



Catholic Anthropology and the Challenges of Gender Ideology

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Popes Francis and Benedict on Gender Ideology

- **“We are experiencing a moment of the annihilation of man as the image of God....**
- **Today children – children! – are taught in school that everyone can choose his or her sex. Why are they teaching this?**
- **In a conversation with Pope Benedict, who is in good health and very perceptive, he said to me: “Holiness, this is the age of sin against God the Creator”..**
 - **Pope Francis, *Comments to Polish Bishops***



Amoris Laetitia 56

- *Ideology of gender: “denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and **envisages a society without sexual differences**, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family....*
- *leads to educational programs and legislative enactments that promote **a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separate from the biological difference** between male and female.... .*
- ***Creation is prior to us and must be received as a gift.** At the same time, we are called to protect our humanity, and this means, in the first place, accepting it and respecting it as it was created.”*



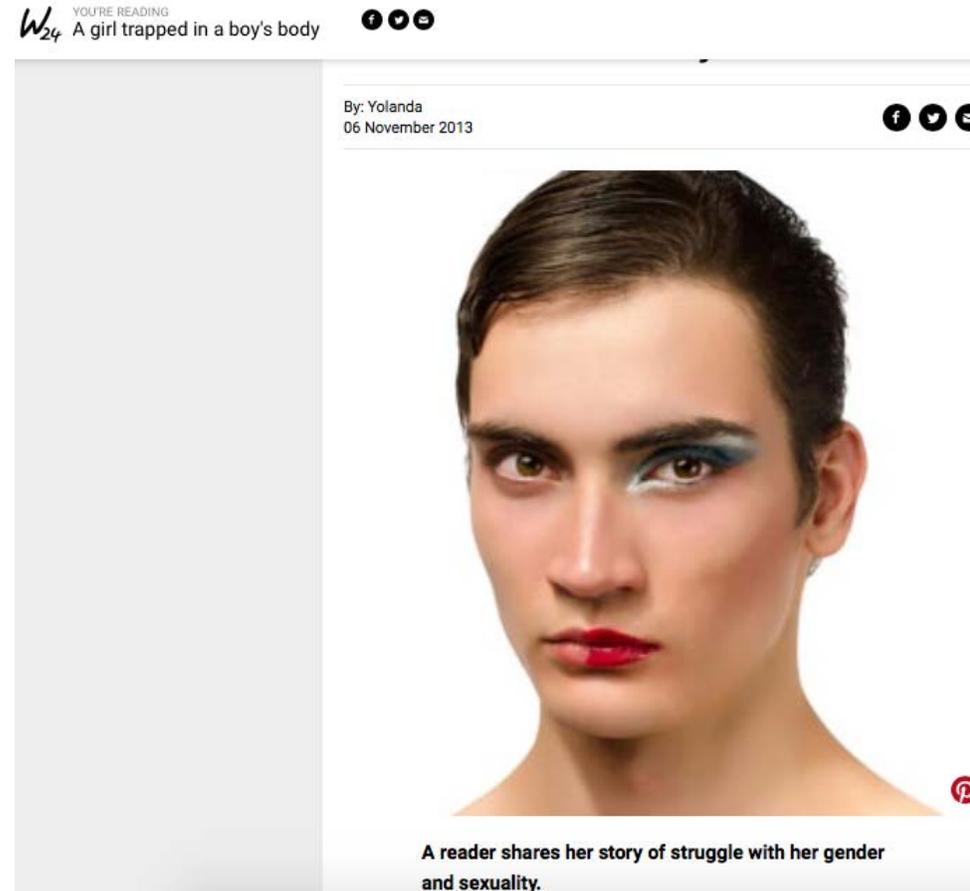
Laudato si' 155

- “...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
- “It is not a healthy attitude which would seek ‘to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it’.”

Why does
the Church
oppose
Gender
Ideology?

“Girl
Trapped in a
Boy’s
Body....”

“Boy Trapped
in Girl’s
Body...”





Gender Ideology redefines the person,
rejecting the unity of body and soul

- Church teaches: **The person is integral unity of body and soul in the image and likeness of God**
- “Christians believe that the body is important and fundamentally good – never a mere shell for an identity.”
 - *Statement on the Challenges posed by Gender Ideology, UK Confraternity of Catholic Clergy*
- Why is this important? **A correct anthropology is the criterion for shedding light on and verifying every historical form of culture.**
 - Compendium of Social Doctrine 558

Redefinition of human nature

OUTWARD EXPANDING THE LGBTQ CONVERSATION JUNE 26 2014 11:44 AM

Don't Let the Doctor Do This to Your Newborn

By Christin Scarlett Milloy



Slate

“It's called infant gender assignment: When the doctor holds your child up to the harsh light of the delivery room, looks between its legs, and declares [his opinion](#): It's a boy [or](#) a girl, based on nothing more than a cursory assessment of your offspring's genitals.”



