

D I O C E S E

of NEW ULM

Catholic Pastoral Center

God Has a Mission and Purpose for Your Life

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I issue this document to provide clarity on the Catholic Church's teaching on sexual identity and the implications for our Catholic parishes and schools in the Diocese of New Ulm. In 2000 years, the teachings of the Church have not changed, but in the last decade, we have witnessed a tremendous shift in how we define "male" and "female." The issue of "gender" has become twisted and confused, and as shepherd of this diocese, I desire to share the wisdom of the Church, given to us through natural law and divine revelation, as we move to implement this policy and provide guidance for those in ministry.

As I travel throughout the diocese, I find it profoundly important to remind people that 1) You are created in the image and likeness of God, therefore a big deal, 2) Your life matters, and 3) God has a mission and purpose for your life. In a world where even our youngest children may be told that they could be born in the wrong body and only THEY can determine what sex they are, the Church teaches us that GOD has already chosen us for a specific purpose and created us in His very likeness.

In March of this year, Pope Francis approved the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith's *Dignitas Infinita* (on Human Dignity), a document that reminds us that "the dignity of the human person comes from the love of the Creator, who has imprinted the indelible features of his image on every person..." (Para. 18). While the mainstream media, systems of education, and celebrity voices would have us believe we can create our own understanding of who we are, the Church grounds us in Truth and reminds us that "Our dignity is bestowed upon us by God: it is neither claimed nor deserved." (*Dignitas Infinita*, Para. 11).

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" (Encyclical *Amoris Laetitia*, #56). Pope Francis further notes that "biological sex and the socio-cultural 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*).

Therefore, when a person experiences identity or body-related distress, such struggles do not change the biological fact of how God created that person, and it would be contrary to the Truth to pretend otherwise. As Catholic institutions, we must speak this Truth with clarity and fidelity

to the Church, striving to respond to the complexities people face with the compassion and love of Jesus Christ.

Pope Francis notes that we must always respect the sacred dignity of each individual person. We must not demean or deny the sincerity and struggle of those who experience same-sex attraction or identity- or body-related distress. Rather, we seek to accompany them on their life journey and offer the light of the gospel with the love and compassion of Jesus Christ.

The goal of this document is to provide guidance for those who minister in Catholic schools, faith formation, youth ministry, and other parish programs. We aim to support and accompany students and their families, and all parishioners who experience gender confusion, always in a way that ensures our parishes and schools fulfill their Catholic mission and uphold the teachings of the Church. The Diocese of New Ulm is committed to providing a safe environment that allows all individuals* to flourish academically, physically, and spiritually.

Most Reverend Chad W. Zielinski

Bishop of New Ulm

Sexual Identity Policy Guidance Table of Contents

Pastoral Guidance for Administrators in the Implementation of This Policy.....	p. 4
I. Guidance for Catholic Schools.....	p. 6
a. Enrollment and Retention	
b. Names, Pronouns, and Records	
c. Conduct and Expectations	
d. Curriculum	
e. Athletics/Extra-Curricular Activities	
f. Online Activity	
g. Counseling and Health Services	
II. Guidance for Faith Formation and Youth Ministry.....	p. 11
a. Enrollment, Registration, and Retention	
b. Names, Pronouns, and Records	
c. Conduct and Expectations	
d. Curriculum	
e. Online Activity	
III. Guidance for Parish Life.....	p. 15
a. The Sacraments	
i. Baptism of Infants	
ii. Baptism of Adults	
iii. Confirmation	
iv. Godparents and Sponsors	
v. Holy Eucharist	
vi. Penance	
vii. Holy Orders	
viii. Weddings	
ix. Mass of Christian Burial	
x. Sacramental Records	
b. Liturgical Ministries	
c. Employees and Volunteers	
d. Sponsorship of Outside Organizations	
IV. Definitions, Endnotes, and References.....	p. 19
a. Definitions	

- b. Endnotes
- c. References

Diocese of New Ulm

Sexual Identity Policy

Guidance

Pastoral Guidance for Administrators in the Implementation of This Policy

The Diocese of New Ulm is committed to spreading Gospel values and forming the faithful in Christ's teachings in accordance with the Universal Magisterium of the Catholic Church. This document sets out compassionate but distinct guidance so that pastors and parish and Catholic school leaders have a framework for making prudential judgements in specific circumstances.

The Policy on Human Sexuality is not meant as grounds for judging others but rather to provide those in administrative roles a clear understanding of the diocese's stance on policy-related issues.

