



“A Body You Prepared for Me” Transgender Policy for the Diocese of Baker

In a remarkably short time, the radical transgender agenda has swept all before it, rapidly expanding its bureaucratic dominance in government, education, and medicine through a deluge of liberty-constricting regulations. Caught unprepared by this sudden onslaught, Catholic parents, pastors, principals, and administrators need clear, consistent standards to navigate these turbulent societal waters and guide those in their care to safe harbor.

This statement of policy applies Catholic teaching on human sexuality and morality to the challenges gender theory presents to Catholic organizations and institutions in the Diocese of Baker, especially to Catholic parishes and schools. The policy provides authoritative guidance for handbooks, employee agreements, and training for key employees throughout the diocese. Under its guidance the policy gathers church employees, volunteers, and people young or old who carry on the work of the Church. It also includes all contracted vendors in their on-site contact with people in the care of the Church.

The Challenge to Faith

Scripture teaches that when the Son of God came into the world, He said to His Father, “a body You prepared for Me” (Heb 10:5). Centuries before, a similar moment of self-recognition had provoked awe-filled praise from the Psalmist: “My bones are not hidden

from You,” the God Who “formed my inmost being . . . in my mother’s womb. . . . I am wonderfully made” (Ps 139: 15, 13, 14).

In the drama of the Gospels the human body of the Word Made Flesh takes center stage: the tiny body of the baby, the transfigured body of the Beloved Son, the crucified body of the King of the Jews, the risen body of the Victor over death. The Son of God took flesh of the Virgin Mary and gave His body over to death to destroy death and raise our bodies to life. In the words of St. Paul, the Savior of the world came to be “the Savior of the body” (Eph 5:23).

As He set about healing and teaching and casting out demons, Jesus made the Psalmist’s amazement His own. “Let the children come to Me and do not prevent them,” He told His disciples; “for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these” (Mt 19:14).

Mindful of their Savior’s command, parents entrust their children to Catholic parishes and schools for formation in Christian teaching on the dignity of human life, the goodness of the human body, the sanctity of marriage, and the indispensable centrality of the family. They do not send their sons and daughters for indoctrination in radical transgender ideology that will prevent them from coming to the Lord. It is therefore necessary to draw distinctions.

Catholics believe that our identity as male or female is an essential part of the divine plan for the human race to “increase and multiply” by the bodily coupling of men and women in marriage. From this one-flesh union of husband and wife come forth their children, creatures of their Creator’s love for them *exactly as they are*. The sooner children come to know that God loved them into existence to share His love forever, the more confidently will they accept and care for their body as the unrepeatable, irreplaceable gift it is—wonderfully, intricately made in God’s mysterious design.

Nonetheless, in the aftermath of original sin growing up is hard to do. To wrestle with our sexual identity, to wonder about the meaning of our maleness and femaleness, is an indispensable part of learning who we are as persons. For a statistically miniscule but deeply afflicted segment of the population, however, the uniquely personal experience of gender identification is soul-wrenchingly difficult to integrate with biological sex.

In the face of such painful confusion, Christians recall the suffering embodied in Jesus. In His last hours the body prepared for Him was plunged into a bottomless abyss of public rejection—physical, emotional, political. Pilate condemned Him; soldiers stripped him, crowned Him with thorns, spat upon Him. Onlookers mocked Him; passers-by reviled Him. God seemed to have abandoned Him (cf. Mt 27: 29-30, 39, 46).

But the Abandoned One does not abandon us. Penetrating the darkest recesses of human loneliness, fear, and shame, the Eternal Son stays true to His name: “Emmanuel.” When we are most alone, He is always “God with us.” He *identifies Himself* with every human being as someone for whom He endured the deadly darkness of the Cross.

The misery gender dysphoria provokes leads transgender activists to draw the hard and

fast conclusion that gender is a purely personal choice, intrinsically unconnected to biological sex. They emphatically insist on a single solution to the problem: unqualified “affirmation” of a person’s “experienced gender” over and against his or her biological sex, along with active encouragement for the process of gender transition to its surgical conclusion. Those who hasten to disrupt natural sexual development pay no heed to the life-long, life-limiting consequences medical mutilation sets in motion, and they are keen to deny parents any say in withholding it from their children.

