

Special Topics in Theology of the Body for Teachers
Gender and Sexual Identity 2018

Session One and Two: Anthropology of Maleness and Femaleness

Emily Macke, MTS, JPPI Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family

In St. John Paul II's Theology of the Body, he provides an "adequate anthropology" (an understanding) of the human person that is truly befitting of the dignity of the person.

- Receive ourselves and our identity...we are loved into existence, identity is a gift; focus on being a son/daughter
- Give of ourselves...called in our unity and differences to love; focus on being a husband or a wife
- A giving that is fruitful...called to create, to bring forth something/someone new; focus on being a mother or a father

Gender is more than being male or female, gender involves the entirety of our being.

My body is not a mere object, it is me. There is a unity between the soul and the body that makes up the human person.

Sexual difference is a visible sign of what is invisible.

Our culture has begun to look at the body as a blank canvas with no inherent meaning.

The body is not some "dumb matter", a meaningless collection of cells and DNA. Rather that body is a gift whose origin is love.

What is the distinction between gender and sex?

- Sex is based on which reproductive organs I happen to have
- Gender is often considered a "social construct"
- Sexual differences, male and female, highlight the givenness and immutability of the two sexes.

Sexual identity, which I discover in my body, is a constant reminder of who I am as a human person...a gift from God, called to give in love, fruitfully. So, embracing this gift of our masculinity and femininity, which is revealed in and through our bodies is key to understanding who God created us to be and what He is calling us to (ultimately, eternal communion with Him in heaven).

In our desperation for equality, it comes across as sameness and overlooks the gifts God have provided to us.

The body reveals the person. Our bodily masculinity or femininity isn't some random attribute we happen to have. It's who we are. And who we are, male or female, reveals something about Who God is- love.

The Church is not injecting meaning into sexual difference. The meaning is inherent, given logic of sexual difference, and the Church is merely safeguarding what is already there.

The high school curriculum created by Ruah Woods, titled Called to be More, addresses these concepts for high school students.

www.ruahwoodspress.com

Session Three: Development and Disorders of Sexual Identity

Dr. Andrew Sodergren, MTS, PsyD

How did we get here?

- Enlightenment Philosophy- 14th and 15th century- present thinking. The meaning of things is not inherent but is decided and posed from the outside.
- Feminism- a gendered body is a threat to my autonomy- limits me and what I am able to do. I need to liberate myself from bodily constraints.
- Relativism/Deconstructionism- We are building a world of relativism- the world is mine to use and build to please myself.
- The belief gender is learned from the outside, nurture vs. nature

There is a difference between gender ideology and the person who is struggling with their gender identity.

Gender confusion or sexual identity confusion is the medical terminology.

We are male and female from our conception.

We have to learn how to grow into our maleness/femaleness.

In childhood...

- Boys continue to be more physically active
- Infant girls prefer to look at faces than objects
- Differences in style of play between boys and girls

- Differences in social behavior (dominance vs. nurturing)
- Moral development (boys need more support and guidance to develop good morals)

Basic concept of gender identity is formed about 2 ½ years old

Sexual identity is stable around 3 ½ years old

Stability of sexual identity and what roles go with each grows over time

Spontaneous sex segregation emerges around 3 and increase until puberty

Importance of acceptance with same-sex peers, especially in the middle school years.

What is Gender Dysphoria (GD)?

- The experience of clinically significant distress or impairment associated with the perceived incongruence between one's psychological/emotional "gender identity" and one's biological sex.
- Formerly known as "Gender Identity Disorder"

What is the experience of GD like?

1. Preference for toys, games, activities, and types of play associated with the other sex
2. Rejection of typically masculine/feminine toys, games, activities, types of play
3. Preference for cross-gender roles in make-believe
4. Preference for classmates of the other sex
5. Preference for cross-dressing
6. Believe one has typical qualities of the other sex
7. Desire to be treated as the other sex
8. Desire to be other sex or insistence that one is
9. Dislike of one's sexual anatomy
10. Desire to get rid of one's primary /secondary sex characteristics
- "Essentially, I am not at home with my body and sexuality"**
11. Associated with much psychological comorbidity
 - a. Children: anxiety, depression, disruptive/impulsive behavior problems, autism spectrum disorder
 - b. Adolescents and Adults: anxiety, depression, substance abuse, self-harm, and suicide

- c. Lifetime suicide rate for transgender population is 41% (Mayer and McHugh, 2016)

How common is gender dysphoria?

