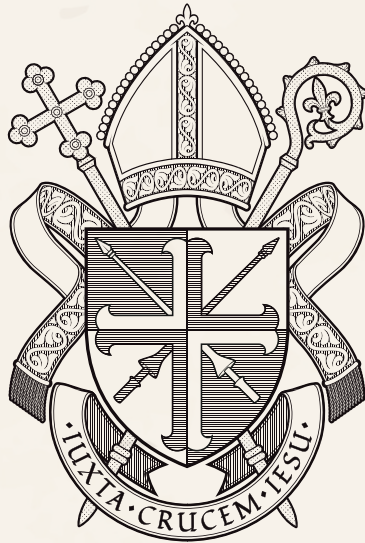




THEOLOGICAL GUIDE

The Human Person and Gender Dysphoria





“Do not accept anything as
the truth if it lacks love.

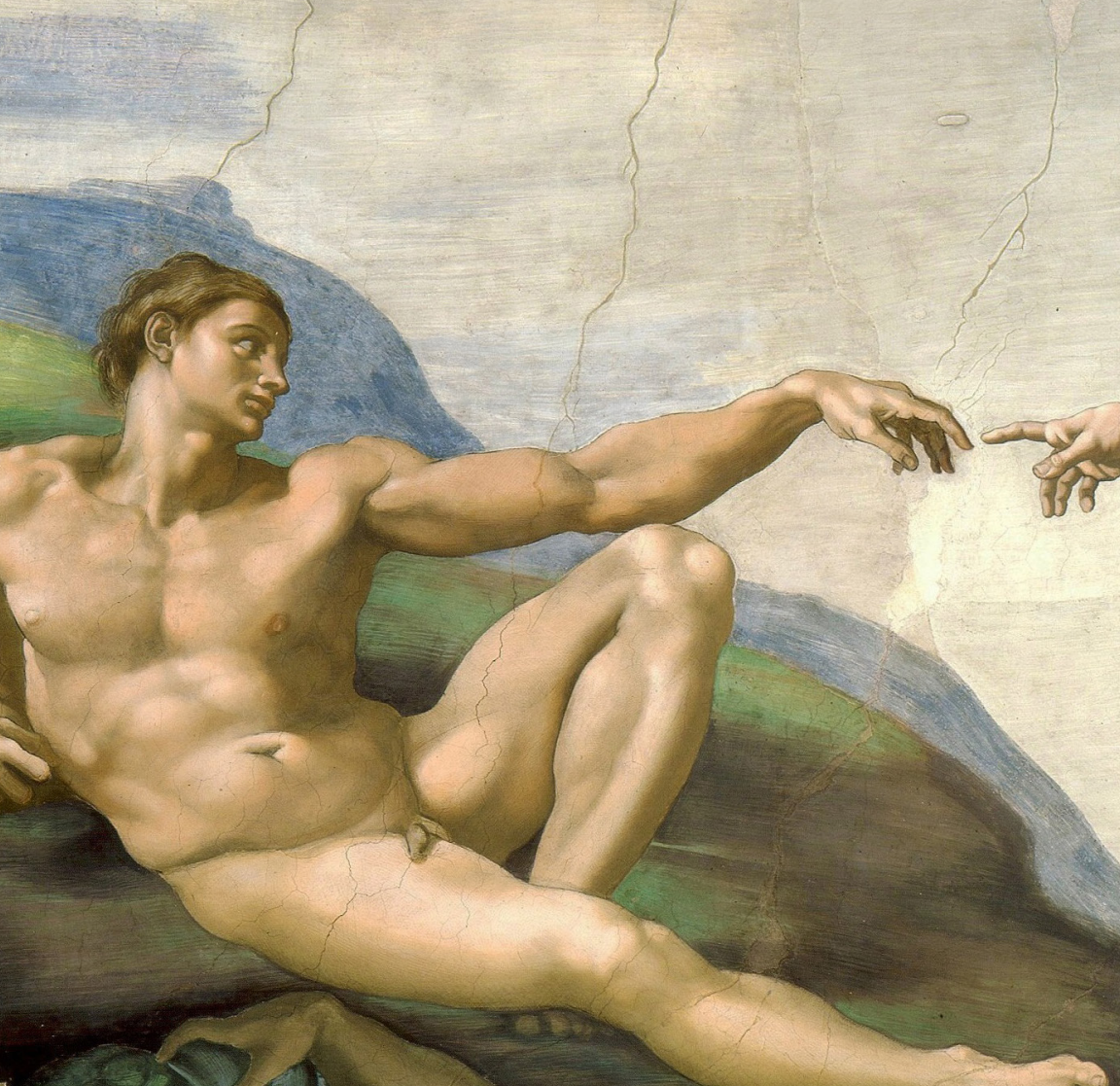
And do not accept
anything as love which
lacks truth!