Such hyper-urgency greatly exaggerates the frequency of deep-seated gender confusion in the population and ignores its preponderantly transient nature in those adolescents it afflicts. In the years before gender theory came to prominence, children who firmly believed themselves to be in the “wrong sex” were a rarity—two-tenths of one percent by one estimate.

They are a rarity still, but their suffering is grievous and merits our compassion. To our great misfortune, however, we find ourselves in sharp disagreement over what true compassion calls for in their condition. Over 80% of children with severe gender identity distress resolve it in the course of puberty with psychological treatment or no treatment at all; they then resume normal development. In stark contrast, of children who receive gender affirmative care, only 3% see a positive outcome.

Such evidence goes against the grain of gender theory’s prescription of unprecedented social experimentation on children. As additional information emerges that further erodes its revolutionary rationale, Christians should not be surprised. For cellular-level science confirms what Scripture teaches: the biological basis of our sexual identity is beyond the reach of human ingenuity to alter. We have no power to undo God’s original

creative design when He made us in His image, for our sexual identity is not *assigned* to us at birth; it is *given* to us by God in the womb.

Subsequent hormonal interventions alter nothing of a person's chromosomal-based sexual identity, nor can so-called "sex-change" surgeries undo the sexuality of a

person created male or female. Directly intending to change one's given bodily sex into a "new" one means intending to alter the unalterable. For while it is possible to *distinguish* sex from gender, it is not possible to *separate* gender from sex. "What God has joined together," Jesus says in another context, "man must not divide."

Going Forward in Faith: Rules for the Road Ahead

Human sexuality comes as gift from the Creator—"male and female He created them"—and the gift brings to light a clear behavioral norm: the biological sex of a person should provide the basis for all our interactions in Catholic parishes, organizations, and institutions.

- Public Witness

Catholic institutions should not publicly call in question their Catholic identity by posting signage or symbols or by adopting programs, texts, or practices that promote transgender ideology.

- The Role of Parents

As the primary educators of their children, parents have a right to information about curricular materials and programmatic events that affect the sexual development of their children.

- Pronouns

Any parochial, organizational, or institutional documentation that 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 or use the plural *they/them/their* instead of the singular *she/her/hers* or *he/him/his*.

Public speakers at church or school events should address people and refer to them with pronouns that are consistent with their biological sex.

- Bathrooms and Locker Rooms

All persons must use the bathroom or locker room that corresponds to their biological sex.

- Attire

All persons are to follow sex-specific dress codes in accord with their biological sex.

- Sports/Extra-curricular Activities

Participation in sex-specific extra-curricular activities at church or school must conform to the biological sex of the participants. Organizers will arrange overnight housing at camps, retreats, and young adult and youth gatherings in accord with the biological sex of attendees.

- Medication

A young person who takes puberty-blocking drugs chooses a path at odds with integral human development, because the process of gender transition entails the rejection of the body as God's gift. The vast majority of children who artificially pause natural pubertal development in this way go on to take cross-sex hormones. Since this is a result we cannot support, neither can we approve the path

that leads to it nor the surgeries that follow from it.

Therefore, young people entrusted to the care of the church may not take puberty-

blocking drugs, even if self-administered, on parish property or at an off-campus parish activity, with the purpose of potential or actual gender re-assignment.

We welcome non-Catholics to participate actively in our parish life, especially in Catholic schools. As experience elsewhere demonstrates, however, open hostility towards this policy or public defiance of Church teachings that support it undermine our Catholic identity and contradict our institutional mission. Therefore, students and parents who profess or promote the transgender agenda in effect make the choice not to enroll in or to withdraw from a Catholic school. The school will

respect their decision: they will not be offered admission, or they will be asked to withdraw if they are already enrolled.

We do not expect everyone to agree with this policy, but we do count on our fellow citizens to respect our right to establish it in accord with our fundamental Catholic beliefs. It is important for all of us to remember that respect is a two-way street—a street that leads to peace in the city.

Seal



Most Reverend Liam Cary
Bishop of Baker
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