



Gender Discordance For Pastors

Being a boy never felt right to Rob. He was beginning to think maybe, deep down, he was really a woman. Supporters of gender theory would be willing to entertain that possibility.

Some of those supporters believe that the right thing to do is to affirm whichever identification seems most likely to resolve his struggles. In this line of thinking, the way to happiness is to accept “who you really are”, even if it doesn’t align with the body you’re born into.

But is there more to this picture?

Questions

What is the “you” that was born into the body?

Let’s try two understandings of the “you” separate from the body.

1) If the real “you” is material, then Rob’s body would be divided against itself. This would indicate that Rob is experiencing an actual medical condition. If “you” and the body are separate material entities, Rob would be two bodies.

2) If the real “you” is immaterial, it would seem to imply a rational soul. Both of these pose problems for gender theory: the first is contrary to experience; the second challenges its basic philosophical premises.

Is the body external to who we are?

Nature has its own existence. A truly human ecology understands nature without trying to dominate it. In our own case, bodily sex is not external to who we are. On the contrary, we could not be who we are without it. Rob would not exist at all if it wasn’t for the bodily sex of his father and mother. To reject the importance of Rob’s own bodily sex would be to reject theirs as well. It would be unfair to Rob to reject an integral aspect of his existence.

Note: It needs to be said that people with experiences like Rob’s suffer unjust discrimination, bullying, and abuse at a much higher rate than the general population. This is objectively wrong.

Tips for approaching the topic of gender discordance with parishioners

Listen to their experiences, but also T.A.L.K.

- **Tone** it down: Focus on conveying information and experience. Stay calm, and if they should start to raise their voices, don't match their tone.
- **Assume** the best intentions: Most people don't start out with a militant desire to live contrary to the truth. If they push back, even if what they're saying is wrong, consider that multiple pressures could be influencing their opinions. Try to identify how those pressures impact their ideas.
- **Limit** your claims: Avoid using generalizing words like "always" and "never". Don't over-promise on the benefits of living according to the truth.
- **Keep** to the issue: Don't get sidetracked talking about other beliefs or a controversial public figure; focus on the topic of gender discordance.

Is it unfair to expect Rob not to identify as a woman? What is the difference between his identifying as a woman and anyone else's?

By this thinking, it would be unfair if a biological woman like Claire was treated the way she identifies, while Rob was treated like a man in spite of identifying as a woman. But Rob and Claire have different self-perceptions. Rob thinks his identity is determined by an inner sense. Gender theory would have Claire believe that she's only considered to be a woman because she identifies as one. Instead, she could respond, "I'm not a woman because I identify as one, and I don't identify as a woman because I have an internal sense of being a woman. My bodily reality determines how I identify, not the other way around. My internal sense varies day to day, and sometimes I don't feel very 'womanly' at all. I'm a woman because of my objectively real and unchanging sex, no matter my internal sense."

Can they both be right?

To say that "people are whatever they identify as" would pressure anyone like Claire to accept a differing rationale for their being a man or woman. Either Claire is mistaken about the cause of her identifying as a woman, or Rob is mistaken about the cause of his identifying as a woman, or they're both mistaken. They can't both be right.

Learn more about
gender discordance at
LoveMeansMore.org



Resources

Dignitas Infinita

Declaration on human dignity from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, 55-60

Gender Ideology and Pastoral Practice

Edited by Theresa Farnan, Susan Selner-Wright, and Robert L. Fastiggi

Chastity Project

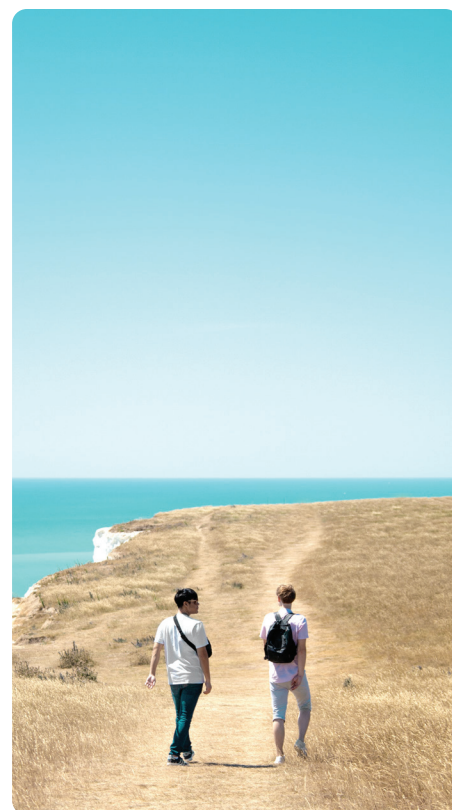
chastity.com/gender

Compass for Parents

By the Archdiocese of Detroit
compassforparents.org

Person & Identity

personandidentity.com/the-basics



All images are stock photos. Models for illustration. © 2026 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops