

CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND LIVING OUR CATHOLIC VALUES SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING Public Session

AGENDA
August 29, 2019

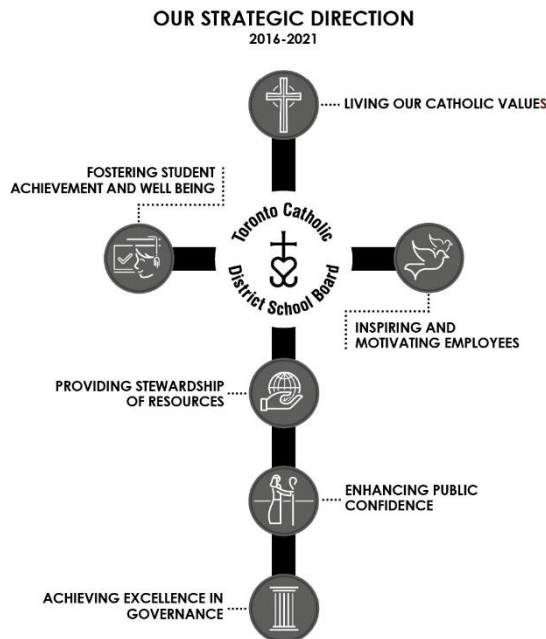
Teresa Lubinski, Chair

Garry Tanuan, Vice-Chair

Nancy Crawford

Michael Del Grande
Ex-Officio

Maria Rizzo
Ex-Officio



MISSION

*The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.
We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.*

VISION

At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Recording Secretary: Sophia Harris, 416-222-8282 Ext. 2293
Assistant Recording Secretary: TBC, 416-222-8282 Ext. 2298

Rory McGuckin
Director of Education

Maria Rizzo
Chair of the Board

OUR MISSION

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**AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND LIVING OUR CATHOLIC VALUES SUB-COMMITTEE
PUBLIC SESSION**

Thursday, August 29, 2019

1:00 P.M.

Pages

1. Call to Order
2. Memorials and Opening Prayer
3. Roll Call & Apologies
4. Approval of the Agenda
5. Notices of Motions
6. Declarations of Interest
7. Approval and Signing of Minutes of the Previous Meeting held June 11, 2019 1 - 11
8. Presentations
9. Delegations
10. Consideration of Motions for which previous notice has been given

11. Unfinished Business from Previous Meetings

From the June 11, 2019 Catholic Education and Living our Catholic Values Sub-Committee Meeting

- 11.a Forging Potential External Partnerships with Strong Faith-based Organizations to enhance Catholic Faith and Morals in our Board and School Communities**
- 11.b Procedure to Review Minutes and Motion Direction** 12 - 13
- 11.c Whistleblower Policy A.39 and Operational Procedure** 14 - 25
- 11.d Whistleblower Procedures and Guidelines for Students, Parents, Staff, Stakeholders on issues Concerning our Catholic Faith, Values, and Morals**

Delegations from the May 28, 2019 Student Achievement and Well Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources Committee

- 11.e Mary Laframboise regarding Inclusion of Persons** 26
- 11.f Paolo De Buono regarding Improving Inclusiveness for the Toronto Catholic District School Board's (TCDSB's) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Students** 27 - 40
- 11.g Emily De Decker regarding Code of Conduct wording on Respect** 41 - 42
- 11.h Iola Fortino regarding adding Gender Identity, Gender Expression, Marital Status and Family Status to the list of Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination in Code of Conduct** 43 - 47
- 11.i Ina Rocha regarding Changes to the Code of Conduct Policy** 48 - 49
- 11.j Elio Freitas regarding changes to the Code of Conduct Policy** 50 - 51
- 11.k Code of Conduct Policy S.S.09** 52 - 72
- 11.l TCDSB Policies Related to Code of Conduct** 73 - 75

From the May 16, 2019 Regular Board Meeting and from the June 11, 2019
Catholic Education and Living our Catholic Values Sub-Committee Meeting

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|------|--|-----------|
| 11.m | From the Governance and Policy Committee: Update to Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy (S.S.11) | 76 - 87 |
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| 12. | Matters referred/deferred from Committees/Board | |
| 13. | Reports of Officials for the Information of the Board of Trustees | |
| 14. | Reports Requiring Action of the Board of Trustees | |
| 15. | Listing of Communications | |
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| 15.a | Vatican Paper 2019: 'Male and Female He Created Them". Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Issue of Gender Theory in Education.

https://zenit.org/articles/new-vatican-document-provides-schools-with-guidance-on-gender-issues/ | 88 - 119 |
|
 | | |
| 15.b | Gender-Ideology: Select-Teaching-Resources | 120 - 128 |
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 | | |
| 15.c | Speaking the Truth in Love: Pastoral Guidelines for Educators Concerning Students Experiencing Gender Incongruence | 129 - 138 |
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| 15.d | The Human Person, Love and Sexuality: Education Commission of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario | 139 - 172 |
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| 16. | Inquiries and Miscellaneous | |
| 17. | Updating of Pending Items List | |
| 18. | Closing Prayer | |
| 19. | Adjournment | |

OUR MISSION

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through witness, faith, innovation and action.*



MINUTES OF THE CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND LIVING OUR CATHOLIC VALUES SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING PUBLIC SESSION

TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2019

Trustees:

T. Lubinski, Chair
G. Tanuan, Vice-Chair – via Teleconference
N. Crawford – via Teleconference
M. Del Grande
M. Rizzo

Non-Committee Trustee:

J. Martino

Staff:

R. McGuckin
D. Koenig
N. Adragna
P. Aguiar
M. Caccamo
M. Peres
J. Shain
E. Szekeres Milne

Fr. Obina

S. Tomaz, Recording Secretary

External Members:

Fr. Mark, Archdiocese of Toronto
N. Milanetti, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association