- Based on the DSM-5 (clinically diagnosed):
 - .005 to .014% of adult males
 - .002 to .003% of adult females
- Other Research:
 - 1 in 13,000 males
 - 1 in 20-34,000 females
- If you let people self-select “transgender”:
 - Between 1 in 250 and 1 in 300
 - Males are 3-5xs more likely to identify as transgender

How persistent is gender dysphoria?

- The majority of early onset (between 2 and 4 years old) cases remit before adulthood.
 - 2-30% of gender dysphoric males persist
 - 12-50% of gender dysphoric females persist

If gender dysphoria lasts through puberty or is late on-set (puberty onward), it tends to be more persistent.

What causes gender dysphoria?

- Possible genetic anomalies
- Parental hormone anomalies
- “transgender brain theory”
- Overall, very little convincing evidence of biological origins
- Psychosocial factors:
 - Characteristics of the child
 - Characteristics of the parents/caregivers
 - Relationship with parents/caregivers
 - Peer relationships
 - Cultural/societal pressures

“Psychosocial factors...have a role to play in the etiology of gender-variant identities. There is evidence that poor or absent parental relationships, childhood abuse, and parental encouragement of gender-variance are more common amongst gender variant populations” (Veale et al., 2009, p.21).

Session Four: Pastoral Perspective of Gender Identity Confusion

Father John Hollowell

Father Hollowell directed participants to watch his video “The Third Way”. While “The Third Way” is about same sex attraction, many of the concepts are similar. This is a great tool for starting this conversation with students during Theology/Theology of the Body.

There is a difference between teaching/catechizing a group vs. talking to someone struggling with gender dysphoria or same sex attraction.

“I am teaching what the church teaches” is not the point to start at if a student comes to speak to you privately about same sex attraction or gender dysphoria.

There should be a three tier support system in place for students.

Tier I- teachers

Tier II- Priests or school counselors

Tier III- psychologist/psychiatrist

No more than 3 meetings prior to advising the student to move on to a professional. People overestimate their ability to address a specific need.

Triage the situation and then pass it on to a professional.

Let the student know you are here to receive them and to love them.

Three ways to support gender dysphoric students:

1. Accompaniment- Although she constantly holds up the call to perfection and asks for a fuller response to God, “the Church must accompany with attention and care the weakest of her children, who show signs of a wounded and troubled love, by restoring them hope and confidence, like the beacon of a lighthouse in a port of a torch carried among the people to enlighten those who have lost their way or who are in the midst of a storm” Let us not forget that the Church’s task is often like that of a field hospital. – *Amoris Laetitia* 291

It is arrogant and prideful to assume we are going to “fix it” - we are not trained!

2. Response

- a. Start with Kerygma: Jesus love you, all the time, in all circumstances
- b. Listen to their story! (from the beginning....) be curious, ask questions, without trying to fix them. These students know the Church is in disagreement with the decision. Let the student tell their story first.
- c. Shine the light of Mercy and Love of God into the midst of their experience
- d. Attempt to walk with them back into a relationship with the Father. Break the cycle of shame and isolation with that person. Know enough to receive students and then help refer the student onto professionals

3. Pro-tips

- a. Avoid value laden statements
- b. Speak hope into the chaos
- c. Check your own past history and experiences
- d. Have tools at your fingertips:
 - i. www.recoveryzone.com
 - ii. www.integrityrestored.com
 - iii. www.prodigal-ministries.com
 - iv. www.ruahwoods.org

Two deadly extremes to avoid when working with students:

1. Thinking you are going to “cure” the student
2. Becoming friends with the student by downplaying the Church’s teachings

Session Five: How do We Teach About Gender to Young People?