First and foremost, all individuals, as children of God, are inherently deserving of respect and are to be treated with compassion, charity, and dignity. This policy is offered as an invitation to individuals struggling with same-sex attraction or identity or body-related distress to see themselves as God created them.

As Christians, all of us, whether in official roles or seeking to abide by our religious beliefs, must clearly and confidently express the truth about the human person, emphasizing Catholic teachings based on natural law and helping those who struggle to “acknowledge and accept his [or her] sexual identity” (Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 2333).

An individual* experiencing identity or body-related distress or asserting a “transgender” identity has inherent human dignity and thus deserves profound respect. They need to be accompanied by those in the Church who speak the Gospel truth with compassion and love. It is neither loving, compassionate, nor truthful to affirm the person's false belief (“I was born in the wrong body”) or the person's rejection of male or female sexual identity (“I am transgender”). Furthermore, when accompanying those who face confusion, we should include the invitation of Jesus Christ, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (*Matthew 16:24-25*). It is important to note that often, children and youth in their

formative years struggle with many issues of identity and acceptance, for which maturity, education, and when necessary, counseling, offer guidance and support. Administrators need to provide support for youth and families. In some instances, this calls for referral for psychological counseling/ therapy. Therapy recommendations must be in accord with Catholic anthropology and teaching and aim to help these individuals discover and resolve the underlying issues.

Pastors and school administrators are called to be mindful that validating or “affirming” an individual’s expression of a “transgender” identity or desire to alter his or her body can be harmful to the individual and may be viewed by the parish or school community as an implicit endorsement of the individual’s choices Which are not in alignment with Catholic Church teaching.

*An individual is defined as any person serving in, or being served by, the parishes and schools of the Diocese of New Ulm.

I. Guidance for Catholic Schools

Catholic schools share the Christian vision of the human person, which is directed toward the dignity and flourishing of each person. They are responsible for creating an environment that is hospitable to a life of faith, which can be expressed in multiple ways. This distinguishes the Catholic school approach from other approaches to education.

All who are employed by, assist/volunteer in, or attend Catholic schools in the Diocese of New Ulm must agree to abide by the teachings of the Catholic Church. School handbooks must reflect these teachings and be provided to parent(s) or guardian(s) of current or prospective students. Following the teachings of the Catholic Church is a condition of employment and is to be reflected in employment contracts and job descriptions provided to prospective employees. Any failure to uphold Catholic Church teachings in their words or actions will result in a request to comply with behaviors outlined in the school's code of conduct.

A. Enrollment and Retention

If a student, staff member, or volunteer chooses not to comply with the expectations set forth in this policy, the privilege to attend the Catholic school or serve in an employed or volunteer position for the school can be revoked.

If necessary, situations of concern should be reported to the bishop of the Diocese of New Ulm through the local pastor or diocesan director of Catholic schools. The bishop will make the final decision regarding enrollment and employment.

The bishop may appoint a committee comprised of clergy and/or lay professionals to advise him on the appropriateness of continued enrollment or employment. The committee, whether standing or ad hoc in nature, will be formed to ensure a fair and thorough review of the situation, and its members will be chosen based on their expertise and commitment to Catholic Church teachings.

In order to best serve each individual, the Catholic school prioritizes its mission, fidelity to Catholic teaching, and responsibility to the common good.

Therefore, every student and prospective student of a Catholic school in the Diocese of New Ulm and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) must agree to uphold Catholic teaching concerning faith and morals, particularly those addressing human sexuality as outlined in this policy. A student is subject to dismissal if the student or his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) object to or publicly seek to undermine the school's instruction regarding sexual identity.

An individual whose parent(s) or guardian(s) support the individual's expression of a "transgender" identity, or who permit the individual to socially "transition" (in any context), to participate in "gender-affirming" psychotherapy, to receive puberty-blocking or cross-sex hormone medications, to undergo surgery or procedures to alter the individual's body as part of a "gender transition," or support open participation in a same-sex sexual relationship finds themselves in contradiction to Catholic teaching which defines gender as being grounded in a body with sex of male or female as given by God.