One without the other
becomes a destructive lie.”

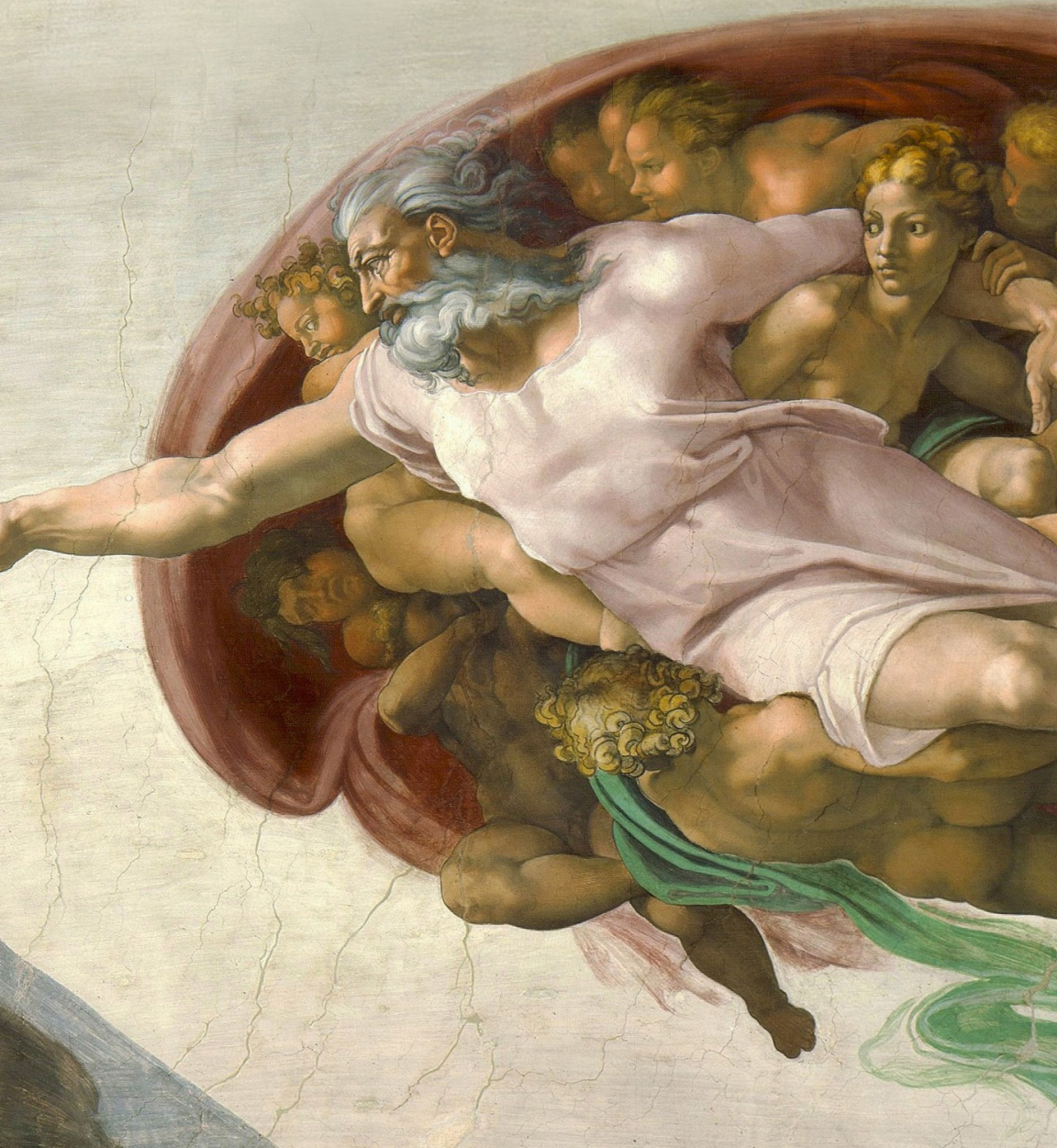
Pope Saint John Paul II

Homily at the Canonization of Saint Edith Stein

On February 2, 2019, the Congregation for Catholic Education issued a document entitled *Male and Female He Created Them: Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education*. Designed as a framework for those engaged in the ministry of Catholic education, this document examines certain perennial truths about the human person and integrates the magisterial teaching of Pope Francis on this topic in light of current fundamental questions raised by the phenomenon of gender dysphoria.