Emily Macke, MTS, JPPI Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family

Basic Principals to Keep in Mind When Speaking to Young People about Gender Dysphoria

1. Responding to Hurt

It is easy to get defensive and angry in response, but we need to remain calm, confident and loving.

The questions and accusations students present do not exist in a vacuum, there is a story behind every question and accusation. We might know what it is, but we might need to love through our answers

2. Respond with questions

Allow the students to think and form their own conclusion. Learn the art of the follow up question.

- Why do you say that?
- Can you give me an example?
- Have you ever thought about...?
- What would you say to....?

3. Use less charged examples

Relate your points to other concepts- things in nature, experiences of young children, or life as a high school student.

Be careful to remind the students it is just an analogy to help understand, not specifically to make a 1:1 comparison.

Talking Points Regarding Gender Dysphoria

Three consistent talking points:

- 1. Dignity of the human person**
- 2. Givenness**
- 3. Relationality (from and for)**

1. Dignity of the human person

Every person is loved. Every person has intrinsic dignity. Every person is created in God's image and likeness.

Dignity that is intrinsic to who we are as a human person is a gift.

2. Givenness

Our male and female body- and therefore our male or female identity – is given and entrusted to us and is inseparable from who we are. St. John Paul II reminded us of what is at stake in receiving this reality: "This is the body; a witness to creation as a fundamental gift, and therefore a witness to Love as the source from which this same gift springs." (TOB 14:4)

i.e. givenness- a sunset- we didn't create it but are given it daily

The Church is not injecting meaning into sexual difference. The meaning is the inherent, given logic of sexual difference, and the Church is merely safeguarding what is already there.

“Young people had come to realize that something is wrong with our relationship with nature, that matter is not just raw material for us to shape at will, but that the earth has a dignity of its own and that we must follow its directives...Man too has a nature that he must respect and that he cannot manipulate at will. Man is not merely self-creating freedom. Man does not create himself. He is intellect and will, but he is also nature, and his will is rightly ordered if he respects his nature, listens to it and accepts himself for who he is, as one who did not create himself, in this way, and in no other, is true human freedom fulfilled.” -Address of Pope Benedict XVI, Sept. 22, 2011

3. Relationality

Sexual difference is a sign of the purpose of our existence- to be “for” another, in communion with another.

“When the freedom to be creative becomes the freedom to create oneself, then necessarily the Maker himself is denied...And it becomes clear that when God is denied, human dignity also disappears.” – Address of Pope Benedict XVI, Dec. 21, 2012

List of Common Objections

- Why is the Church anti-feminist?
- Why do Catholics hate gays?
- Why can't gay people get married
- Why do the Church try to dictate what people do with their sexuality

What do these questions have in common?

Fairness, kindness

What presuppositions do they hold true?

Equality is sameness, freedom, compassion

Truth is manipulated reality. Truth and love are not enemies. Authentic love requires truth-wants vs. needs- love is doing what a person needs even when it's not what someone wants.

Verbicide means killing words; words taking on a new meaning

What can we do to promote a culture that affirms sexual differences?

1. Use gendered terms more than neutral ones
 - a. Husband or wife, not spouse
 - b. Brother or sister, not sibling

- c. Son or daughter, not child
 - d. Mother or father, not parent
- 2. Other sex not opposite sex (still implies two but not in opposition to each other, or two halves make a whole)
- 3. Don't reduce gender to superficial stereotypes, but affirm young men and young women in their sexual identity as male and female

What can be done at the school level?

- 1. Integrate the Theology of the Body K-12
- 2. Instead of telling students "You can be anything you want" tell them they are a "Masterpiece of God created with precision for a specific purpose" or "What is God calling you to do?", or "Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire."
— [Catherine of Siena](#)

Session Six: The Cultural Setting for Gender Identity

Gender Ideology –Definitions

Sex- refers to the biological and physiological characteristics assigned at birth and references physical attributes beyond anatomy to include chromosomes or hormonal prevalence (APA 2011)

Human sexuality is an objective, biological binary trait: XY and XX are genetic markers. The norm for human design is to be conceived either male or female. Human sexuality is binary by design with the obvious purpose being the reproduction and flourishing of our species.