4. Approval of the Agenda

MOVED by Trustee Del Grande, seconded by Trustee Rizzo, that the Agenda, as amended to include the Addendum, withdraw Items 12j) Verbal Update on Letters to the Archdiocese and Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA); and 12k) Verbal Discussion regarding next possible Nurturing Our Catholic Community (NCC) Committee Meeting, and to defer Items 12n) Paolo De Buono regarding Improving Inclusiveness for the Toronto Catholic District School Board's (TCDSB's) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Students; 12o) Emily De Decker regarding the Code of Conduct Wording on Respect; 12p) Iola Fortino regarding Adding Gender Identity, Gender Expression, Marital Status and Family Status to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination in Code of Conduct; 12q) Ina Rocha regarding Changes to the Code of Conduct Policy; and 12r) Elio Freitas regarding changes to the Code of Conduct Policy, until the April 30, 2019 and the May 21, 2019 Sub-Committee meeting minutes are approved at the September 5, 2019 Student Achievement and Well Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources Committee meeting and until the Code of Conduct Policy returns to the Catholic Education and Living our Catholic Values (CE&LOCV) Sub-Committee, be approved.

Trustee Crawford connected via teleconference at 5:15 pm.

Results of the Vote taken, as follows:

In Favour

Opposed

Trustees Crawford
Del Grande
Lubinski
Rizzo
Tanuan

The Motion was declared

CARRIED

6. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

7. Approval and Signing of Minutes of the Previous Meetings

MOVED by Trustee Del Grande, seconded by Trustee Tanuan, that Items 7a) and 7b) be adopted as follows:

- 7a) From the Meeting held April 30, 2019; and**
- 7b) From the Meeting held May 21, 2019 received.**

Results of the Vote taken, as follows:

In Favour

Opposed

Trustees Crawford
Del Grande
Lubinski
Rizzo
Tanuan

The Motion was declared

CARRIED

9. Delegations

MOVED by Trustee Del Grande, seconded by Trustee Tanuan, that Item 9a) be adopted as follows:

9a) Mary Laframboise regarding Inclusion of Persons received.

Results of the Vote taken, as follows:

In Favour

Opposed

Trustees Crawford
Del Grande
Lubinski
Rizzo
Tanuan

The Motion was declared

CARRIED

12. Matters Referred/Deferred from Committees / Board

MOVED by Trustee Del Grande, seconded by Trustee Tanuan, that Items 12a) and 12b) be adopted as follows:

12a) Whistleblower Procedures and Guidelines for Students, Parents, Staff, Stakeholders on Issues Concerning our Catholic Faith, Values, and Morals; and

12b) Whistleblower Policy A.39 and Operational Procedure received.

Results of the Vote taken, as follows:

In Favour

Opposed

Trustees Crawford
Del Grande
Lubinski
Rizzo
Tanuan

The Motion was declared

CARRIED

Trustee Rizzo left the table at 5:56 pm and returned at 6:06 pm.

MOVED by Trustee Del Grande, seconded by Trustee Rizzo, that Item 12c) be adopted as follows:

- 12c) Build a Repository of Cases, Research, and Rulings for Precedents and References on Issues relating to our Catholic Faith and Morals Teaching, Doctrines, and Pastoral Care (approved March 1, 2018)** that the CE&LOCV Sub-Committee refer to the Student Achievement and Well Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources Committee that staff review how a case log of legal opinions given to the TCDSB, with respect to our Catholic denominational rights, can be put together.

Results of the Vote taken, as follows:

In Favour

Opposed

Trustees Crawford
Del Grande
Lubinski
Rizzo
Tanuan

The Motion was declared

CARRIED

MOVED by Trustee Tanuan, seconded by Trustee Del Grande, that Item 12d) be adopted as follows:

- 12d) Promote and Broaden the Student Faith Engagement Kairos Program in High Schools and Similar Catholic Faith-based Initiatives to all Catholic Schools (approved March 1, 2018) received.**

Results of the Vote taken, as follows:

In Favour

Opposed

Trustees Crawford
Del Grande
Lubinski
Rizzo
Tanuan

The Motion was declared

CARRIED

Trustee Rizzo left the table at 6:31 pm and returned at 6:34 pm.

MOVED by Trustee Rizzo, seconded by Trustee Del Grande, that Items 12e) and 12f) be adopted as follows:

- 12e) **Back to Basics of Our Catholic Faith Program;** and
- 12f) **Renewing the Promise and Walking the Talk** received.

Results of the Vote taken, as follows:

In Favour

Opposed

Trustees Del Grande
Lubinski
Rizzo
Tanuan

The Motion was declared

CARRIED

N.B. Trustee Crawford did not vote.

MOVED by Trustee Rizzo, seconded by Trustee Del Grande, that Item 12i) be adopted as follows:

12i) Religious Education Department Budget received.

Results of the Vote taken, as follows:

In Favour

Opposed

Trustees Del Grande
Lubinski
Rizzo
Tanuan

The Motion was declared

CARRIED

N.B. Trustee Crawford did not vote.

MOVED by Trustee Del Grande, seconded by Trustee Tanuan, that Item 12l) be adopted as follows:

12l) Verbal Discussion regarding Catholic Education and Living our Catholic Values Sub-Committee Meeting dates for 2019 that the next Sub-Committee meeting be held on Thursday, August 29, 2019 between 1 pm and 3 pm.

Results of the Vote taken, as follows:

In Favour

Opposed

Trustees Crawford
Del Grande
Lubinski
Rizzo
Tanuan

The Motion was declared

CARRIED

MOVED by Trustee Del Grande, seconded by Trustee Rizzo, that all Items not dealt with be deferred to the August 29, 2019 CE&LOCV Sub-Committee meeting.

Results of the Vote taken, as follows:

In Favour

Opposed

Trustees Crawford
Del Grande
Lubinski
Rizzo
Tanuan

The Motion was declared

CARRIED

ITEMS AS CAPTURED IN THE ABOVE MOTION

- 12g) Forging Potential External Partnerships with Strong Faith-based Organizations to enhance Catholic Faith and Morals in our Board and School Communities;
- 12h) Procedure to Review Minutes and Motion Direction; and
- 12m) From the Governance and Policy Committee: Update to Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy (S.S.11)

19. Adjournment

MOVED by Trustee Rizzo, seconded by Trustee Del Grande, that the meeting be adjourned.