Following on that document, the Diocese of Lansing offers the present *Theological Guide: The Human Person and Gender Dysphoria* to provide a context in which to understand our dignity as human persons with a view toward promoting authentic pastoral approaches to those suffering from gender dysphoria and their families. Thus, by living the truth in love, pathways may be opened toward true freedom as children of God.



Christian Anthropology

In creating the human race, God endowed us with a tremendous gift: He formed us in his own image and likeness (cf *Genesis 1:27a*). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us:

Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead.¹

This dignity of personhood, with its capacity for self-giving and communion with other persons, is beautifully described in the book of Genesis. The text first introduces mankind's creation as *male and female* (*Genesis 1:27b*). In its second chapter, Genesis describes this truth through the drama of Adam's solitude. God declares that it is "not good for man to be alone" and determines that he will create a helper for Adam. This helper does not signify mere utilitarian assistance, but rather, she reveals to him another *person* with whom he shares an equal dignity; a dignity that Adam immediately recognizes: "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called 'woman,' for out of 'her man' this one has been taken" (*Genesis 2:23*). Man and woman both share in one and the same dignity "in the image of God." In their "being-man" and "being-woman," they reflect the Creator's wisdom and goodness.² Indeed, "being man" or "being woman" is a reality which is good and willed by God. Man and woman possess an inalienable dignity which comes to them

¹ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 357.

² CCC 369.

directly from God. Today, it is perhaps more necessary than ever to present this timeless truth anew, as it helps us to understand the human being's identity revealed in one's own body, in relationship with others, especially in the fundamental relationship between man and woman.

The human person, considered under this relational aspect, reveals an image of the central mystery of Christian faith and life – the Holy Trinity. The Trinity is the source of all the mysteries of faith.³ We confess one God in three persons, each of them is God whole and entire; the real distinction of the persons from one another resides solely in their *relationships* with one another: The Father is related to the Son, the Son to the Father, and the Holy Spirit to both. God is love. He is a *communion of persons*, and he freely wills to share the glory of this blessed life. This is the “plan of loving kindness” which unfolds in the work of creation, in the entire movement of salvation after the fall, and the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit, which are continued in the mission of the Church.⁴ It is into this great mystery that, at the beginning of our Christian life, we are baptized “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” The ultimate fulfilment of this divine plan is found in the entry of God's creatures into the perfect unity of the Blessed Trinity.⁵

Of all visible creatures, mankind alone is able to know and love his creator and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God's own life, and this is the fundamental reason for his dignity:

What made you establish man in so great a dignity?
Certainly the incalculable love by which you have
looked on your creature in yourself! You are taken
with love for her; for by love indeed you created
her, by love you have given her a being capable of
tasting your eternal Good.⁶

³ CCC 234.

⁴ CCC 253, 255, 257.

⁵ CCC 232, 260.

⁶ Cf. CCC 356; Saint Catherine of Siena, Dialogue 4, 13 “On Divine Providence”. Liturgy of the Hours, Sunday, week 19, OR.



The material human body reveals the immaterial self

By encountering Eve, Adam begins to understand himself, who Eve is, and what his relationship is with her. In this we discover the unfolding of a profound claim: *that the material human body reveals the immaterial self*. In other words, the human body, created male or female, communicates who the *person* is in an essential way. We are designed for complementarity. Pope Saint John Paul II called this relational dimension of the human person the *nuptial meaning of the body*:

When [God] said, “It is not good that man should be alone, (Genesis 2:18) he affirmed that “alone,” man does not completely realize this essence. He realizes it only by existing “with someone”—and even more deeply and completely—by existing “for someone.”

This norm of existence as a person is shown in Genesis as characteristic of creation, precisely through the meaning of these two words: “alone” and “helper.” These words indicate as fundamental and constitutive for man both the relationship and the communion of persons. The communion of persons means existing in a mutual “for,” in a relationship of mutual gift. This relationship is precisely the fulfillment of man’s original solitude.⁷

Another aspect of our humanity is that we are beings who are *at once spiritual and corporeal*. We are body-soul. Indeed “*human nature* must be understood on the basis of *the unity of body and soul*” and not on its radical separation.⁸ This is what the Church teaches about the unity of the human person, “whose rational soul is *per se et essentialiter* the form of his body. The spiritual and immortal soul is the principle of unity of the human being, whereby it exists as a whole — *corpore et anima unus* — as a person.” Again, “only in reference to the human person in his ‘unified

totality,' that is, as 'a soul which expresses itself in a body and a body informed by an immortal spirit,' can the specifically human meaning of the body be grasped."⁹

“If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32)

Faced with the challenges of his time Saint Paul reminded the Christians in Rome: “Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect” (*Romans 12:2*). Centuries later, Pope Saint Leo the Great reminded the faithful: “Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God’s own nature ... never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God.”¹⁰ Today, there are some who hold that fidelity to the truth about God’s design and honoring the moral law are restrictions on one’s “freedom” or are wrongly judged as a form of unjust discrimination. But God, in his goodness, knows perfectly what is good for us, and, on account of this love, both created us and gave us his commandments. Apart from the truth, there can be no authentic freedom:

Genuine understanding and compassion must mean love for the person, for his true good, for his authentic freedom. And this does not result, certainly, from concealing or weakening moral truth, but rather from proposing it in its most profound meaning as an outpouring of God’s eternal Wisdom, which we have received in Christ, and as a service to man, to the growth of his freedom and to the attainment of his happiness.¹¹

The Church desires the flourishing of every human person – without exception. This flourishing can only be achieved by holding fast to the full truth of our creation and our intrinsic dignity as human persons.

⁹ Pope Saint John Paul II, Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, 48, 50.

¹⁰ Saint Leo the Great, *Sermo 21 in Nat. Dom.*, 3: PL 54, 192 C.

¹¹ VS, 95.



“

If you remain in my word,
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know the truth, and the
truth will set you free

”

John 8:31-32

Gender Dysphoria: A Pastoral Approach

The psychological condition known as gender dysphoria, in which a biological male or female believes that his or her gender does not conform with his or her biological sex, has seen a rapid increase in significance in recent years.¹²

As with other highly sensitive cases where the world's way of thinking is contrary to the Christian, situations which arise concerning gender dysphoria will require wise pastoral guidance and a merciful concern for all involved persons. Our pastoral care for anyone afflicted with this condition must never diminish or deny the gift of our bodies as given to us by God.¹³ We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has given us. Similar to those with same-sex attraction, this condition “constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.”¹⁴

¹² According to a 2019 Sky News report, *Transgender Children: Crisis in Care*, seventy-seven children were referred to Britain's Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) in 2009-2010. That number rose to nearly twenty-six hundred in 2018-2019 with an additional three thousand on the waiting list. This phenomena has been particularly concentrated in girls as the number of girls being referred to GIDS in that timeframe rose 4500%. (*Transgender Children: Crisis in Care*, YouTube: Special Report: NHS 'over-diagnosing' transgender children, uploaded December 11, 2019 and accessed August 31, 2020.)

In addition, the Supreme Court has begun deciding cases pertaining to gender dysphoria, cases which bear increased ramifications for the Catholic Church and society in general as in the recent 2020 case *Bostock v. Clayton County* which extended the definition of discrimination based on sex to transgenderism.

¹³ A pastoral document from the Diocese of Springfield observes: “With this teaching in mind, gender dysphoria can be reasonably compared to anorexia. Each is a condition in which a person, for a complex set of reasons, has a self-perception of his or her physical biology that is dislocated from reality. Just as it would be pastorally reckless to provide weight loss resources to a visibly gaunt anorexic who thinks she is overweight, it is equally reckless to encourage someone with gender dysphoria to undergo hormone treatment and/or genital mutilation.”

¹⁴ CCC 2358.



It is likewise important to recognize the pastoral care needed for parents and family members. Within the family the needs of one overflow to the needs of others. The Church's vision of the human person can sometimes seem as a "voice crying out in the wilderness" and the various views held among different persons can cause confusion, doubt, uncertainty, or guilt among family members of these persons. One must be prepared to meet and accompany parents and family members wherever they fall on the spectrum of responses to their loved one's condition, whether that response is anger, confusion, guilt, or accommodation. On the one hand, parents may feel shame or a sense of guilt; on the other, a false sense of compassion to "fix" the problem through overlooking it or permitting a child to appear as the opposite sex, or even to go as far as hormonally and surgically manipulating the body to appear as the opposite sex. In neither approach do we find the truth of our humanity which sets us free. Always respecting our common, inalienable human dignity, we must look first to God's design for the human person.

