



## **GENDER IDENTITY**

### **April 2020**

The following are new guidelines for addressing issues of gender identity in the Diocese of Fairbanks.

*The Church teaches that our identities as male and female are part of God's good design in Creation, that our bodies and sexual identities are gifts from God, and that we should accept and care for our bodies as they were created. A person cannot change his or her gender. A person should accept and seek to live in conformity with his or her sexual identity as determined at birth. The human person is a body-soul union, and the body – created male or female – is a constitutive aspect of the human person. Therefore, the Catholic Church teaches that the removal or destruction of healthy sexual and reproductive organs is a type of mutilation and intrinsically evil. Procedures, surgeries, and therapies designed to assist a person in "transitioning" his or her gender are morally prohibited. "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." See Catechism of the Catholic Church ("CCC"), §2333. "Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way." See, CCC §2335.*

### **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.*

**Policy** It is the policy of the Diocese of Fairbanks in Alaska 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.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An "agency" as used herein shall include any department, institution, office, parish, school, juridic person or any subdivision thereof governed by the moral authority of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Fairbanks in Alaska

***Procedures:***

- a) This policy applies to all interactions the Diocese or her agents have with any persons, whether said person is an employee, volunteer, student, or a general member of the faithful.
- b) The Sacramental and Liturgical Life of the Church will also reflect this policy in as much as it corresponds with the moral teachings of the Church and the provisions of Canon Law.
- 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;
  - 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.

## **2) Specific Policy Concerning Employees and Volunteers**

***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 (cf. General Policy).

***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.

### **3) Specific Policy Concerning Students**

***Policy*** Students and their parents are expected to live virtuous lives guided by Gospel values and the teaching of the Church. 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 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 use of a single-person, unisex facility. Such requests will be assessed on an individual basis by the appropriate school administrator in consultation with the school chaplain or the diocesan bishop.
- d) A student 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.