God creates humans male and female

- Created male or female from the moment of conception
- The **body is good** and should never be treated in a purely instrumental way
- Being a **man or woman** is not about roles, or socially constructed expectations imposed on a person – **it is relational**
- **Masculinity, Femininity** essential to the family – **Fatherhood and motherhood are for the child**

Redefines family

“A group of people who care about each other and take care of each other.”

-Broward County Sexual Health Kindergarten Curriculum





Family

- Based on **biological ties**
- Human sexuality is created to enable humans to have intimacy and create a family – **the procreative and unitive purposes of human sexuality (Life and Love) are inseparable**
- **The family = image of the Trinity**
- **Adoption is a special circumstance** where a man and a woman generously give a child the mother and father – the family – he or she needs



Gender Ideology, Marriage Redefinition and Reproductive Technology

- **The Pill essentially changed our understanding of marriage and family**
 - (Sex without babies/babies without sex)
- **Intentional family: motherhood, fatherhood no longer tied to biological sex**
- **Marriage redefinition:** Intentionally creating a family that will never have either a mother or a father
- **Increasingly reliant on Artificial Reproductive Technology** – morally problematic procedures that separate generation of life from conjugal love, generate **excess embryos** that are frozen or destroyed.
- **Intentional creation of child who will never know either mother or father**



Redefines relationship of person/ family to state

- **Coming soon to a state near you? Double mastectomy for your 15-year-old, without parental consent**

A screenshot of a Facebook post. The user's name is "Jenn Burleton" and the date is "August 13, 2015". The post text is: "NO AGE RESTRICTION ON CONSENT FOR TRANS SURGERY WITH PARENT CONSENT....AGE OF CONSENT WITHOUT PARENTAL PERMISSION REMAINS 15. VICTORY!". The text is in all caps and appears to be a celebratory announcement regarding legal changes to consent requirements for trans surgery.



Marriage, Family prior to State

- **Marriage and family are ontologically prior to the state.**
The state can recognize, but not redefine.
- Dignity from God, not the state
- **Parents have the duty and right** to impart a religious education and moral formation to their children, a right the state **cannot annul**, but which it must respect and promote.
Compendium 239
- *The family is the first school of human values where we learn the wise use of freedom. AL 274*



Gender ideology:
Redefines relationship of
person to God

**“When the
freedom to be
creative becomes
the freedom to
create oneself,
then necessarily
the Maker himself
is denied and
ultimately man
too is stripped of
his dignity as a
creature of God,
as the image of
God at the core of
his being.”**

Benedict XVI





Freedom and God's Plan

- It is a **distortion of freedom** to try to claim the right to “create yourself.” From the time of Adam and Eve, sin has caused human beings to want to control God and creation, rather than respecting the magnificent integral order of creation as a gift.
- **Being a man or woman is not “assigned”** at birth; rather it reflects how God lovingly created you from the moment of conception
- **“Reassignment surgery”** is a violation of the integrity and dignity of the person – mutilation of healthy body parts

Clash of anthropologies

Christian Anthropology

- *Relational being*
- *Created Being*
- **Immortal soul – eternal life**
- *Meaning/Purpose: love, eternal life, God*
- **Unity of body and soul**
- *Dignity: Image and likeness of God*
- **“Male and female He created them”**
- *Created for love and relationships--self-gift imaged in body.*
- **marriage=covenant, loving intimacy + procreation**
- *Family=natural - man, woman in marriage + children ; permanent*
- **“Christ reveals man to himself”
Vat II, JP II**

Gender Ideology

- *Sexual being*
- *Self-Creating*
- **Materialism- happiness here**
- *Meaning/Purpose: pleasure, will to power*
- **Dualism: Person = will/ body= tool**
- *Dignity: conferred by state, law, “acceptance”*
- **No “binary” (M/F)--Infinite # genders, sexualities, identities**
- *Sex /gender/procreation – delinked; Autonomous self. Relationships by consent.*
- **Marriage = breakable contract for companionship**
- *Families =by desire; Any group of consenting individuals;*
- **Unintelligible, even to ourselves**