Results of the Vote taken, as follows:

In Favour

Opposed

Trustees Crawford
Del Grande
Lubinski
Rizzo
Tanuan

The Motion was declared

CARRIED

SECRETARY

CHAIR

CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND LIVING OUR CATHOLIC VALUES SUB-COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE

That the Student Achievement, Catholic Education and Human Resources Committee (SAWBCEHR) establish a sub-committee under Section 5.9 of the Board's Operating By-law 175, to consider matters pertaining to the relevant terms of reference of the SAWBCEHR Committee, such as, but not limited to:

- a. The living our Catholic Values Pillar of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan
- b. Program alignment with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations
- c. Building Catholic school communities and strong relationships between school, home and church
- d. Programs and services lead by Nurturing Our Catholic Community
- e. The achievement of the aims and objectives of the Board in Catholic Education
- f. Deployment of Board resources for Catholic Education
- g. Policy development and revision in the area of Catholic Education
- h. That the Catholic Education Sub-Committee is responsible for Policy and that the Nurturing Our Catholic Community is responsible for Program
- i. Enhance Faith Development for all Staff and Students and Trustees
- j. That all recommendations made at the Catholic Education Sub-Committee be forwarded to the SAWBCEHR for approval
- k. Other matters of Catholicity as referred from SAWBCEHR from time to time

That this sub-committee be named the Catholic Education and Living our Catholic Values sub-committee;

That this sub-committee be comprised of no more than one third of the Board of Trustees and the Chair and Vice-Chair as ex-officio members and that additional committee membership shall include TCDSB staff and stakeholders as determined by the Director and other appropriate individuals as determined by the Board of Trustees from time to time;

That a representative be requested from the Archdiocese of Toronto with expertise in faith and morals, to be added as an advisor to the Catholic Education and Living Our Catholic Values Sub-Committee;

That the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA) be invited to send a representative as an advisor to the Catholic Education and Living Our Catholic Values Sub-Committee.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND LIVING OUR CATHOLIC VALUES SUB-
COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE

That the Catholic Education and Living Our Catholic Values Sub-Committee recommend to the Student Achievement and Well Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources Committee that this Sub-Committee meet on a monthly basis, approximately 10 days before each month's Student Achievement Meeting, and also on an as needed basis in the event of emergencies, and that cancellation of meetings be at the discretion of the Chair and lead Staff; and

That this sub-committee report monthly to the SAWBCEHR Committee.



POLICY SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

POLICY NO: A. 39

Date Approved: September 20, 2018	Date of Next Review: September, 2023	Dates of Amendments:
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Cross References:

Education Act, 1990, s. 301, 302

Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990

Occupational Health and Safety Act

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Criminal Code of Canada

Ontario Code of Conduct

O. Reg. 521/01, Collection of Personal Information

Code of Conduct S.S.09

Conflict Resolution H.M.19,

Complaint Against a Staff Member H.M.30

Harassment and Discrimination Policy H.M.14 & Respectful Workplace Guidelines

Appendix

Whistleblower Policy Operational Procedure

Purpose:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) will achieve effective utilization and protection of all of its resources through sound application and management of financial systems and internal controls. These objectives will be achieved by adherence to generally accepted accounting principles, sound business practices and applicable Provincial and Federal Statutes and Regulations. Management will maintain comprehensive operational procedures to guide and safeguard both the TCDSB Community and assets in its day to day operations.

Scope and Responsibility:

This policy applies to all internal and external stakeholders of the TCDSB Community. This includes all individuals or organizations engaged in education or



POLICY SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

POLICY NO: A. 39

other activities while in TCDSB facilities or representing the TCDSB. The Director of Education is responsible for this policy.

Alignment with MYSP:

Living Our Catholic values

Strengthening Public Confidence

Achieving Excellence in Governance

Inspiring and Motivating Employees

Policy:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) is committed to safeguarding the public interest and trust in public education. All internal and external stakeholders for the TCDSB Community are expected to uphold the public trust and demonstrate integrity in all of their dealings.

This Policy supports that commitment by providing a framework for the disclosure and investigation of wrongdoing, as well as protection from reprisal or threat of reprisal for those who make disclosures of information.

The Policy is intended to encourage TCDSB stakeholders at all levels of the organization and others to act with integrity. All persons to whom this policy applies are expected to adhere to the procedures outlined in this policy when making a disclosure and during any subsequent investigation.



POLICY SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

POLICY NO: A. 39

Regulations:

1. Any act of alleged wrongdoing that is detected or suspected must be reported immediately and investigated in accordance with this policy as expeditiously as possible.
2. Any individual or employee who has knowledge of an occurrence of a wrongdoing, or has reason to suspect that a wrongdoing has occurred, has the right and obligation to report the occurrence using the channels of reporting provided under the various policies, procedures, and collective agreements. However, an individual or employee may choose to report the incident to a third party whistleblower hotline.
3. The third party whistleblower hotline will assess the nature of the reported alleged wrongdoing and redirect it to the appropriate authority for review and investigation, as required, based on criteria as set out in the Operational Procedure.
4. The TCDSB will provide information to ensure that internal and external stakeholders are familiar with the policy including a mechanism for concerned individuals to confidentially report actual or suspected instances of wrongdoing through a third party whistleblower hotline.
5. Provided there are reasonable grounds, the TCDSB shall investigate any and all incidents of suspected or alleged acts of wrongdoings. An objective and impartial investigation will be conducted regardless of the position, title, length of service, or relationship with the Board, of any party who becomes the subject of such investigation.



