

Gender Identity

"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 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."
~Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 2015

Over the course of the past 10 years, the public has become increasingly aware of the struggles of those who experience gender dysphoria, and the movement to create legal mandates for the accommodation of persons who identify as a gender other than their biological sex has become more prevalent. The matter of gender dysphoria is a sensitive topic that requires a compassionate response.

As Catholics, it is our most fundamental belief that every human being has been created in the image and likeness of God and has inestimable value and dignity. No one should be an object of scorn, hatred, or violence for any reason, including those who seek gender transition or who refuse to identify as either male or female.

The Catholic Church teaches that God created us, male and female, and that our bodies, souls, and identities as male and female are all integral to who we are as human persons. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 362-369). As our Holy Father has said:

"It needs to be emphasized that 'biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated' . . . It is one thing to be understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life, and another to accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality. Let us not fall into the sin of trying to replace the Creator. We are creatures and not omnipotent. Creation is prior to us and must be received as a gift. At the same, we are called to protect our humanity, and this means, in the first place, accepting it and respecting it as it was created." Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (no 56)