or the belief that all persons will “rise again *with their own bodies* which they now bear.”¹³ The body which will one day rise is the very body which each person received as a gift and in which each person lives out his or her vocation to holiness.¹⁴

2.2 Our biological sex, expressed by our body, is a gift from God and is unchangeable. A person’s biological sex is expressed in and through the body. It cannot be changed because it is bestowed by God as a *gift* and as a *calling*, and “the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.”¹⁵ Biological sex is a *gift* because in the very act of creation, God bestows upon each human person a gender—“Male and female he created them”¹⁶—two sexes that are *different, equal, and complementary*.¹⁷ It is a *calling* because we work out our salvation via our masculinity or femininity. In other words, human persons do not experience the freedom and joy of salvation despite their biological sex, but only in it and through it.

2.3 Christian anthropology teaches that we are made in the image and likeness of God. Our dignity and creation in the image and likeness of God, Christian anthropology, a proper understanding of human sexuality, and the essential importance of our sexuality and sexual identity as assigned by God are authoritatively and definitively revealed in Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Catholic Church. (*see Genesis 1:27; see Male and Female; see Catechism of the Catholic Church (“CCC”), #355-373, 2331-2372*). As all entities of the Catholic Church are for the purpose of furthering the saving mission of Jesus Christ, they must operate in accord with the truth revealed by God in both natural law and divine revelation. In particular, our Catholic schools and parish catechetical programs must remain in the fullness of the truth and charity in order to carry out their proper mission:

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. (*Code of Canon Law, c. 795*).

2.4 A person’s “gender” is inseparable from biological sex. The *Catechism* states that “Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul.”¹⁸ Therefore, biological sex and “gender can never be separated.”¹⁹ Should someone experience a tension between biological sex and “gender,” he or she should know that this interior conflict is not sinful in itself²⁰ but rather reflects “the broader disharmony caused by original sin”²¹ and often results from the residue of social ills and cultural distortions of what constitutes “masculinity” and “femininity.” Such persons should be treated with respect and with charity, and “no one should suffer bullying, violence, insults, or unjust discrimination” based on such experiences.²² However, charity “needs to be understood, confirmed, and practiced in the light of truth,”²³ and thus each such persons should be encouraged to seek harmony between his or her biological sex and “gender” – i.e., not through a rejection of one or the other, but through turning to Christ and to all that the Church provides. “Regarding gender theory, whose scientific coherence is the subject of considerable debate among experts, the Church recalls that human life in all its dimensions, both physical and spiritual, is a gift from God. This gift is to be accepted with gratitude and placed at the service of the good. Desiring a personal self-determination, as gender theory prescribes, apart from this fundamental truth that human life is a gift, amounts to a concession to the age-old temptation to make oneself God, entering into competition with the true God

of love revealed to us in the Gospel.”²⁴ “Only by turning to Christ can one acknowledge and accept one’s sexual identity in every aspect— physical, moral, social, and spiritual²⁵ —and only through such an acceptance can the human person in turn experience the freedom promised by Christ.”

2.5 Respect for creation is also a respect for one’s biological sex. As Pope Francis writes, “It is enough to recognize that our body itself establishes us in a direct relationship with the environment and with other living beings. The acceptance of our bodies as God’s gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home, whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation. Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology. Also, valuing one’s own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment. It is not a healthy attitude which would seek to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it”.²⁶

2.6 These teachings of the Church are not mere antiquated notions. In fact, Pope Francis has repeatedly stressed the importance of a proper understanding of our sexuality, warning of the challenge 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 (*Amoris Laetitia* (“AL”), #56). Pope Francis further notes that “biological sex and the sociocultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated,” and that although we must always be “understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life,” that does not require us to “accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality” (*Ibid.*). Ultimately, “we are creatures, and not omnipotent,” and we must accept and respect our humanity “as it was created” (*Ibid.*; see also Gen. 1:27, Matthew 19:4, and Mark 10:6). Pope Francis then stresses that “the young need to be helped to accept their own body as it was created,” so that “we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator” (AL, #285).

