



DIocese of Superior

Office of the Bishop

August 2022

To the Faithful of the Diocese:

Peace be with you. In recent years it has become increasingly evident that the Church must be ever clearer in presenting her teachings on the human person. When there is confusion, charity demands that leaders provide clarity. The dignity of the human person and the nature of human sexuality has not changed and, in fact, cannot change. No matter how much the broader culture leaves these timeless truths behind, we will remain steadfast in that which our Lord has bestowed on us.

As Catholic Christians, our anthropology is rooted in Sacred Scripture, the Church's constant tradition, and the Natural Law. We know that as human beings we are composed of both body and soul. We are not only earthly beings, but also transcendent. We are not mere matter; we are not accidents. We were created by a God who knows and loves us and we are called to be holy. There are many voices and influences in contemporary American culture that would have us live and teach otherwise. Brothers and Sisters, we cannot do so.

Over the past few years, I have asked a team of laity and clergy in our diocese to look at the implications of gender theory for us as Catholics. Our conclusions were simple: as Catholic Christians our fundamental mandate is love: we must love all human beings as each is made in the image and likeness of God. What is hard for all of us, sinners that we are, is to know that love does not mean acceptance of our own personal wishes. Love and truth must go hand in hand. They are inseparable.

The pastoral guidance that follows is designed to assist parish and school employees, volunteers and the faithful at large to walk with each other in Christ. This guidance is here to help us to begin to understand the teachings of the Church, yet know that there is much more to know and understand.

As we make use of this guidance, it is important to remember the words of Pope Saint Paul VI, "All pastoral care is defined, primarily, by love. It is the duty of those who find themselves in positions of ministry to communicate the deep love of Christ to all. Ultimately, all pastoral care is aimed at guiding people toward a relationship with Jesus Christ."

The attached guidance is designed to give the faithful of the diocese principles and a basic set of guidelines for living this out.

Please, I sincerely ask you: read this *entire* document. Please do not skip to the parts that interest you. The teaching and the guidelines are mutually dependent. If you struggle with any of it, I ask for your goodwill. Let us mutually commit to be sons and daughters of the Church and true disciples of Jesus in these confusing times. May the Holy Spirit lead us into all truth and into true freedom.

Please know of my sincere prayers for each of you and your families.

I remain sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. James P. Powers
Bishop, Diocese of Superior