In these situations, school/diocesan staff will work with compassion to help guide the individual and his or her family as they seek to embrace this truth and how it defines the individual in the mind and heart of God. If the individual and the parents commit to acceptance or a process of growth toward according to Catholic Church teaching. The commitment of the individual and the parent(s) or guardian(s) to acceptance or a process of growth toward acceptance of this truth is of utmost importance. If this commitment is not present, the individual may not be able to enroll or continue to participate in Catholic schools. If the individual cannot accept the truth of this Church teaching, enrollment or continued participation in Catholic school is not possible.

B. Names, Pronouns, and Records

All individuals serving in, or being served by, schools or parishes in the Diocese of New Ulm must be referred to with pronouns consistent with their biological sex.

Sacramental records, student records, schedules, identification cards, transcripts, class lists, correspondence (including college recommendation letters), permanent records, and all other records kept on file must reflect the student's legal name and biological sex as determined at conception and manifest at birth. Official school documents are historical documents and, as such, must always accurately reflect the name and biological sex of the student during enrollment and graduation.

C. Conduct and Expectations

It should be emphasized that all persons have inherent human dignity and are thus deserving of innate respect. Bullying, harassment, or threats of violence against any individual will not be tolerated in Catholic schools in the Diocese of New Ulm. Any such behavior will be addressed according to school policy, and law enforcement may be notified.

Individuals will conduct themselves in accord with Catholic Church teaching concerning sexual identity and sexuality [sexual behavior] at all times, both at on-site and at off-site events.

Individuals must abide by the school dress code that corresponds with their biological sex.

Individuals must access facilities and overnight accommodations that align with their biological sex.

Generally, restrooms in all Catholic schools in the Diocese of New Ulm are designated for either males or females. All individuals must utilize the restroom or locker room designated for their biological sex. Catholic schools in the Diocese of New Ulm are permitted to also have individual-use restrooms that are available for all members of the community.

The expressed rejection of one's given sexual identity as male or female, or the expression of a "transgender" identity is contrary to Catholic Church teaching. An individual's experience of identity- or body-related distress should always be addressed in the context of pastoral care and, in the case of minors, should include parent(s) or guardian(s).

Chaste behavior and modesty in communications, appearance, and behavior by individuals are expected at all times at on-site and off-site events. For example, individuals may not attend church or school-sponsored functions as a "same-sex couple" (e.g. dances or prom).

Respectful, analytical discussion of Catholic teaching in the classroom, as determined by the teacher in consultation with the pastor, is acceptable provided it intends to help the individual progress toward greater awareness and understanding of Catholic Church teaching. Individuals must refrain from open hostility toward or defiance of Church teaching.

The student handbook will address these behavioral expectations, and a receipt of handbook form will be signed by parent(s) or guardian(s), affirming that the parent(s) or guardian(s) and the student parent(s) or guardian(s) have discussed and agreed to abide by the information contained in the handbook. The signed consent, completed at the start of each school year, is a condition of continued enrollment.

D. Curriculum

Essential Catholic beliefs and doctrinal principles to be addressed as developmentally appropriate in the school curriculum include the following:

- Human beings are created as male and female in the image and likeness of God (*Gen. 1:27*). Human dignity is grounded in this special creation.¹
- Sexual difference is willed by God as part of the divine plan. The complementarity that results from sexual differentiation is ordered to the human good and in particular to marriage and family life (*CCC, nn. 369, 2333*).²
- The human person is a body-soul union, and the body is a constitutive aspect of the human person (*CCC, nn. 364, 365*).³
 - Human biology demonstrates that sex is determined at conception, is binary (male or female), is immutable (never changes), and can be objectively observed even before birth. A person's sex marks "every cell" in a person's body (over 30 trillion cells).⁴
 - Humans are called to accept their sexual identity, manifested through the body, as a fixed and unchanging element of self (*CCC, n. 2393*).⁵

- Humans must care for and respect their bodies, which is a constituent dimension of their being. The human body may not be treated as a “piece of property” or “manipulate[d] as a thing or an instrument over which one is master and arbiter.”⁶
- All students and families deserve interactions with Catholic communities that are marked by respect, charity, and the truth about human dignity and God’s love.

E. Athletics /Extra-Curricular Activities

The Catholic Church believes that each individual is created male or female in the image and likeness of God. Being in the image of God, the human individual possesses the dignity of a person who is called by grace to a covenant with the Creator (CCC 355-357). As such, Catholic schools in the Diocese of New Ulm strive to promote the dignity of each individual who chooses to participate in athletic or extra-curricular activities, respecting their identity as biological males or females.