POLICY SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

POLICY NO: A. 39

6. The identity of the whistleblower shall remain confidential to the Director of Education, or designate, unless law enforcement obtains a court order compelling the Board to disclose the name of the whistleblower.
7. Responsibility for ensuring all reported allegations of wrongdoing are investigated rests with the Director of Education.
8. The Board shall make every effort to ensure that an individual or employee, who in good faith reports under this policy, is protected from harassment, retaliation or adverse employment or contract consequence.
9. An individual who retaliates against someone who has reported in good faith is subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment or vendor/contractor services.
10. An individual or employee who makes an unsubstantiated report, which is knowingly false, frivolous, or made with vexatious or malicious intent, will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment or vendor/contractor services.
11. No person shall willfully obstruct management or any others involved in an investigation of wrongdoing.
12. No person shall direct, counsel or cause in any manner any person to obstruct management or any others involved in an investigation of wrongdoing.
13. No person shall direct, counsel or cause in any manner any person to destroy, alter, falsify, or conceal a document or other thing they know or ought to know is likely relevant to an investigation of wrongdoing.



POLICY SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

POLICY NO: A. 39

14. When an alleged wrongdoing is confirmed by the investigation, appropriate action shall be taken, up to and including termination of employment and/or contract where appropriate.

15. In the event of criminal misconduct, the Police shall be notified immediately.

16. Annual budget provisions will be made to support compliance with the policy.



POLICY SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

POLICY NO: A. 39

Definitions:
Informant

An informant is a person who exposes misconduct, alleged dishonest or illegal activity occurring in an organization.

Wrongdoing

Wrongdoing may be classified collectively as illegal or inappropriate conduct, i.e. a violation of a law, rule, regulation and/or a direct threat to public interest, such as fraud, health and safety violations, and corruption.

Wrongdoing includes but is not limited to:

- Fraud as defined in the Criminal Code of Canada (s. 380 (1)).
- Misappropriation of funds, supplies, resources, or other assets.
- Any computer related activity involving the alteration, destruction, forgery, manipulation of data or unauthorized access for wrongdoing purposes, in violation of the TCDSB policy on Electronic Communication System-Acceptable Use (A.29)
- Irregular and/or improper accounting, internal controls, or auditing practices or conduct.
- Conflicts of interest (personal or otherwise) influencing the objectives and decision-making of one's duties.
- An actual or suspected violation or contravention of any federal or provincial law, regulation, TCDSB policies or administrative procedures as it relates to the TCDSB.
- Conduct or practices that present a danger to the health, safety, or well-being of the Board's students, employees, or other parties, where applicable.
- Unprofessional conduct or conduct that contravenes the following TCDSB policies: Conflict of Interest: Employees (H.M.31); Conflict of Interest: Trustees (T.01); Code of Conduct (SS.09).



POLICY SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

POLICY NO: A. 39

- Knowingly directing or counselling a person to commit a wrongdoing of illegal or inappropriate conduct.

The above list is not exhaustive but is intended to provide guidance to individuals as to the kind of conduct that constitutes wrongdoing under this policy.

Reprisal

A reprisal is any measure taken against an individual or employee who has reported wrongdoing that adversely affects his or her employment or appointment and includes but is not limited to:

- a. Ending or threatening to end an individual or employee's employment or appointment;
- b. Disciplining or suspending or threatening to discipline or suspend an individual or employee;
- c. Imposing or threatening to impose a penalty related to employment or appointment of an individual or employee; or
- d. Intimidating, coercing or harassing an individual or employee in relation to his or her employment or appointment.

Stakeholders

"Stakeholders" includes trustees, TCDSB employees, and the general public, including parents and students.

Third Party Whistleblower Hotline

An objective third party service offering a secure reporting tool and management system to support the Board's mandate to implement an ethics and compliance reporting (whistleblowing), policy and procedure. The certified ethics reporting service protects individuals' identities so they are more inclined to report alleged wrongdoing.



POLICY SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

POLICY NO: A. 39

Evaluation and Metrics:

The effectiveness of the policy will be determined by measuring the following:

1. A report of the number and classification of disclosures of information and substantiation of reports and concerns including themes regarding the concerns shall be provided to the Board and Audit Committee quarterly.
2. A survey will be distributed annually to TCDSB internal and external stakeholders to assess satisfaction with the Whistleblower policy and its operational procedures. The results of this survey will be reported to the

WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY (A.39)

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE

This operational procedure supports the TCDSB's commitment to provide a framework for the disclosure and investigation of alleged wrongdoing to a third party whistleblower hotline as well as protection from reprisal or threat of reprisal for those who make disclosures of such information.

This operational procedure applies to all internal and external stakeholders of the TCDSB Community. This operational procedure extends to all individuals or organizations engaged in education or other activities while in TCDSB facilities or representing the TCDSB.

1. Reporting an Alleged Wrongdoing

- (a) Any individual who has knowledge of an occurrence of a wrongdoing, or has reason to suspect that an alleged wrongdoing has occurred may report to the third party whistleblower hotline.
- (b) The third party whistleblower hotline will assess the nature of the report of the alleged wrongdoing and redirect it to the appropriate authority for review and investigation, as required, based on the following criteria:
 - (i) Where a Trustee or employee of the Board is suspected of the alleged wrongdoing, the reported information will be provided to the Director of Education or designate.
 - (ii) Where the Director of Education is suspected of alleged wrongdoing, the reported information will be provided to the Chair of the Board, who will report to the entire Board of Trustees. The investigation will be conducted by a third party investigator and reported to the entire Board of Trustees.

- (c) The informant can report their concerns to the third party whistleblower hotline via email, fax, mail, or phone.
- (d) The third party whistleblower hotline will collect the information from the informant, creating a unique case file for each matter reported. The information will be assessed and forwarded as per the Board policy.

2. Investigation of Suspicions or Allegations of Wrongdoing

- (a) The Director of Education shall ensure that all instances of alleged wrongdoing are appropriately investigated and reported to the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis.
- (b) Investigations will be conducted in accordance with the appropriate Board policy.
- (c) The Director of Education, in consultation with the Board's legal counsel, may solicit the services of internal staff and/or external resources as appropriate.
- (d) Employees are expected to fully cooperate with management and any others involved in the investigation and make all reasonable efforts to be available to assist during the course of the investigation.
- (e) In the event that the investigation was conducted in good faith yet is not to the informant's satisfaction, he/she has the right to report the event to the appropriate legal or investigative agency. Any associated costs are the responsibility of the informant.
- (f) All participants in an investigation of an alleged wrongdoing, including persons who make a disclosure, witnesses, and the persons alleged to be responsible for wrongdoing, shall keep the details and results of the investigation confidential, and shall not discuss the matter with anyone other than those conducting the investigation. Any person who violates this confidentiality requirement will be subject to disciplinary measures up to and including suspension or termination.

3. Duty to Protect

- (a) The identities of all participants in an investigation of wrongdoing, including persons who make a disclosure, witnesses, and the persons alleged to be responsible for wrongdoing will be protected and remain confidential unless it is a criminal matter and must be reported to the appropriate authorities.
- (b) The identity of the informant shall remain confidential to those persons directly involved in applying this policy, unless the issue requires investigation by law enforcement, in which case members of the organization are subject to subpoena.

4. Duty to Report

- (a) In making a report, an individual or employee must be acting in good faith with reasonable grounds for believing that there is a grievous breach of a Board policy or federal or provincial law that relates to the safeguarding of the Board's assets as well as the Board's fiduciary responsibilities.
- (b) Any act of wrongdoing that is detected or alleged must be reported immediately and investigated in accordance with this policy as expeditiously as possible.

5. Prohibition Against Interfering with an Investigation

- (a) Any person who willfully obstructs management or any others involved in an investigation of alleged wrongdoing is subject to disciplinary measures including suspension or termination.
- (b) No person shall destroy, alter, falsify, or conceal a document or other thing they know or ought to know is likely relevant to an investigation of alleged wrongdoing.
- (c) Any person, who destroys, alters, falsifies, or conceals a document or other thing they know or ought to know is likely relevant to the

investigation of alleged wrongdoing is subject to disciplinary measures, including suspension or termination.

6. Prohibition Against Counseling Interference with an Investigation

- (a) Any individual who directs, counsels or causes in any manner any individual to obstruct management or any others involved in an investigation of alleged wrongdoing is subject to disciplinary measures, including suspension or termination.
- (b) Any individual who directs, counsels or causes in any manner any individual to destroy, alter, falsify, or conceal a document or other thing they know or ought to know is likely relevant to an investigation of alleged wrongdoing is subject to disciplinary measures, including suspension or termination.

7. Reporting Of A Complaint From An Individual Who Believes That They Have Suffered Or Are Suffering From Retaliation Or Reprisal

- (a) An individual who feels that they are suffering reprisal resulting from making a complaint of alleged wrongdoing should contact the Superintendent of Human Resources or Director of Education.
- (b) The Third party whistleblower hotline may also be contacted where the individual who feels that they have suffered reprisal is uncomfortable with reporting the matter through the process noted in 7(a).

8. Investigating A Complaint From An Individual Who Believes That They Have Suffered From Retaliation Or Reprisal

- (a) The complaint will be processed as per Board policies and procedures related to the disposition of complaints.
- (b) An individual or employee who retaliates against someone who has reported in good faith is subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment or vendor/contractor services.



TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

DELEGATION REGISTRATION FORM FOR STANDING OR OTHER COMMITTEES

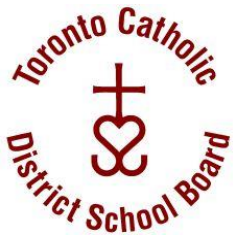
**PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT ALL STANDING
COMMITTEE MEETINGS ARE BEING RECORDED**

For Board Use
Only

Delegation No. _____

☐ Public Session
☐ Private Session
☐ Three (3)
 Minutes

Name	Mary Laframboise
Committee	Catholic Education and Living our Catholic Values Sub-Committee
Date of Presentation	6/11/2019
Topic of Presentation	Inclusion of persons; necessary judgment of behaviour
Topic or Issue	We need a distinctively Catholic approach to inclusivity.
Details	Like any good parent, we want to love the person but guide their behaviour in accord with truth.
Action Requested	That our code of conduct not be amended to include gender identity, gender expression, marital status, family status, as grounds for unjust discrimination. We must be able to justly discriminate between good and bad behaviour according to our Catholic faith understanding.
I am here as a delegate to speak only on my own behalf	{ 1) I am here as a delegation to speak only on my own behalf }
I am an official representative of the Catholic School Parent Committee (CSPC)	
I am an official representative of student government	
I am here as a spokesperson for another group or organization	
I have read, understand and agree to comply with the rules for Delegations as per the TCDSB Delegations Policy T.14.	I Agree
Submittal Date	6/11/2019



TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

DELEGATION REGISTRATION FORM FOR STANDING OR OTHER COMMITTEES

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT ALL STANDING
COMMITTEE MEETINGS ARE BEING RECORDED

For Board Use Only

Delegation No. _____

☐ Public Session

☐ Private Session

☐ Three (3)

Minutes

Name	Paolo De Buono
Committee	Student Achievement and Well-Being Catholic Education Human Resources
Date of Presentation	5/28/2019
Topic of Presentation	Improving Inclusiveness for the TCDSB's LGBT Students
Topic or Issue	Improving inclusiveness for the TCDSB's LBGT students is a key component for their achievement & well-being as students for the benefit of all TCDSB stakeholders.
Details	The presentation will focus on how there can be improvements in the TCDSB's communication at all levels & in the training of its professional staff to improve inclusiveness of LGBT students.
Action Requested	- Improved communication (examples to be presented) - Improved training for professional staff (suggestions to be presented)
< R> I am here as a delegate to speak only on my own behalf	{ 1) I am here as a delegation to speak only on my own behalf }
I am an official representative of the Catholic School Parent Committee (CSPC)	No
I am an official representative of student government	
I am here as a spokesperson for another group or organization	
I have read, understand and agree to comply with the rules for Delegations as per the TCDSB Delegations Policy T.14.	I Agree
Submittal Date	4/24/2019

Improving Inclusiveness for the TCDSB's LGBT Students

Summary of My Delegation at the May 28, 2019 Regular Meeting of the TCDSB's Student Achievement and Well Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources Committee

Inclusiveness is directly linked to student achievement and well being, and inclusiveness is directly linked to Catholicity. These links to student achievement, student well being, and Catholicity are consistent with the selection of We Belong as the Catholic education focus of the Toronto Catholic District School Board ("TCDSB") for the 2018-2019 school year.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender ("LGBT") students are recognized as a protected group in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Ontario's Human Rights Act. The Education Act directs school boards to promote a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all pupils, including specifically LGBT students. I understand that there is a general belief by some in the Catholic community that there is a Catholic exception to LGBT-related language in the Charter, Human Rights Act, and Education Act with respect to students. Despite much effort in searching for what is publicly and readily available for me as a Catholic educator, I have not found a Catholic exception to the obligation to be inclusive and accepting of LGBT students in Catholic schools. In contrast, there are many publicly and readily available documents and examples which support the Catholicity of deliberate inclusion of LGBT students in Catholic schools, not limited to the example of Jesus in the Gospels and of the intention of Catholic social justice. Good Catholic education policy can be written. Absent any clearly written Catholic education policy to the contrary, Catholic educators are obligated professionally and religiously to be inclusive and accepting of LGBT students in Catholic schools.

The TCDSB's communication about our LGBT students is not as inclusive as it could be. There are examples available on social media such as Twitter that the TCDSB's Senior

Management Team (“SMT”), in comparison to school and system superintendents at the Toronto District School Board (“TDSB”), is not using language or terms that are deliberately inclusive of LGBT students. For example, combining all Twitter-active SMT members in a search using LGBT-related search terms (specifically: homophobia, homophobic, biphobia, biphobic, transphobia, and transphobic), from September 4, 2018 to May 26, 2019, during this We Belong school year, the result was zero; in contrast, in a similar search involving the TDSB’s supervisory officers, there were several examples of social media being used to share messages that were deliberately inclusive of LGBT students. On April 10, 2019, the International Day of Pink (a day recognized internationally to raise awareness to stop homophobia), the main TDSB Twitter account in a related tweet referred specifically to homophobia and that “all students belong;” in contrast, the main TCDSB Twitter account avoided LGBT-inclusive terms in a related tweet. TCDSB SMT members on April 10, 2019 had “anti-bullying” messages on the International Day of Pink, but avoided terms such as homophobia. Further, my own search of board-wide emails from SMT members shows zero emails that are deliberately inclusive of LGBT students. Also, my attendance at a TCDSB-sponsored equity conference on student success in November 2018 included two main presentations which included no deliberate references about LGBT students.

In contrast to the zero examples of messages that were deliberately inclusive of LGBT students, there are many examples of deliberately inclusive messages from the SMT through social media and board-wide emails in other areas of equity such as race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, gender, and disability.

This inclusiveness gap, comparing the lack of SMT messages about LGBT students with the many SMT messages about students identifying with other equity areas, leaves the possibility for our LGBT students, who are statistically at risk in the areas of student well being and student achievement, that they may interpret the message of We Belong as not fully inclusive of them. Such an interpretation is harmful to everyone. We must be more deliberately inclusive of our LGBT students. Communication inclusive of our LGBT students is most effective from the SMT level. These are some suggestions for the SMT to adopt more inclusive language and actions to improve inclusiveness for our LGBT students:

- Include inclusive terms about LGBT students in social media, emails, speeches at board/school events, and in principal meetings.

- Associate inclusion of LGBT students, including addressing homophobia, with Catholicity, such as in adopting board-wide Catholicity goals and when assisting schools in adopting school-wide Catholicity goals.
- Focus on specific days (such as the International Day of Pink) for deliberate system-wide inclusive messages about LGBT students.
- Invite speakers for training purposes for SMT members and principals on improving inclusiveness (particularly as it relates to obligations under the Education Act regarding bullying and school climate).
- Attend GSA meetings at schools and release related messages on social media.



we belong

Improving Inclusiveness for the TCDSB's LGBT Students

we **BELONG**

- Inclusiveness is directly linked to student achievement and well being.
- Inclusiveness is directly linked to Catholicity.
- LGBT students are recognized as a protected group in our most fundamental laws including the Education Act. There is no Catholic exception.

TDSB

TCDSB

Senior Team Leadership Directory 2018-2019

The screenshot displays the TCDSB website's navigation and content. At the top, a red header bar contains the board's name and tagline, along with links for 'Find A School', 'Sitemap', and 'Question'. Below this is a dark red navigation menu with links for 'Board', 'Schools', 'Programs And Services', 'News', 'Calendar', 'Students', and 'Parent'. A breadcrumb trail indicates the current location: 'Board > TCDSB Administration > Administrative Offices > School Superintendents'. The main content area features a sidebar with links to 'Superintendents', 'Educational Services', and 'Communications'. The main body is titled 'School Superintendents' and includes a list of links for 'Area 1' through 'Area 8', a 'Map of Superintendent Areas', and a link to 'Superintendent Areas 2016-17'.

Find A School Sitemap Question

Toronto Catholic District School Board
Transforming the world through witness, faith, innovation & action

Keyword Search

Board Schools Programs And Services News Calendar Students Parent

Board > TCDSB Administration > Administrative Offices > School Superintendents

Superintendents
Educational Services
Communications

School Superintendents

| [Area 1](#) | [Area 2](#) | [Area 3](#) | [Area 4](#) | [Area 5](#) | [Area 6](#) | [Area 7](#) | [Area 8](#) | [Area 9](#)

Map of Superintendent Areas
 [Superintendent Areas 2016-17](#)



Advanced search

Words

All of these words

This exact phrase

Any of these words

homophobia homophobic biphobia biphobic transphobia transphobic

None of these words

These hashtags

Written in

All languages



People

From these accounts

@tdsb [REDACTED]

To these accounts

Mentioning these accounts

Places

Near this place



Add location

Dates

From this date

2018-09-04

to

2019-05-26

Search

homophobia OR homophobic OR biphobia OR biphobic OR transphobia OR transphobic f...

[Top](#) [Latest](#) [People](#) [Photos](#) [Videos](#) [News](#) [Broadcasts](#)

Search filters · [Hide](#)

From anyone

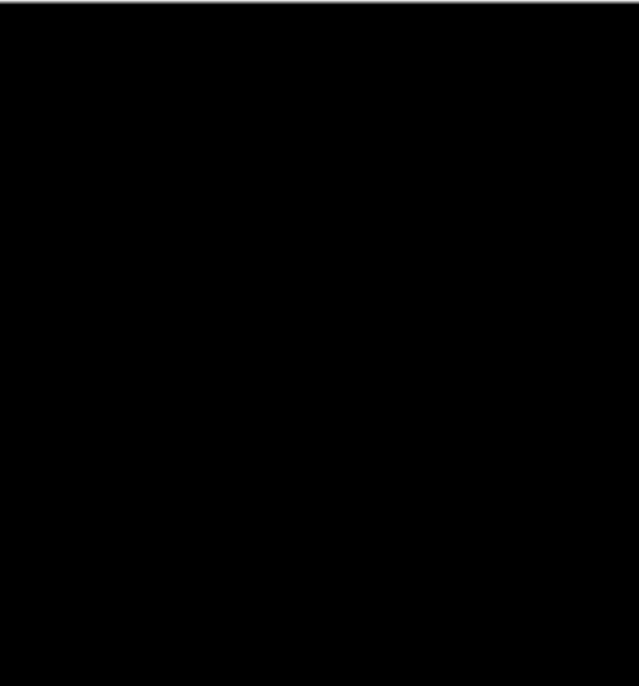
Anywhere

All languages

Quality filter on

[Advanced search](#)

Who to follow · [Refresh](#) · [View all](#)



 **Find people you know**
Import your contacts from Gmail

[Connect other address books](#)

-   Retweeted
-  **Toronto DSB**  @tdsb · May 17
- Today, we recognize the International Day Against **Homophobia**, **Transphobia** and **Biphobia** as we work to bring awareness and stand up for inclusion and diversity to ensure everyone is made to feel welcome.
-  3  84  196 
-   Retweeted
-  **John Malloy** @malloy_john · May 17
- Today is the International Day Against **Homophobia**, **Transphobia** and **Biphobia**. At the [#tdsb](#), we strive to create a safe space for our LGBTQ2 community to feel welcome and achieve a sense of belonging and acceptance. [#IDAHOTB](#) [#tdsbdirector](#)
-  1  27  80 
-  **Jeewan C** @jeewanc · Apr 20
- The people who are targeted by racism, **homophobia**, heterosexism and gender bias are not responsible for initiating these convos and building the tables where they should be happening. We have to be able to choose courage over comfort.
-  3  5  24 
- [Show this thread](#)
-   Retweeted
-  **John Malloy** @malloy_john · Apr 10
- Today, [#tdsb](#) staff & students wear pink in support of diversity and to raise awareness to stop discrimination, gender-based bullying, **homophobia**, and **transphobia**. We must work together to end bullying. [#tdsbdirector](#) [#TDSBPink](#) [#DayofPink](#)
- Page 35 of 172



Advanced search

Words

All of these words

This exact phrase

Any of these words

homophobia homophobic biphobia biphobic transphobia transphobic

None of these words

These hashtags

Written in

All languages



People

From these accounts

@tcdsb

To these accounts

Mentioning these accounts

Places

Near this place



Add location

Dates

From this date

2018-09-04

to

2019-05-26

Search



homophobia OR homophobic OR biphobia OR biphobic OR transphobia OR transphobic f...

Top Latest People Photos Videos News Broadcasts

Search filters · [Hide](#)

From anyone

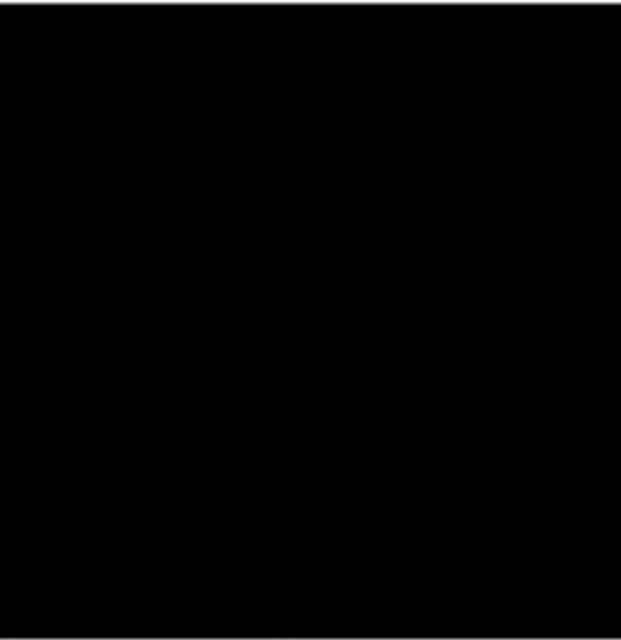
Anywhere

All languages

Quality filter on

[Advanced search](#)

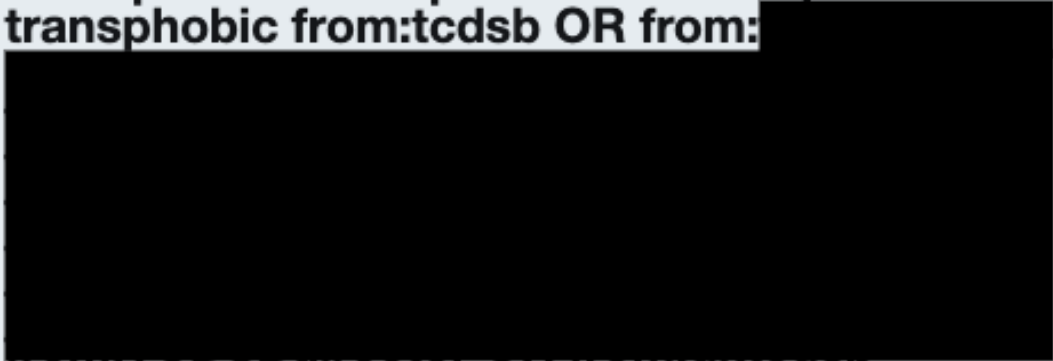
Who to follow · [Refresh](#) · [View all](#)



Find people you know
Import your contacts from Gmail

[Connect other address books](#)

**No results for homophobia OR homophobic
OR biphobia OR biphobic OR transphobia OR
transphobic from:tcdsb OR from:**



since:2018-09-04 until:2019-05-26

Sorry, we didn't find any results.