Gender is defined as "attitudes, feelings and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex" (APA 2011).

No one is born with gender. Everyone is born with a biological sex. Gender, an awareness and sense of oneself as male or female, is a sociological and psychological concept; not an objective biological one. No one is born with an awareness of themselves as male or female; this awareness develops over time, and like all developmental processes, may be derailed by a child's subjective perceptions, relationships, and adverse experiences from infancy forward. People who identify as "feeling like the opposite sex" or "somewhere in between" do not comprise a third sex. They remain biological men or biological women.

A person's belief that he or she is something they are not is at best, a sign of confused thinking. It is an objective psychological problem that lies in the mind and not the body.

84.2% of children who believe they are the opposite gender as a child, grow out of it a puberty.

Endorsing gender discordance as normal via public education and legal policies will confuse children and parents, leading more children to present to “gender clinics” where they will be given puberty blocking drugs. This, in truth, virtually ensures that they will “choose” a lifetime of carcinogenic and otherwise toxic cross sex hormones, and likely consider unnecessary surgical mutilation of their healthy body parts as young adults.

What does the Church have to say?

Everyone, man and women, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral and spiritual differences and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs and mutual support between the sexes are lived out. (CCC 2333)

By creating the human being man and women, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. (CCC 2393)

“Relativism is emerging as a new kind of totalitarianism – one that seeks to push the Christian belief in truth further out of the mainstream. We are building a dictatorship of relativism that does not recognize anything as definitive and whose ultimate goal consists solely of one’s own ego and desires” Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger

“Yet another challenge is posed by the various forms of an ideology of gender that denies the difference and reciprocity in the nature of a man and a women as envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family. This ideology leads to educational programs and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female. Consequently, human identity becomes the choice of individuals, one which can also change over time. It is a source of concern that some ideologies of this sort manage to assert themselves as absolute and unquestionable, even dictating how children should be raised. It needs to be emphasized that ‘biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but no 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 time, 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*, March 19, 2016

The Snowball Effect- The Enlightenment, Atheism, Marxism, Radical Feminism, Sexual Liberation, Materialism, Nihilism...All of these have contributed material to the current state of Gender Ideology today.

Atheism- rejects God as our creator.

Radical Feminism- The only way for women to be “free” is to reject the “Oppressors” . The oppressors are religion, the Church, men, family, female biology.

The goal of sameness- women are the same as men. No complementarity, no fruitfulness...only sterility.

Increasing Momentum...Gender Ideology Drivers

- A confluence of interests are working on the LGBT agenda for different and varying reasons.
 - Philanthropists- in 2014-15, 334 foundations distributed 5,267 grants totally more than \$160, 702, 984 for LGBTQ issues.
 - Corporations- appeal to new markets and don't want boycotts from the LGBTQ community
 - NGOs- include human rights activities, environmental issues, improving health and development of work.
 - Ideologues/activists
 - Globalists- “ideological colonization”- Pope Francis
 - Entertainment
 - Government- US State Department has a special envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTQ people, USAid is an exporter of gender ideology, the UN has a Special Expert on LGBTQ issues who functions as a “global watch dog” for LGBTQ issues.
 - Corporations openly championing LGBTQ issues- the spending power of the LGBTQ community is calculated at \$800 million to 1 billion per year.
 - Organizations (e.g. Movement Advancement Project, Human Rights Campaign)

What has been the impact of this momentum on LGBTQ issues?

1. Laws- the collision of two core American values- freedom of religion and freedom from discrimination- is prompting a showdown in legislatures and courts across the country.

Ontario, Canada has new laws that allow government to take children away from parents if parent's do not accept a child's gender identity (this is currently happening in Ohio too).

In Canada is it illegal to use the wrong gender pronoun.