Individuals in all Catholic schools in the Diocese of New Ulm are allowed to participate in school-sponsored athletic teams and activities that are consistent with their biological sex. In the event that a team is open to either males or females (i.e., trap shooting, robotics, etc.) the school will assure that both male and female participants are treated with dignity and respect.

If an individual wishes to participate in a sports team designated for athletes of the opposite sex and can do so without jeopardizing fairness, the safety of all members of the team, and respect for the dignity of all student-athletes, a written request from the individual and their parent(s) or guardian(s) could be made for consideration. The school administration will render a decision in collaboration with the pastor and/or the approval of the bishop. All individuals must utilize the restroom or locker room designated for their biological sex. Catholic schools in the Diocese of New Ulm are permitted to also have individual-use restrooms that are available for all members of the community.

All Catholic schools strive to promote competition that is safe, fair, and respectful of the dignity of all participants. Therefore each school reserves the right to forfeit a game or match if (a) it is deemed that the opposing team and/or any of its players present a threat to the safety of the athletes due to excessive differences in size or strength of players; or (b) it is deemed that to compete would show disregard for the dignity, privacy, modesty, and/or safety of those involved in the competition; or (c) it is deemed that to compete would not be in alignment with the Catholic Church’s teaching.

F. Online Activity

Online activity, including use of social media by individuals will be respectful of others and not promote, advocate, or endorse beliefs or conduct contrary to the Catholic Church’s teachings.

Online activity, including the use of social media, which bullies or degrades another is prohibited. An individual who violates these standards may be disciplined up to and including dismissal from the Catholic school.

G. Counseling and Health Services

As mandated reporters, church or school staff will communicate with parent(s) or guardian(s) about their child's behavior at school and inform them of any concerns relating to the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual health, safety, and welfare of their child, subject to legal constraints imposed by law (for example, in cases of suspected parental abuse).

In an effort to support individuals experiencing identity or body-related distress while upholding Catholic Church teaching, the parish or school may suggest counseling, in consultation with the parent(s) or guardian(s). Such counseling should be provided by a licensed mental health provider who understands and respects Catholic Church teaching on human anthropology, preferably one who is a practicing Catholic. Individuals will not receive referrals for gender-related care that is not aligned with Catholic teaching.

If an individual tells a parish or school employee or volunteer that the individual rejects his or her sexual identity or desires to "transition" or otherwise assert a new identity (e.g. name change, change in dress/ behavior, hormone therapy, etc.), then the employee or volunteer must share this information with the designated clergy, school, or parish contact. The designated parish or school employees will contact the parent(s) or guardian(s) within 48 hours.

As detailed in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Doctrinal Note on the Moral Limits to Technological Manipulation of the Human Body, the Catholic Church prohibits medical procedures and therapies, sometimes collectively described as gender-affirming care, including social or medical interventions, the use of puberty-suppressing drugs, cross-sex hormones, and irreversible surgeries that attempt to alter the body in contradiction to the individual's sexual identity. These interventions are known to cause harm to an otherwise healthy body and fail to resolve the individual's underlying distress.

In cases of true genetic or physical anomalies, also known as disorders of sexual development, the Catholic Church permits appropriate medical care to restore health and function.

Catholic schools are encouraged to contact the Diocese of New Ulm for resources that are consistent with Catholic Church teachings regarding identity or body-related distress, "transgender" identification, or other aspects of this guidance.

II. Guidance for Faith Formation & Youth Ministry

Parishes have a responsibility to support parent(s) or guardian(s) in their role as the first and most important teachers of their children. At the same time, parent(s) or guardian(s) are obligated to educate their children in the Catholic faith. Outside the home, this primarily occurs in Catholic schools, faith formation classes, and youth ministry programming.

The following guidelines apply to every individual involved in faith formation or youth ministry programs in parishes throughout the Diocese of New Ulm. It is the responsibility of the youth minister* or director of Faith Formation (religious education), in consultation with the pastor, to implement these guidelines.

*Youth minister is defined as an individual who functions as a leader in youth ministry in the parish.

A. Enrollment, Registration, and Retention

An individual who rejects his or her given sexual identity, expresses a “transgender” identity or who socially “transitions” (in any context), participates in “gender-affirming” psychotherapy, receives puberty-blocking or cross-sex hormone medications, or is undergoing or about to undergo surgery or procedures to alter his or her body as part of a “gender transition,” or who openly participates in a same-sex sexual relationship finds themselves in contradiction with Catholic Church teaching which defines gender as being grounded in a body with sex of male or female as given by God.