Transgender Ideology

In developing an effective pastoral approach to gender dysphoria, it is also important to understand clearly the issue of transgender ideology, which has been influential in shaping the current cultural context. This ideology radically separates the material from the spiritual and treats the material as mere inert matter for the spiritual to act upon. This denial of the fundamental goodness of the unity of the human body and soul as created by God combined with the prevalent voluntarism of the individual's will, leads to what Pope Benedict XVI called the "dictatorship of relativism" in which it is the *individual will* that determines all of reality, a situation "in which everything that exists is of equal value and at the same time undifferentiated, without any real order or purpose."¹⁵ No less than the U. S. Supreme Court espoused these presuppositions when, in 1992, it declared, "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life."¹⁶ Pope Francis criticized these ideas in society when he stated: "Ultimately, it is easy nowadays to confuse genuine freedom with the idea

¹⁵ *Male and Female*, 20.

¹⁶ *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833 (1992).



that each individual can act arbitrarily, as if there were no truths, values and principles to provide guidance, and everything were possible and permissible.”¹⁷

Holding to these presuppositions, some now falsely propose that the “gender” of a person constitutes the bedrock of identity, while the physical sex of a person has little to no bearing on who they are. There are a number of philosophical and theological problems with this concept, including its implicit denial of the nature of truth itself, which Saint Thomas Aquinas defined as the correspondence of the mind with reality.¹⁸ To decouple the mind from objective reality is to erode the foundations of our dignity and our awareness of the genuine needs of our neighbor.

The ideological and juridical advocacy for this way of understanding the world has no less than the family itself as its prime casualty. When the essential difference between men and women is denied, as well as their natural ordering to reciprocity, the dignity of their distinctiveness as well as the entirely personal nature of the generation of human life is undermined.

¹⁷ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Lætitia*, 34.

¹⁸ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, Q16, Art2.



Applying the Truth of the Church's Teaching to Practical Circumstances

Pope Francis, when speaking on this matter stated that gender theory is a form of “ideological colonization” and has questioned whether “the so-called gender theory is not an expression of frustration and resignation, which seeks to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it. . . . The removal of difference creates a problem, not a solution.”¹⁹ Our bodies have been entrusted to us as gifts so we might more fully image God’s own unity. Our differences are what enable unity and such differences must be accepted and fostered in truth.

The Church therefore holds that any therapies which would attempt to change the body into the opposite sex are forms of mutilation and are morally prohibited. “Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of 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.”²⁰ In fact, “each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way.”²¹

As always, when proclaiming this truth, it is not enough to state facts. We must speak with love, mercy, compassion, and patience. Not only are persons and families wrestling with a real psychological condition, as shown, they are also often formed by a culture which provides them an

¹⁹ Pope Francis, General Audience April 15, 2015.

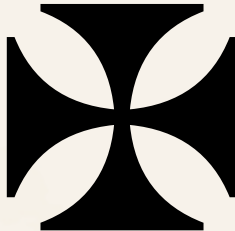
²⁰ CCC 2333.

²¹ CCC 2335.

impoverished vision of the world and human nature as essentially dualistic and subject to their individual wills. Thus, every pastoral interaction must not only witness to the truth of the human person and creation but must also bear out the compassion and sensitivity required to show the love and mercy of the Fatherhood of God.

In the Diocese of Lansing, our parishes, schools, and institutions embrace and walk compassionately with persons and families as they bear their cross during their earthly pilgrimage. While we offer pastoral guidance, we cannot do so at the expense of the truth about the human person as created by God. Catholic institutions in the Diocese of Lansing uphold the design of God in creation. The specifics of our policies honor persons by respecting revealed truth and its meaning as manifested by our bodies as God created them.

The Church exists to proclaim our Lord Jesus Christ, who reveals the full truth about God and humanity. The foundations of our mission compel us never to abandon the truth as handed on to us. Instead, we invite all to walk with the Lord in faith, hope, and love as we journey toward eternal life in the one God who is the eternal Source of our deepest identity, who is love itself, and who calls us into everlasting communion with him: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



GLOSSARY

ANTHROPOLOGY, CHRISTIAN. The theological and philosophical study of the human person through the perspective of divine revelation and Church teaching. Christian anthropology investigates the origin, nature, and destiny of humans and of the universe in which we live.