2. Healthcare- "I have seen the upending of the medical consensus on the nature of gender identity. What doctors once treated as a mental illness, the medical community now largely affirms and even promotes as normal". Dr. Michelle Cretella
3. New Normal- Pediatric gender clinics are considered elite centers for affirming children who are distressed by their biological sex. In 2014, there were 24 gender clinics, one year later there were 40 across the nation.

In 2017, the federal government stated that it would not require Medicare and Medicaid to cover transition affirming procedures for children or adults because medical experts at the Department of Health and Human Services found the risks were often too high, and the benefits too unclear.

Two leading pediatric associations- The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Pediatric Endocrine Society have endorsed the transition affirmation approach even though the organization states it endorsement is based on low evidence.

The transition affirming approach has been embraced by public institutions in media, education, and our legal system, and is now recommended by most national medical organizations.

Puberty blockers for gender dysphoria have not been proven safe.

40% of people with gender dysphoria attempt suicide at least once in their lives.

Bottom Line: Transition Affirming Protocol is Child Abuse

1. The crux of the matter is that while the transition affirming movement proports to help children, it is inflicting a grave injustice on them and their nondyphoric peers.
2. These professionals are using the myth that people are born transgender to justify engaging in massive, uncontrolled, and unconsented experimentation on children who have a psychological condition that would otherwise resolve after puberty in a vast majority of cases.

3. Today's institutions that promote transition affirmation are pushing children to impersonate the opposite sex, sending many of them down the path of puberty blockers, sterilization, the removal of healthy body parts, and untold psychological damage.
4. These harms constitute nothing less than institutionalized child abuse. Sound ethics demand an immediate end to the use of pubertal suppression, cross-sex hormones, and sex reassignment surgeries in children and adolescents, as well as an end to promoting gender ideology via school curricula and legislative policies.

What are we the Church to do?

"Gender ideology is threatening the freedom of religious expression, religious belief, and the freedom of the Church as an institution in many places, and in the places where it is not being threatened, it probably will be threatened very shortly." Father Gahl, Associate Professor of Ethics at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, May 19, 2017

"Pope Francis is very concerned about what he calls 'ideological colonization...He's especially concerned about the educational process of how there are schools that are indoctrinating children with propaganda that is ideological and contrary to even a scientific or Christian understanding of the human person." Father Gahl, Associate Professor of Ethics at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, May 19, 2017

What should (Arch)Bishops do?

Provide clear communication on the position of the Church, its teachings and its purpose in establishing Catholic schools that are true to their own identity and mission.

"It would be inconsistent with the school's identity and mission to teach, promote or encourage and understanding of the human person that is contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Young people must be encouraged to accept their own bodies and gender as they were created, and helped to recognize that the current attempts in our culture to redefine gender and alter the nature and purpose of human beings, are misguided and not in accord with the truth." Ohio Bishops Religious Freedom Advisory Committee: Advisory Statement No.1

What should schools do?

- Teach Christian Anthropology- Theology of the Body K-12

- Provide Teacher Training on Christian Anthropology and Teachings of the Church
- Draft School Mission and Policy Statements
 - Guidelines for Gender and Non-Traditional Families
- Create Defensive Legal Statements
- Hire Smart- authentically practicing Catholics
- Provide good/true resources for parents
 - Courage/EnCourage

Session Seven: Responding to Sexual Identity Confusion with Clarity and Charity

Dr. Andrew Sodergren, MTS, PsyD

Therapy options for Children with Gender Dysphoria

1. Psychosocial therapy to decrease gender dysphoria
2. Watchful waiting – most resolve on their own by puberty, specifically early on-set
3. Psychosocial Facilitation- involves changing dress and grooming and name and pronouns
4. Puberty Suppression- hormones to suppress puberty

From a Catholic perspective 1 is effective, 2 is risky, and 3 and 4 are not in keeping with the teachings of the Church.

The therapy option is dwindling. There is pressure to ban therapy for gender dysphoria therapy. Five states and many cities have passed legal bans including Cincinnati, Dayton, Toledo, and Columbus, Ohio.

“Treatment aimed at trying to change a person’s gender identity and expression to become more congruent with sex assigned at birth...is no longer considered ethical’.