B. Names, Pronouns, and Records

All individuals serving in, or being served by, will be referred to with pronouns consistent with their biological sex as determined at conception and manifest at birth.

Sacramental records, student records, schedules, identification cards, class lists, correspondence, permanent records, and all other records kept on file must reflect the student’s legal name and biological sex.

C. Conduct and Expectations

Individuals will conduct themselves in accord with Catholic Church teaching concerning sexuality and sexual identity at all times, both on-site and when representing the parish program at off-site events.

Individuals will abide by the dress code that corresponds with their biological sex.

Individuals will access facilities and overnight accommodations that align with their biological sex.

Chaste behavior and modesty in communications, appearance, and behavior by individuals are expected at all times at on-site and off-site events.

The expressed rejection of one's given sexual identity as male or female, or the expression of a "transgender" identity is contrary to Catholic Church teaching. An individual's experience of identity- or body-related distress should always be addressed in the context of pastoral care and, in the case of minors, should include parent(s) or guardian(s).

Respectful, analytical discussion of Catholic Church teaching in the classroom or in youth ministry programs, as determined by the instructor or youth minister in consultation with the pastor, is acceptable, provided it intends to help the individual progress toward greater awareness and understanding of Catholic Church teaching. Individuals must refrain from open hostility toward or defiance of Catholic Church teaching.

In these situations, the administrator or diocesan representative will work with compassion to help guide the individual and his or her family as they seek to embrace this truth and how it defines the individual according to Catholic Church teaching. The commitment of the individual and the parent(s) or guardian(s) to acceptance or a process of growth toward acceptance of this truth is of utmost importance. If this commitment is not present, the individual may not enroll or continue to participate in a religious education and/or youth ministry program.

If an individual exercises choices, as described above, that are contrary to Catholic Church teaching and, therefore, is not eligible to attend a religious education program but still requests to be educated in the Faith, accommodations must be made for the parent(s) to educate their child at home (see Diocese of New Ulm policy 332.1 for guidelines). Attendance at a youth ministry program is a privilege; therefore, there is no canonical obligation on the part of the parish to provide at-home youth ministry opportunities for the individual.

Any questions concerning the application of these guidelines will be addressed with the pastor who will then consult with the bishop in collaboration with the appropriate diocesan representative. The bishop will serve as the final decision-maker.

The bishop may appoint a committee comprised of clergy and/or lay professionals to advise him on the appropriateness of continued enrollment or employment. The committee, whether standing or ad hoc in nature, will be formed to ensure a fair and thorough review of the situation, and its members will be chosen based on their expertise and commitment to Catholic Church teachings.

It should be emphasized that all persons have inherent human dignity and are thus deserving of innate respect. Bullying, harassment, or threats of violence against any individual, will not be

tolerated in religious education or youth ministry programs. Any such behavior will be addressed by the appropriate staff and law enforcement may be notified.

D. Curriculum

Essential beliefs and doctrinal principles to be addressed as developmentally appropriate in the faith formation curriculum include the following:

- Human beings are created as male and female in the image and likeness of God (*Gen. 1:27*). Human dignity is grounded in this special creation.¹
- Sexual difference is willed by God as part of the divine plan. The complementarity that results from sexual differentiation is ordered to the human good and in particular to marriage and family life (*CCC, nn. 369, 2333*).²
- The human person is a body–soul union, and the body is a constitutive aspect of the human person (*CCC, nn. 364, 365*).³
 - Human biology demonstrates that sex is determined at conception, is binary (male or female), is immutable (never changes), and can be objectively observed even before birth. A person’s sex marks “every cell” in a person’s body (over 30 trillion cells).⁴
 - Humans are called to accept their sexual identity, manifested through the body, as a fixed and unchanging element of self (*CCC, n. 2393*).⁵
 - Humans must care for and respect their bodies, which is a constituent dimension of their being. The human body may not be treated as a “piece of property” or “manipulate[d] as a thing or an instrument over which one is master and arbiter.”⁶
 - All students and families deserve interactions with Catholic communities that are marked by respect, charity, and the truth about human dignity and God’s love.

E. Online Activity

Individuals’ online activity, especially their use of social media, will be respectful of others and not promote, advocate, or endorse beliefs or conduct contrary to the Catholic Church’s teachings.

Online activity, including the use of social media, that bullies or degrades another is prohibited. An individual who violates these standards may be disciplined up to and including dismissal from the program.