As Pope Francis notes, we must always respect the sacred dignity of each individual person, which means that the Church cannot and must not accept the confused notions of gender ideology. We must not demean or deny the sincerity and struggle of those who experience same-sex attraction or who feel their true gender identity is different from their biological sex. Rather, we seek to accompany and to lead them on their journey of life, offering them the light of the Gospel as they try to find their way forward. These truths are not merely faith-based; rather, such realities are also knowable through the use of properly functioning senses and right reason (Pope St. John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, #22). We do not serve anyone’s greater good by denying or falsifying the truth, for it is only the truth that frees us for the full life that God offers to each of us. Thus, when a person experiences either same-sex attraction or some form of gender dysphoria, such struggles do not change the biological fact of how God immutably created that person. It would be untruthful for the Catholic Church or our Catholic schools to think or pretend otherwise and would contradict Church teaching on reason and the nature of the human person, as well as key tenets of the faith (see National Catholic Bioethics Center, *Brief Statement on Transgenderism*). Therefore, the policies of our Catholic schools and Catholic diocesan institutions must respectfully uphold these fundamental truths.

3. POLICY

The following policy seeks to provide guidance in applying the Church's moral teachings regarding the challenges presented by "gender theory." This policy is put forth for parishes, organizations, and institutions of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Beaumont.

As a general rule, in all interactions and policies, parishes, organizations, and institutions are to recognize only a person's biological sex. This policy applies, but is not limited to, all Church employees, personnel, students, volunteers, and those entrusted to the care of the Church, including all contracted vendors when they are on-site and may have contact with those entrusted to the care of the Church.

3.1 Designations and Pronouns. Any parochial, organizational, or institutional documentation which requires the designation of a person's sex is to reflect that person's biological sex. No person may designate a "preferred pronoun" in speech or in writing, nor are parishes, organizations, or institutions to permit such a designation. Permitting the designation of a preferred pronoun, while often intended as an act of charity, instead promotes an acceptance of the separability of biological sex and "gender" and thus opposes the truth of our sexual unity.

3.2 Bathrooms and Locker Rooms. All persons must use the bathroom or locker room which matches their biological sex. Diocesan parishes, schools, organizations, and institutions are permitted but not required to have individual-use bathrooms which are available for all members of the respective community.

3.3 Attire. All persons are to present themselves in a manner consistent with their God-given dignity i.e., in accordance with their biological sex. Where a dress code or uniform exists, all persons are to follow the dress code or uniform that accords with their biological sex (including but not limited to *quinceañera*, School dances, Parish weddings, etc.).

3.4 Athletics and Extra-Curriculars. Participation in parish and school single sex athletics (including but not limited to extra-curricular activities) is restricted to persons of the designated biological sex. Some sports and activities may be open to the participation of individuals of both sexes, and in such cases must follow the general rule of recognizing only the biological sex of each person.

3.5 Single Sex buildings, areas, Programs and Institutions. Admission to single sex programs, including but not limited to single sex schools, camps, and retreats, is restricted to persons of the designated biological sex. Dormitories or other single-sex buildings are restricted to persons of the designated biological sex.

3.6 Public Displays of Affection. Romantic displays of affection between students, are not permitted at Church/school or Church/school- sponsored events.

3.7 Medication. No person is permitted on parish or school property, or at any parish or school function occurring away from parish or school property, to possess, distribute, or promote the use of any form of any medication, including but not limited to "puberty blockers," for the purpose of potential or actual "gender reassignment." Also, students and those entrusted to the care of the Church are not permitted to take "puberty blockers," even if self-administered, on parish or school property, with the purpose of a potential or actual "gender reassignment."

3.8 Protecting the Vulnerable. Those entrusted to the care of the Church who express a tension between their biological sex and their "gender" and others directly affected by this tension (parents, guardians, etc.) should be directed to appropriate ministers and counselors who will help the person in a manner that is in accord with the directives and teachings of the Church. Parishes, schools, and other Catholic institutions or organizations should take the necessary precautions, in accord with the policies of this document to avoid bullying and to protect the integrity of those who may express tension or concerns about their biological gender.

4. RESOURCES AND PASTORAL IMPLEMENTATION

A few examples of resources include:

Instructional Videos

This page (<https://canavox.com/dear-katy/category/transgender/>) includes a series of brief videos that can be useful instructional videos for staff, faculty, and parents on how to approach conversations about gender identity and transgenderism with both sensitivity and clarity. These may be used directly as resource for parents, or for help in training and preparing for conversations with others.