BIOLOGICAL SEX. The state of being either male or female. The differences between male and female are a part of God's design in creation. Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity, though in a different way. Also see *Complementarity; Nuptial Meaning of the Body; Sex.* (CCC 2335)

BODY-SOUL UNION. The human person is a being at once bodily and spiritual. The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the “*form*” of the body. In other words, because of our soul, the body made of matter becomes a living, human body. In the human person, spirit and matter are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature. (cf, Council of Vienne [1312]; DS 902; CCC 385).

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. The official summary, in book form, of the beliefs of the Catholic Church. Pope Saint John Paul II declared that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is “a statement of the Church's faith and of Catholic doctrine, attested to or illumined by Sacred Scripture, Apostolic Tradition, and the Church's Magisterium. I declare it to be a valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion and a sure norm for teaching the faith.” (Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution *Fidei Depositum*, IV: The Doctrinal Value of the Text).

CCC. An abbreviation for *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY. See *Anthropology, Christian*.

COMMUNION OF PERSONS. God reveals himself in Jesus Christ as the Holy Trinity, a personal communion of absolute love. The human being is created in the image of this Triune mystery of Love and destined to share in the Trinity's own eternal life.

COMPLEMENTARITY. Mutually supplying each other's lack. The physical, moral, and spiritual differences between men and women which are oriented toward the goods of *marriage* and the flourishing of family life.

CONSTITUTIVE. Essential. The Catholic Church holds that the human body is an essential aspect of the human person. See *Corpore et anima unus*.

CORPORE ET ANIMA UNUS. Latin "one body and soul." The human being is a *body-soul union*. The Second Vatican Council, wishing to express the Church's view of the human person, stated that "though made of body and soul, man is one." (Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 14).

DICTATORSHIP OF RELATIVISM. A phrase coined by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger in his homily of April 18, 2005, before being elected as Pope Benedict XVI, in which he described modern life as being ruled by a "dictatorship of relativism which does not recognize anything as definitive and whose ultimate goal consists solely" of satisfying "the desires of one's own ego." He concluded: "We, however, have a different goal: the Son of God, the true man. He is the measure of true humanism."

DUALISM. The religious or theological system which would explain the universe as the outcome of two eternally opposed and coexisting principles, conceived as good and evil, light and darkness, spirit or matter, or some other form of conflicting powers. Dualistic heresies have included Gnosticism and Manichaeism. Christianity rejected all forms of a dual origin of the world in which matter, or evil, or any other principle was made into a second eternal being coexistent with God, and it taught the

origin of the universe from one, infinite, self-existing spiritual Being who freely created all things. The Christian belief in the incarnation of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, affirms the intrinsic goodness of the material and spiritual world. Jesus Christ assumed our flesh, body, and soul, and lived among us in order to redeem us.

ENCYCLICAL. Originally a circular letter sent to all the churches of a particular area. Today, it is one of the most authoritative forms of communication by the pope and usually deals with some aspect of Catholic teaching. They are generally issued to clarify Church teaching on matters of doctrine, morals, or discipline. Encyclical letters are written by the pope to the bishops of the Catholic Church as a body, or less frequently, to groups of bishops in particular nations.

FORM. A synonym of essence and nature.

FREEDOM. Freedom is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one's own responsibility. By free will one shapes one's own life. Human freedom is a force for growth and maturity in truth and goodness; it attains its perfection when directed toward God, our beatitude. (CCC 1731)

GENDER. A cultural construct in which being a man or a woman is not determined fundamentally by *sex* but by culture. Generic sexual identity ("gender") is the product of interaction between the community and the individual, independent from personal *sexual identity*: i.e., that masculine and feminine genders in society are the exclusive product of social factors, with no relation to any truth about the sexual dimension of the person. In this way, any sexual attitude can be justified, including homosexuality, and it is posited under this ideology that it is society that ought to change in order to include other genders, together with male and female, in its way of shaping social life. This concept attacks the very bases of the family and inter-personal relationships. (Pontifical Council for the Family: *Family, Marriage, and De Facto Unions* [2000]).

GENDER DYSPHORIA. A psychological condition in which a biological male or female believes that his or her “*gender*” does not conform with his or her *biological sex*.

GENDER FLUIDITY. The belief that a *human person* can oscillate at will among various *genders*.

GENDER IDENTITY. The popular, though erroneous, concept that a person’s self-perceived *gender* is of greater consequence than one’s objective and observable *biological sex*. It is sometimes used interchangeably with *sexual identity*. As a phrase, *sexual identity* is more precise in its meaning. See *Sexual Identity*.

GENDER THEORY. See *Gender*.

GOD-GIVEN BIOLOGICAL SEX. See *Biological Sex*.

HUMAN BODY. The visible, corporeal aspect of the *human person*. In the human body, our organs have discernible functions: the heart pumps blood; kidneys remove waste products from the blood; reproductive organs join man and woman as one, and enable the procreation of children. We intuitively view the world in purpose-driven ways, and we recognize the *telos* (Greek, “end” or “purpose”) written into the realities that surround us. The *telos* of an acorn is to become an oak tree; the *telos* of human sexuality is to draw man and woman together to procreate and raise children in the family unit created by *marriage*. Acknowledging the fashioning of our sexuality in this determinate way, and recognizing the conjugal union of marriage as an institution of nature, not a product of man’s willfulness, enables us to discern between proper and improper uses of the gift of our genital sexuality. The body is no mere addendum to the person, nor is it a blank slate to be modified and changed to our liking. The body is a constitutive element to the meaning of being human and its existence as male or female is not divorced from the psychological and

spiritual elements of what it means to be a human person. (See: Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, “Making Sense of Bioethics: Column 105: Discrimination and Human Genital Sexuality,” The National Catholic Bioethics Center, Philadelphia, PA March 30, 2014)

HUMAN PERSON. The only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake. Being in the image of God, the human individual possesses the dignity of a *person*, who is not just something, but someone. In his own nature, the human being unites the spiritual and material worlds; he is a *body-soul union*. God created man and woman together and willed each for the other. Man and woman possess an inalienable dignity which comes to them directly from God their Creator. The human person alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God’s own life. It was for this end that he was created, and this is the fundamental reason for his dignity. (CCC 355-384)

IDEOLOGICAL COLONIZATION. Pope Francis has used the term “ideological colonization” to describe forms of oppression of developing societies by affluent ones, especially the West, through imposing an alien worldview or set of values on poorer societies, often by making adoption of those values a condition of humanitarian or development aid. Pope Francis remarked in 2016: “In Europe, America, Latin America, Africa, and in some countries of Asia, there are genuine forms of ideological colonization taking place. And one of these - I will call it clearly by its name – is [the ideology of] “*gender*”. Today children – children! – are taught in school that everyone can choose his or her sex. Why are they teaching this? Because the books are provided by the persons and institutions that give you money. These forms of ideological colonization are also supported by influential countries. And this terrible!” (Pope Francis, *Dialogo del Santo Padre con i Vescovi della Polonia* [Kraków, 27 July 2016]).

INTRINSICALLY EVIL. Certain human acts that can never be morally justified or permitted, regardless of the intention of the person who performs them or any circumstances within which they take place. (Pope

Saint Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, no. 14; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Persona Humana*, 8-9; Pope Saint John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*).

MARRIAGE. The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman (see *Complementarity*) establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized spouses has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament (*Code of Canon Law*, canon 1055 §1).

Jesus, who reconciled all things in himself, restored marriage and the family to their original form (cf. Mt 10:1-12). Marriage and the family have been redeemed by Christ (cf. Eph 5:21-32) and restored in the image of the Holy Trinity, the mystery from which all true love flows. The spousal covenant, originating in creation and revealed in the history of salvation, takes on its full meaning in Christ and his Church. Through his Church, Christ bestows on marriage and the family the grace necessary to bear witness to the love of God and to live the life of communion. The Gospel of the family spans the history of the world, from the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen 1:26-27), to the fulfilment of the mystery of the covenant in Christ at the end of time with the marriage of the Lamb (cf. Rev 19:9)” (Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*).

The sacrament of marriage is not a social convention, an empty ritual or merely the outward sign of a commitment. The sacrament is a gift given for the sanctification and salvation of the spouses, since “their mutual belonging is a real representation, through the sacramental sign, of the same relationship between Christ and the Church. The married couple are therefore a permanent reminder for the Church of what took place on the cross; they are for one another and for their children witnesses of the salvation in which they share through the sacrament. Marriage is a vocation, inasmuch as it is a response to a specific call to experience conjugal love as an imperfect sign of the love between Christ and the

Church. Consequently, the decision to marry and to have a family ought to be the fruit of a process of vocational discernment (Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, 72).