F. Counseling and Health Services

As mandated reporters, parish staff will communicate with parent(s) or guardian(s) about their child’s behavior at faith formation or youth ministry programs and inform them of any concerns relating to the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual health, safety, and welfare of their child, subject to legal constraints imposed by law (for example, in cases of suspected parental abuse).

In an effort to support individuals experiencing identity or body-related distress while upholding Catholic Church teaching, the parish may suggest counseling, in consultation with the parent(s) or guardian(s). Such counseling should be provided by a licensed mental health provider who understands and respects Catholic Church teaching on human anthropology, preferably one who is a practicing Catholic. Individuals will not receive referrals for gender-related care that is not aligned with Catholic teaching.

If an individual tells a parish or school employee or volunteer that the individual rejects his or her sexual identity or desires to “transition” or otherwise assert a new identity (i.e. name change, change in dress/behavior, hormone therapy, etc.), then the employee or volunteer must share this information with the designated clergy, school, or parish contact. Designated parish or school employees will contact parent(s) or guardian(s) within 48 hours.

As detailed in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Doctrinal Note on the Moral Limits to Technological Manipulation of the Human Body, the Catholic Church prohibits medical procedures and therapies sometimes collectively described as gender-affirming care, including social or medical interventions, including the use of puberty-suppressing drugs, cross-sex hormones, and irreversible surgeries that attempt to alter the body in contradiction to the person’s sexual identity. These interventions are known to cause harm to an otherwise healthy body and fail to resolve the individual’s underlying distress.

In cases of true genetic or physical anomalies, also known as disorders of sexual development, the Catholic Church permits appropriate medical care to restore health and function.

Parishes are encouraged to contact the Diocese of New Ulm for resources that are consistent with Catholic Church teachings regarding identity or body-related distress, “transgender” identification, or other aspects of this policy.

III. Guidance for Parish Life

A. The Sacraments

The bishop is obliged to regulate the rights of the faithful to the Sacraments as the common good demands (CIC canon 223).

If a candidate is properly prepared and predisposed, he or she has a right to receive the Sacraments. A pastor has the duty to make known the teachings of the Church in their fullness so candidates may be properly prepared and predisposed (CIC canons 217, 229 §1).

In the instance of individuals requesting the sacraments when the individual and/or those requesting on his or her behalf are professing to live a transgender lifestyle, the following critical considerations should be taken into account before deciding whether to offer the sacrament.

1. Baptism of Infants

The baptism of children, including children entrusted to a parent who is leading a transgender lifestyle, is permitted. Yet, as the rite requires, there must be well-founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic faith. Otherwise the administration of the sacrament should be postponed. Such assurance may be garnered through godparents, extended family, and the community. See below regarding the selection of sponsors or godparents.

2. Baptism of Adults

Adults must accept the teachings of the Catholic Church when requesting baptism for themselves. Those who are living a transgender lifestyle, considering transitioning, or undergoing transitions should be delayed until Catholic Church teachings are fully understood and professed as being accepted by the individual. See below regarding the selection of sponsors or godparents.

3. Confirmation

Those living a transgender lifestyle, considering transitioning, or have begun transitioning should be delayed until Catholic Church teachings are fully understood and accepted. See below regarding the selection of sponsors or godparents.

4. Godparents and Sponsors

Those confirmed adults living a transgender lifestyle or currently transitioning may not serve as a baptismal or confirmation sponsor.

5. Holy Eucharist

Mindful that the Most Holy Eucharist represents the source and summit of our Catholic faith and that the Catholic Church's mission is to make known the tenets of faith:

Those publicly living a transgender lifestyle or undergoing a transition are to refrain from receiving Communion until they fully accept the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Those who are struggling with gender dysphoria but are living in accord with Catholic Church teaching are welcome to receive Communion.

6. Penance

Regarding gender ideology, the confessor has an obligation to provide clarity on Catholic Church teaching in order to lead the penitent to repentance and conversion.

7. Holy Orders

Having undergone surgery to alter genitals or reproductive organs is an impediment to ordination (*CIC* canon 1041, 5°). Only biological males may be accepted as seminarians or ordained.

8. Weddings

An individual who has rejected his or her given sexual identity as male or female, or who expresses a "transgender" identity or who is pursuing medical interventions for purposes of "gender transition" may not enter into the sacrament of matrimony nor may they serve as members of the bridal party (bridesmaids or groomsmen).