Impact on Catechesis

- **Affects understanding of Incarnation, Christology, Divine Fatherhood, goodness of Creation, Trinity (especially understanding the Trinity as a family, existing in relationship), Sacramental Theology (Marriage, Holy Orders), Moral theology (actions of the body affect the soul), Virtues, Remote preparation for marriage, understanding of human sexuality, human life issues, e.g., contraception and reproductive technology**
- **You can no longer assume an explicitly Christian view of person, love and the family.**

Instead **anticipate gaps in foundational concepts for catechesis.**

- Obligation to accompany person who has gender dysphoria/
gender identity issues
 - Their pain is real
 - Dignity of each person
- Obligation to faithfully communicate the truth of the Gospel
 - Divine Truth and Divine mercy cannot conflict
 - Potential for confusion, scandal



Can you choose a trans godparent?

- **CDF: Cannot have a Trans godparent. Why?**
- “attitude that goes against "the moral requirement to resolve the problem of one's own sexual identity according to the truth of one's own biological sex," the bishop cited the doctrinal congregation as saying.
- The congregation said such behavior shows the person does not meet the conditions required for living a life in conformity to the faith and, as such, cannot be accepted as a godparent.
- **Unique role as godparent – Canon 872**
- objective lack of the requirements" that are necessary for the ecclesial responsibilities of a godparent.



How do you talk to your kids about this?

- Be confident, be clear, be charitable
- Emphasize that reason and Revelation both support Christian anthropology
- Give big picture: Connect sex with call to be mother or father
- “Original Sources” (social media, etc.) – See what your kids are seeing, hearing!
- If they see it, address it
- Be aware of, and avoid, politicized science
- Use clear language – terms like “disordered inclination” require explanation and may lead to misunderstanding
- Avoid language that reinforces Gender Ideology (e.g., preferred pronouns)
- Use language that reinforces the dignity of every person.

Resources

- USCCB Gender Ideology Teaching Resources
- <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/marriage/promotion-and-defense-of-marriage/upload/Gender-Ideology-Select-Teaching-Resources.pdf>
- *The New Atlantis: [Sexuality and Gender, Growing Pains](#)*
- *ACPeds "Gender Ideology harms Children," <https://www.acpeds.org/the-college-speaks/position-statements/gender-ideology-harms-children>*
- *Findings from the Biological, Psychological, and Social Sciences Report on Gender and Sexuality*
- *Amoris Laetitia 56*
- *Compendium of Social Doctrine Chapter Five: The Family, The Vital Cell of Society*
- *Encyclical of Ukrainian synod of bishops concerning the danger of gender ideology*
<http://news.ugcc.ua/en/articles/encyclical-of-the-synod-of-bishops-of-the-major-archbishopric-of-kyivhalych-of-the-ukrainian-greek-catholic-church-concerning-the-danger-of-gender-ideology-78367.html>
- *Catholic Women's Forum –" Gender" – "Resources"*
- <https://catholicwomensforum.org/resources/>



Parish wide initiatives: Catechesis on marriage

- **Clear teaching about contraception**, which is the root of Gender Ideology (especially focus on marriage prep and parent education)
- **Marriage and family strengthening** ministries key as **remote preparation**, not just for marriage but also for reinforcing beauty to Christian anthropology
- Theology of the Body/ NFP
- Outreach to same sex attracted that is grounded on church teaching, not in opposition – **Courage/ Eden Invitation**
- **Cannot ignore pornography**



Practical guidelines for dealing with gender ideology

- Challenge: Balance accompaniment of wounded with faithful formation of the community
- Evangelization and catechesis
- Avoid scandal
- Support parents' efforts to protect their children's innocence
- Watchful eye on parish resources (textbooks)
- Anticipate challenges – craft policies before crisis, not in response



Implement strategic response: parish

- Importance of **training**
- **Designated expert** – you the pastor, and/or DRE, RCIA director, etc....
- **Educate staff**
- Examine parish ministries for faithfulness to **Catholic identity**: school, social ministries, parish outreach
- Reach out to and educate **key constituencies** in parish: (on church teaching)
 - **Parents, physicians and teachers** especially