MUTILATION. An action which deprives oneself or another of a healthy bodily organ or its use. The mutilation may be either direct or indirect: “direct mutilation” is a deliberately intended act that of its very nature causes mutilation; if the effect is not directly intended, it is called “indirect mutilation.” The fifth commandment forbids mutilation. Surgery, including amputation, for valid reasons of preserving physical health do not constitute mutilation as they are not done as an end in itself, but to preserve the life of the person. “Christian doctrine has established this, and by the light of human reason it is quite clear that private individuals have no other power over the members of their bodies, and cannot destroy or mutilate them, or in any other way render them unfitted for natural functions, except when the good of the whole body cannot otherwise be provided for.” (DS 3723; Pope Pius XI, Encyclical *Casti Conubii*).

NUPTIAL MEANING OF THE BODY. The design of our body orients us toward a marital (nuptial) relationship. The man is meant for the woman, and the woman for the man. In this complementary relationship found in marriage, there is the fruitfulness of children. The Sacrament of Matrimony is a sign of the union between Christ the Bridegroom and the Church, his bride. The differences between men and women manifest different aspects of God’s relationship to his people. This does not exclude those who are called to celibacy embraced for the kingdom (Mt 19:12; 1 Cor. 7:32-35, 38).

OR. Office of Readings.

PER SE ET ESSENTIALITER. Latin, “by itself and essentially.” The rational soul is by itself and essentially (*per se et essentialiter*) the *form* of the body.

PL. *Patrologia Latina*, a collection of the writings of the Church Fathers published in Latin by Jacques-Paul Migne.

PURE IN HEART. The sixth beatitude proclaims, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” “Pure in heart” refers to those who have attuned their intellects and wills to the demands of God’s holiness, chiefly in three areas: charity; chastity or sexual rectitude; love of truth and orthodoxy of faith. There is a connection between purity of heart, of body, and of faith:

The faithful must believe the articles of the Creed “so that by believing they may obey God, by obeying may live well, by living well may purify their hearts, and with pure hearts may understand what they believe.” (CCC 2518)

RELATIVISM. In philosophy, the view that there is no absolute truth or certitude. It is claimed that truth depends entirely on variable factors such as person, place, time, and circumstance. Moral relativism holds that there are no unchangeable principles of human behavior, either because all truth is relative or because there are no inherently evil actions, since everything depends on other factors, such as customs, conventions and social approval. (Rev. John A. Hardon, SJ *Catholic Dictionary*)

SEX. 1. One of the two divisions of human beings; the differences in structure and function between male and female. The character of being either male or female. These differences are designed toward fecundity, the ability to produce offspring. 2. Sexual intercourse. By its very nature the institution of *marriage* and married love is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory. The acts in marriage by which the intimate and chaste union of the spouses takes place are noble and honorable; the truly human performance of these acts fosters the self-giving they signify and enriches the spouses in joy and gratitude. The deliberate use of the sexual faculty, for whatever reason, outside of marriage is essentially contrary to its purpose. (CCC, 2335, 1652, 2362, 2352). See *Human Body*.

SEXUAL IDENTITY. Sexual identity—whether male or female—derives from empirical, observable data, including, for example, chromosomal and genital formation. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: “Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and *complementarity* are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of 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)

SOUL. The soul is “the principle of unity of the human being, whereby it exists as a whole—*corpore et anima unus*—as a person” (*Veritatis splendor*, 48)

TRANSGENDER. Transgender or transsexualism is an assertion that one’s *biological sex* differs from one’s *gender*.

TRUTH. The conformity of the mind and reality (St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, Q16, Art2).

UTILITARIAN. Designed to be useful or serviceable.

VERITATIS SPLENDOR. The *encyclical* of Pope Saint John Paul II that clarified certain matters of moral theology that were brought into question by certain theologians in the period following the Second Vatican Council. The authoritative teaching of *Veritatis Splendor* counters moral *relativism* with the assertion that the moral law is universal, in other words, that there are certain acts that are always wrong, and that there are never circumstances in which they may be permitted if done knowingly and intentionally.

VOLUNTARISM. Voluntarism is a philosophical theory that assigns the will (Latin: *voluntas*) a greater role than that attributed to the intellect or any other faculty. Absolute voluntarism recognizes the role of the will to the exclusion of the other faculties.

WILL. The power of the spirit that tends toward a good and away from an evil recognized by the intellect. Among the powers of the will are the faculty to choose, intend, desire, consent, and hope.



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