9. Mass of Christian Burial

A funeral Mass may be offered for a deceased individual who professed his or her Catholic baptism and who experienced identity or body-related distress, and rejected his or her given sexual identity as male or female, even to the point of public expression of a "transgender" identity. However, the funeral will be prayed in a manner such that no endorsement of the individual's transgender identification is given. The individual's given/baptismal name will be used when referencing the deceased.

If the obituary written by the deceased or family members publicly endorses the false notion that he or she "transitioned," it will not be permitted to be shared at the liturgy. If a wake is to be prayed in the parish church, particular care is to be taken to ensure that any eulogy or public remarks made by mourners avoid giving public endorsement that the individual has "transitioned." The parish is not responsible for remarks made off of

Church property and clergy should use their judgment as to what role they will take in off-site wake services.

The priest celebrant will consult the bishop on funeral plans before the liturgy to ensure that public scandal, to the degree possible, is avoided in the prayer of the funeral (*CIC* canons 1184 and 1185).

10. Sacramental Records

Baptismal records for infants should record the child's biological sex. [Note: Most states permit individuals to alter birth certificates, with no notation that the person's "sex" designation has changed. The parish must maintain its own records. For baptisms that occur later – beyond infancy – the parish needs an affirmation or something similar from the parents that the birth certificate has not been altered to reflect a different "sex" (or "gender" if that's the state terminology).]

No indication of self-determined identity or "change" in "gender" may be recorded in baptismal records.

“[A parish] is not allowed to annotate two mothers or two fathers as parents. If one of the partners is the child's natural father or mother, he or she **MUST** be mentioned in the register; the other partner **CANNOT** be annotated in any fashion including sponsor or godparent. If the child was adopted, then the partners **MUST** choose which individual will be annotated. It is not considered possible by the Church to annotate in the baptismal register a “transgender father” whose real nature is a woman or a “transgender mother” whose real nature is a man.” (From a letter by the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts dated November 15, 2007.)

B. Liturgical Ministries

Recognizing the potential of scandal and confusion of the faithful regarding Church teachings, individuals who are involved in same-sex sexual relationships or who enter a civil “same-sex marriage,” or who publicly express a transgender identity or publicly reject their given sexual identity as male or female, in either word or action, may not serve as a lector, music minister, or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion during school or parish liturgies. By their actions, such individuals, place themselves in a state of objective, grave sin and are urged to repent and seek to be reconciled through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It should be noted that the same standard exists for those involved in cohabitating relationships, those in civil marriages but without the Sacrament of Matrimony, or premarital sexual relationships.

Consistent with the norms of the Catholic Church, all persons may attend public worship events.

C. Employees and Volunteers

Recognizing the potential of scandal and confusion of the faithful regarding Catholic Church teachings, individuals who are involved in same-sex sexual relationships or who enter a civil “same-sex marriage,” or who publicly express a transgender identity or publicly reject their given sexual identity as male or female, in either word or action, may not serve in an employed or volunteer ministry on behalf of any parish, parochial school, or diocesan ministry in the Diocese of New Ulm. The same standard exists for those involved in cohabitating relationships or premarital sexual relationships.

D. Sponsorship of Outside Organizations

Parishes and Catholic schools in the Diocese of New Ulm may not sponsor, charter, or provide meeting space for any organization that violates the definition of marriage or advocates for or celebrates transgender identification or sexual behaviors in contradiction to Catholic Church teaching, as indicated in this guidance.

Parishes, schools, and institutions in the Diocese of New Ulm are required to ensure that the sponsored organization’s participation policy reflects or is not inconsistent with the beliefs of the Catholic Church and policies of the diocese. Parishes and schools in the Diocese of New Ulm are to avoid any and all accommodations to organizations that profess beliefs that do not align with Church teaching.

IV. Definitions, Endnotes, and References

A. Definitions

Biological sex: the biological classification of the person as male or female based on the body's design to produce either small gametes - sperm (male) or large gametes - ova (female). Sex is determined at conception, binary (male or female), immutable, and observed at birth or in utero.

Chastity: the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being. Sexuality, in which man's belonging to the bodily and biological world is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and a woman. (CCC 2337, p. 561)

Divine Revelation: Through an utterly free decision, God has revealed himself and given himself to man. This he does by revealing the mystery, his plan of loving goodness, formed from all eternity in Christ for the benefit of all men. God has fully revealed this plan by sending us his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. (CCC 50, p. 19)

Gender Dysphoria (aka Gender Identity Disorder): the psychiatric or psychological condition of experiencing a strong desire to be a person of the opposite gender.

Gender Identity Disorder: (see "Gender Dysphoria")

Gender Ideology (aka Gender Theory): a prevalent cultural trend that promotes both a redefining of gender, and a plurality of new types of unions, both of which contradict God's creation plan, and His divine model of marriage as between one man and one woman. The theory of gender ideology is that an individual has the right to choose his or her "gender identity," regardless of the individual's biological sex at birth, and to "transition" socially, legally, medically, and surgically, if so desired, to that new sex; and that society must not only respect these choices but also affirm and provide support for this theory. As stated above, gender ideology, in its proposed theory, rejects God and His plan for our lives in accordance with His purpose for each of us, and therefore, is not a reality and not valid in the Catholic Church.

Gender Non-conforming: (see "Transgender")

Gender Theory: (see "Gender Ideology")

Marriage: one man and one woman unite for a lifelong union for the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children.

Natural Law: Expresses the original moral sense which enables man to discern by reason the good and the evil, truth and the lie (CCC, 1954). The natural law, present in the heart of each

man and established by reason, is universal in its precepts and its authority extends to all men. It expresses the dignity of the person and determines the basis for his fundamental rights and duties. (CCC, 1956)

Same-sex Attraction: A person’s emotional, romantic, and sexual attractions are predominantly and persistently towards the same sex. (Courage.org)

Sex: (see “Biological Sex”)

Sexual identity: One’s identity as male or female – son or daughter of the Lord – received as a gift from God our Creator.

Transgender: an adjective describing a person whose psychological self-perception differs from the physical reality of his or her sex (male or female). A person who identifies as transgender has rejected his or her given sexual identity as male or female and asserts an alternative identity – whether the opposite sex, neither male nor female (sometimes referred to as “nonbinary”), or “fluid” and changing over time. Such public expressions that are intended to communicate an identity different from one’s sex include, but are not limited to, utilizing pronouns of the opposite sex or invented pronouns, changing one’s name, clothing, hairstyle, or undergoing medical or surgical interventions to alter the body to appear more like the opposite sex (or less like one’s given sex). “Transgender” or “gender-affirming” medical and surgical interventions cannot change a person’s sex. They only impair the natural functioning of the healthy body, induce disease (including cardiovascular risks, cancers, metabolic disorders, etc.), and may cause sterility. [Puberty suppression in a sexually immature child, followed immediately by high-dose “cross-sex” hormones as an adolescent will sterilize the child.] Transgender is inconsistent with Christian anthropology theology, and it holds significant moral consequences.

Transitioning: refers to an individual who has begun a process by which he or she undergoes physical and other changes to outwardly portray a change in his/her gender. Often individuals identify themselves as “transitioning” when in fact they are still discerning whether to pursue internal feelings they harbor and submit to physical changes.

B. Endnotes

[1] Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000 update), n. 2393. All subsequent citations appear in the text.

[2] See Francis, *Laudato si'* (May 24, 2015) n. 155.

[3] See National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC), “Brief Statement on Transgenderism,” *National Catholic Bioethics Center Quarterly* 16.4 (Winter 2016): 600–601, doi: 10.5840/ncbq201616457; and John A. Di Camillo, “Gender Transitioning and Catholic Health Care,” *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 17.2 (Summer 2017): 219–220, doi: 10.5840/ncbq201717221.

[4] Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Understanding the Biology of Sex and Gender Differences; Wizemann TM, Pardue ML, editors. *Exploring the Biological Contributions to Human Health: Does Sex Matter?* Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2001. 2, Every Cell Has a Sex. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK222291/>

[5] See Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Washington, DC: US Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2004), n. 224; and Congregation for Catholic Education, *Male and Female He Created Them* (2 February, 2019), n. 4.

[6] Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Health Care Workers, *New Charter for Health Care Workers* (Philadelphia: NCBC, 2017), n. 47.

C. References

Archdiocese of Omaha. “Policy on Human Sexuality.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000 update), n. 2393.

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<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2024/04/08/240408c.pdf>

Francis, *Laudato si* (24 May, 2015) n. 155.

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United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. “Doctrinal Note on the Moral Limits to Technological Manipulation. <https://www.usccb.org/resources/Doctrinal%20Note%202023-03-20.pdf>