Gender Ideology and Sacraments

- Balance: Lay faithful generally have right to Sacraments, clergy assess readiness,
- Church community right to proper teaching as illustrated through catechesis and administration of Sacraments
- **Issue 1: Identifying as transgender incompatible with marriage, holy orders**
 - (Possible for someone who has identified as trans and detransitioned; would require personal catechesis/ marriage prep)
- **Issue 2: Is understanding of anthropology sufficient for reception of sacrament/ acceptance of teachings of Catholic church**
 - Adult identifying as transgender in RCIA – can you say this adult understands the teachings of the Church if he or she still holds onto trans ideology?
- **Issue 3: Children: Boy who wants to wear Communion dress**
 - Sacrament, not a statement; Should not wear clothing of opposite sex
- **Decision for Bishop!**

Religious Ed

- **Know** what is in public schools
- **Adjust content** of religious ed to counter content in public schools
- **Strong presentation** of Christian anthropology
- **Encourage** parents to listen, observe, question, object, propose
- **Adjust model** of religious ed to allow for more opportunities for engagement



Catholic schools

- ***A Catholic school cannot validate the idea that a child has changed gender without compromising its mission and Catholic identity.***
- ***A Catholic school cannot validate a same-sex student “couple” without undermining mission and identity.***
- ***A Catholic school cannot treat a same-sex couple as a “family” or comply with an adult’s insistence that he or she identifies as a gender other than his or her biological sex without compromising its mission and Catholic identity.***

Catholic schools

- **Consistency in dress code, behavioral expectations, facility use**
- **Pronouns matter**
- **Clear communication** with parents before enrollment (or re-enrollment) is essential
- This communication must include a **realistic assessment** of what is/is not possible in accommodation
- Discrete presentation of living situation, words and behavior that don't contradict Christian anthropology important to ensure **respect for identity, mission of school**



Catholic schools

- *The school's openness, respect for the child must be matched by parent(s)' and child's respect for mission and identity of the school.*
 - This is the basis for **dialogue** about possibility of enrollment
- **Examples of areas that must be clarified**
 - Dress, deportment of student, attitude/respect for Church
 - Public displays of affection on part of parents, listing in school directory
 - **Are they there to change the Church?**



Why do we need morality clauses for teachers?

- **Mission Based Hiring!**
- **Opportunity for evangelization**
 - – areas of disagreement often due to perceptions about general catholic “values” (kindness, etc) that are not informed by knowing “what” and “why” of Church teachings
- Opportunity to identify possible situations where they could give **scandal without realizing it**
 - E.g., Facebook postings, objective living situations, etc
 - **Principals, administrators: Build a relationship** with your teachers
 - **Teachers: if you don’t understand why something is included, ask!**

Pastoral Care of Individuals

- Adults
 - **Inclusion**: extent depends not only on the church's invitation but on individual's ability to give up what is holding them back
 - **Accompaniment**: companion on their journey toward conversion
 - **Prayer and communal activities** always available
 - **Mercy, confession** always available
 - **Avoiding scandal** – lectors and Eucharistic ministers should not be living in open rejection of church teaching
 - Public/private distinction

Pastoral care

- **Take care not to affirm erroneous beliefs** about person, even in private conversations – the person who identifies as transgender and their families deserve faithful catechesis.
- **Do not allow use of facilities for events that can be construed as opposing church teaching** (e.g., receptions after same sex union ceremonies)
- **Appropriate facility use** – complying with norms of decency and modesty – bathroom use, changing facilities



Pastoral care of children

- Same principles apply – pronouns, dress and facility use appropriate to biological sex from birth
- Teens and preteens – on overnight, mission trips, sleeping quarters according to biological sex
- Dances – couples must be opposite sex
- Do not use birth certificate to determine gender – why?
Birth certificates can be legally changed, in some states without medical/surgical treatment

Hard Cases

- Catholic dad transitions to woman –
 - Consider: How old are his kids? Is he showing up at school events? Is he looking for affirmation/ attention at the expense of the kids? Are his psychological issues well known? How is he dressing – non specific, or very feminine clothes? What are his children's needs? How to prevent scandal, while still keeping him in his kids' lives...
- Parents present boy transitioning to girl for First Communion – he wants to wear a Communion dress.
 - Parents' attitudes – all in? Looking for support in working through this?
 - Do they understand the underlying theology? Are they willing to work through this with the diocese? Are they seeking a public or private First Communion?
- Teenager in confirmation class begins to socially transition
 - What is attitude of parents? What is his or her support? How can I delay confirmation yet keep this teenager plugged into the parish without losing him/her? Honest discussion of theology behind it to show nothing personal Environmentalism as hook – human ecology



Outreach to Key Persons

- Public school teachers – support, friendship evangelization, catechesis
- Physicians
- Social workers
- psychologists
- Catholic school teachers
- Those who work in higher ed, govt