What should our response be as Catholics?

- Distinguish between gender ideology and those individuals struggling with gender confusion.
- Always affirm the dignity of the person
- Speak the truth in love
 - Sensitivity, compassion, respect,
 - Uphold the truth of being created male and female and called to love
 - Men are called and equipped to love as fathers – son/husband/father

- Women are called and equipped to love as mothers – daughter/wife/mother
- Be careful with language/terminology
 - Better to say “people who experience confusion regarding their sexual identity” than trans person, etc.
- Enthusiastically present God’s plan for human beings and human relationships
- We cannot support living according to a false sexual identity or mutilating the body to become something I am not

School Related Issues

What should schools do?

- Remember your mission and be faithful to it
 - Be a witness to the gospel through love and faith
 - Catholic teaching on true nature of human beings must permeate all aspects of a Catholic schools activities, academics, or otherwise
 - Must inform personnel, parents, students, etc. on Catholic teaching on sexual identity and related policies
- Teachers need to be outstanding in correct doctrine and integrity of life
 - Live according to this doctrine, announce it themselves, defend it if necessary, and take their part in the apostolate
- Resist immoral government mandates
- Witness of charity, respect, and understanding
- Must teach the truth regarding the nature of the human person, male and female throughout curriculum and grades
- Encourage students to accept the sexual identity revealed in their body as a gift and a call from God
- Help students see that attempts to redefine gender are misguided and harmful

What schools must NOT do?

- Teach, promote, or encourage an understanding of the human person contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church
- Participate in or promote the denial, or perceived denial, of students’ biological sex or transitioning to a different sex
- Advocate or celebrate relationships or conduct, including transgender attitudes, that conflict with Catholic teaching

- Sponsor, facilitate, or host organizations, events or activities that would promote views of gender that conflict with Catholic teaching, either on or off campus, or through social media.
- Put vulnerable students in harms way by exposing them to gender ideology, cross-dressing or scandalous behavior, or by allowing access to opposite sex bathrooms/locker rooms
- Shame students for having gender dysphoria

What should a school do if a student comes forward with gender dysphoria or as “trans” ...?

- Affirm the person’s identity as a child of God
- Ensure all children are treated with compassion, sensitivity and respect
- Distinguish between those who are struggling with it and those who “present” it publically as identity, expecting to be recognized and accommodated
- Work with the student and the family to understand the situation, clarify what best serves the true good of the student and the good of the school
- Try to build alliance around pursuing the good
- If at all possible, help student and family acknowledge and accept his sexual identity (male/female)
- Strive to assist them to mature in a healthy and moral manner
- Help them become who they truly are, to avoid a path that leads to sin, and to attain instead authentic dignity and happiness
- Refer the family to healthcare providers who are faithful to Catholic anthropology
- If student and/or family insist on publically embracing a “trans” identity and/or allowing transitioning, then schools may need to refuse entrance or ask the student to leave

How can you help the individual?

- Don’t panic- God is bigger than this. It is not your job to “fix” it.
- Take the “long view”- some situations take a lifetime to heal or more
- Show the love of Christ
 - Spend time with them building a relationship
 - Show them that you care
 - Affirm the goodness of the person and their desire for love and happiness
 - Help them encounter God with you
 - Pray with them and for them
- Listen, Listen, Listen- these kids have a story to tell and they need caring adults to listen
- Show genuine interest in their experiences, their feelings, their desires/hopes/fears

- Show empathy- imagine what their experiences have been like
- Listen for other signs of psychological distress and even suicidality
- Be a witness to authentic maleness/femaleness
- Share the joy of being a man or woman, father or mother (don't overdo it)
- Help them to make friendships with same sex peers- opportunities and activities where they can experience acceptance and belonging
- Gently teach when there is an opening
 - Culture: you feel trans → therefore you **are** trans
 - Church: the body reveals who you are even if you feel different →
I am a man who experiences dysphoria/distress/confusion about my sexual identity
- Help them to make good choices in accord to their true, authentic good
- If they want to use a different name, seek a reasonable compromise that doesn't go too far
- Set clear boundaries about gender bending behavior