Male and Female He Created Them

This document, referenced above, was produced by the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome: http://www.educatio.va/content/dam/cec/Documenti/19_0997_INGLESE.pdf.

Transgender Children: Crisis in Care

This study ([Transgender Children: Crisis in Care – Youtube](#)), referenced above, is based on interviews with several psychologists who previously worked in the UK's Gender Identity Development Service. It highlights concerns and dangers of the trend toward accelerating gender dysphoria patients toward invasive transgender procedures.

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:

- a) For questions regarding the contents of this policy and Catholic morality, please contact the Very Reverend M. Shane Baxter, Vicar General, at 409-924-4303.
- b) For questions regarding Canon Law, please contact Very Reverend Ernie Carpio, Chancellor at 409-924-4303.
- c) For questions regarding the implementation of this policy in a Catholic school, please contact the Catholic School Office at 409-924-4322.
- d) For an updated list of Catholic therapists and other behavioral resources within the Diocese of Beaumont, please contact Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas at 409-924-4400.

5. GLOSSARY

5.1. Biological sex: The sex with which a person is born, regardless of acceptance or perceived identity.

5.2 Gender: As understood by the Church, gender is the socio-cultural role of sex and particularly how it informs one's psychological identity.²⁷

5.3. Gender dysphoria: the state in which a person claims to experience an incongruity between psychological identity and biological sex.

5.4 Gender Ideology/Theory: An ideology or theory that denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman, and envisages a society without gender differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family. Thus, "Gender Ideology" or "Gender Theory" promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female. Consequently, human identity becomes a choice of the individual, one which can also change over time. 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 gender can be distinguished but not separated.²⁸

¹ Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2 April 2024, *Declaration "Dignitatis Infinita" on Human Dignity*, 1.

² John 4:7-12.

³ *Gaudium et spes*, 3-4.

⁴ St. John XXIII, *Mater et magistra*, 1.

⁵ St. John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, 4; Congregation for Catholic Education, "'Male and Female He Created Them': Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education" (Vatican City, 2019), 30.

⁶ St. Paul VI, *Humanae vitae*, 29.

⁷ Glossary of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops—Libreria Editrice Vaticana English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000).

⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 5.

⁹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 76; St. John Paul II, *General Audience of October 24, 1979*; CCC, 365.

¹⁰ Pope Francis, *Lumen fidei*, 34.

¹¹ Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 5.

¹² St. John Paul II, Message to Health Workers, Phoenix, Arizona, 1987.

¹³ Fourth Lateran Council (1215), DS, 801.

¹⁴ St. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 5.13.1. International Theological Commission, *Some 14 Current Questions in Eschatology* (1992), 1.2.5.

¹⁵ Romans 11:29.

¹⁶ Genesis 1:27.

¹⁷ CCC, 355, 369.

¹⁸ CCC, 2332.

¹⁹ Fourteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Relatio finalis* (24 October 2015), 58; Pope Francis, *Amoris laetitia*, 56.

²⁰ In Catholic moral theology, the term "disordered" has a particular meaning which may not be identical with how the term is used by psychologists and medical professionals. According to the Catholic moral tradition, every inclination, desire, and action is ordered to some particular purpose or end (i.e., consuming medicine is ordered toward health; sexual relations are ordered toward unity between spouses and procreation; etc.). Any inclination, desire, or action which impedes this purpose is considered "disordered" (i.e., the inclination to take medicine in order to commit suicide; or engaging in contraceptive sexual relations). Since the purpose of the body (as given by God) and the soul is to be united forever

in the presence of God, an inclination which disrupts this unity—such as an experienced tension between natal sex and "gender"—would be considered "disordered." Note well that it is the inclination, desire, or action that is disordered, not the inherent dignity of the person. On the relationship between the concept of "disorder" and the dignity of the person, see CCC, 2358 and the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Persona Humana: Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics*.

²¹ Catholic Diocese of Arlington, "A Catechesis on the Human Person & Gender Ideology" (12 August 2021).

²² Congregation for Catholic Education, "'Male and Female He Created Them': Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education" (Vatican City, 2019), 16.

²³ Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, 2.

²⁴ *Dignitatis Infinita*, 57.

²⁵ CCC, 2333.

²⁶ Pope Francis, *Laudato si*, 155.

²⁷ *Relatio finalis*, 24 October 2015, 8, 58.

²⁸ Pope Francis, *Amoris laetitia*, 56.