Session Eight: Sex and Drugs: Dangers of Hormonal Approaches to Alleviate Gender Dysphoria

Dr. Paul W. Hruz, MD, PhD

Department of Pediatrics, Washington University School of Medicine

Basic Terminology

Sex- Biological trait intrinsically oriented toward reproduction

Gender- Social and cultural expression of being masculine or feminine

Gender Identity- A person's perception of being male or female

Sexual Orientation – A person's attraction to and desire for sexual intimacy with another person

People who experience a gender identity that is discordant with their biological sex.

The vast majority of people with gender discordance do not have a disorder of sexual development.

Health Outcomes for People with Gender Dysphoria

- Suicide
- Addictions and substance abuse
- Anxiety disorders
- Mood disorders

- Intimate partner violence/ domestic violence
- Childhood sexual abuse
- HIV

What causes gender discordance?

- The exact cause remains unknown
- There is evidence both for genetic and environmental influences
- It is most likely that this condition is multifactorial with differing influences in different people

Approaches to Treatment

- Traditional approach
 - Recognized as an objective mental disorder
 - Encouragement to identify with sex (expectant waiting, family therapy)
 - Recognition that the majority of children desist in transgender identity (85-90% will realign their sex without intervention)
- Current Paradigm
 - Assertion that gender variation is “normal”
 - Focus on alleviating dysphoria
 - Pubertal suppression with start of normal puberty (beginning at 8,9,10 years of age)
 - Cross-sex hormones at age 16
 - Surgical Intervention at age 18

Why is the scientific community pushing the current paradigm so vigorously?

Ideology

Rationale- “We have to do something...We are saving lives by providing some type of intervention.”

Safeguards are eroding away for patients and physicians.

Session Nine: Catholic Morality and Gender Identity Confusion

Catechism of the Catholic Church #2297

Except when performed for strictly therapeutic medical reasons, directly intended amputations, mutilations, and sterilizations performed on innocent persons are against the moral law.

Ethical Implications

- The anthropological reality, that a person's innate sexual identity cannot be changed, has moral consequences.
- Directly intending to transition one's given bodily sex into a "new" one (even though this may be perceived as the "real" and "true" one) means intending to alter what is unalterable, to establish a false identity in place of one's true identity, and so to deny and contradict one's own authentic human existence as a male or female- soul unity.

Catholic Health Care

In light of the scientific evidence showing that "transitioning" has no demonstrated long-term therapeutic benefit, and in light of Catholic teaching about the nature of the human person, no Catholic health care organization should establish policies that positively affirm the choice of any behavioral, hormonal, or surgical gender transitioning of patients, personnel, or other persons served by the organization.

No Catholic health care organization should require its personnel to carry out, promote, refer for, or otherwise cooperate formally in procedures involved in gender transitioning, especially surgical or hormonal interventions; require the use of pronouns or sex-specific identifiers that are explicitly contrary to a person's biological sex; or otherwise require the affirmation of a false sexual identity for any persons who are or who are planning on transitioning.

A challenge for Catholic agencies is to address the holistic needs of transgender persons who are seeking, not direct support for sex reassignment, but pastoral care, other services, and full participation in the life of the Church.

Catholic Educational Institutions

Educational ministries of the Church are under increasing external pressure to treat students consistent with their self-selected gender identity, in education records, forms of speech (use of pronouns and names consistent with the self-selected gender), participation in school activities, sports, and access to bathrooms and locker rooms.

All religious education is subject to the authority of the Church. Clearly, cooperating in the "transitioning" of youth is inconsistent with these obligations. The moral issue for Catholic schools is that they cannot participate in or promote the denial, or perceived denial, of the biological sex with which a child has been endowed by the Creator.

Employment policies of a Catholic educational institution should also exemplify the mission of a ministry of the Catholic Church. Catholic laity assists in carrying out the ministries of the Church, but they are to “live” according to this doctrine, announce it themselves, defend it if necessary, and take their part in exercising the apostolate.”