You could also try removing filters or [clear all filters](#).

International Day of Pink (April 10, 2019)

TDSB



TCDSB



we BELONG

- Our communication about our LGBT students is not as inclusive as it could be.
- We may be sending the following message:
“We belong, but they don’t.”
- The Senior Management Team and Communications should lead in sharing LGBT-inclusive communication.

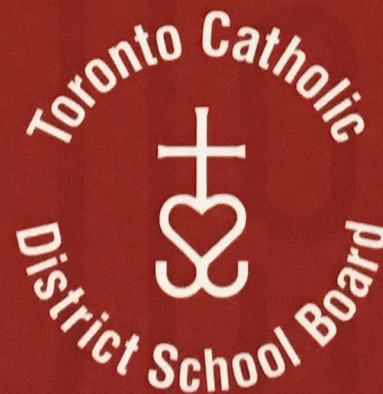
ROOTED IN CHRIST

“Live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, abounding in thanksgiving.” – Colossians, 2:6-7

we
BELONG

we
BELIEVE

we
BECOME



2018-2021



TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

DELEGATION REGISTRATION FORM FOR STANDING OR OTHER COMMITTEES

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT ALL STANDING
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Delegation No. _____

☐ Public Session

☐ Private Session

☐ Three (3)

Minutes

Name	Emily De Decker
Committee	Student Achievement and Well-Being Catholic Education Human Resources
Date of Presentation	5/28/2019
Topic of Presentation	Code of Conduct wording on Respect
Topic or Issue	Amendments to the Code of Conduct Standards of Behaviour
Details	Amendments to the Code of Conduct Standards of Behaviour to ensure Catholic values are protected
Action Requested	Request Trustees vote against adding “gender identity,” “gender expression,” “marital status,” and “family status,” in the Code of Conduct

I am here as a delegate to speak only on my own behalf	{ 1) I am here as a delegation to speak only on my own behalf }
I am an official representative of the Catholic School Parent Committee (CSPC)	
I am an official representative of student government	
I am here as a spokesperson for another group or organization	
I have read, understand and agree to comply with the rules for Delegations as per the TCDSB Delegations Policy T.14.	I Agree
Submittal Date	5/28/2019

Emily De Decker
Code of Conduct Editions
Student Achievement and Well Being Committee Meeting
May 28, 2019

Good evening Director, Trustees, staff, members and guests of the board. As a parent, I am alarmed by this proposal to add the words, "gender identity," "gender expression," "marital status," and "family status," to the prohibited grounds of discrimination contained in the Board's Code of Conduct.

Some will support adding the terms "gender identity" and "gender expression" to protect students from being bullied. Of course we agree that there should be no bullying of students, especially based on sexual attraction, or feelings of gender dysphoria. But adding those terms is not really necessary since the policy already includes "gender" and "sexual orientation".

And there are good reasons to oppose their inclusion, namely that Pope Francis has spoken out strongly against allowing Catholic schools to adopt and teach what he calls the "ideology" of gender instead of the Genesis teaching that God created two sexes, male and female.

In *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis decried the "ideology of gender" being imposed on children at school, and urged that young people "need to be helped to accept their own body as it was created" [para 285].

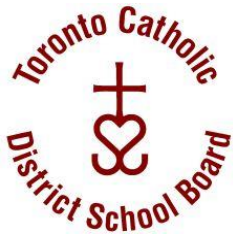
And again in a 2016 speech, "You, Irina, mentioned a great enemy to marriage today: the theory of gender. Today there is a world war to destroy marriage. Today there are ideological colonizations which destroy, not with weapons, but with ideas. Therefore, there is a need to defend ourselves from ideological colonizations."

How do we properly defend ourselves in this particular case?

By opposing the addition of these terms which relate to gender ideology. Something that could be threatened by the addition of these four terms is that the board could be pushed to allow the hiring of teachers and staff living outside of heterosexual marriage, or who may participate in any variety of gender expressions, which remain inconsistent with the teachings of the faith, and the expectations of Catholic parents.

The Supreme Court has ruled that Catholic schools have the right to demand that teachers follow the prescriptions of the faith concerning marriage in *Caldwell v. Stuart* (1984).

To sum up, I believe that from a Catholic point of view, the addition of these terms should not be supported by the Board. I respectfully request Trustees not to vote to add them in, when the Code of Conduct comes up for a vote.



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☐ Three (3)
 Minutes

Name	Iola Fortino
Committee	Student Achievement and Well-Being Catholic Education Human Resources
Date of Presentation	05/28/2019
Topic of Presentation	Action item Adding gender identity, gender expression, marital status family status to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination in its Code of Conduct"
Topic or Issue	Opposing the above noted secular action item It is in Opposition to Catholic Teachings
Details	To be Discussed
Action Requested	That this action item/ proposal not even be considered as a motion by the Catholic School Trustees, that it be defeated at the outset
I am here as a delegate to speak only on my own behalf	{ 1) I am here as a de egation to speak only on my own behalf }
I am an official representative of the Catholic School Parent Committee (CSPC)	
I am an official representative of student government	
I am here as a spokesperson for another group or organization	
I have read, understand and agree to comply with the rules for Delegations as per the TCDSB Delegations Policy T.14.	I Agree
Submittal Date	5/27/2019

Submission from Iola Fortino

Thankyou for this opportunity.

I oppose the entertaining of the following into our schools:

"Adding gender identity, gender expression, marital status, family status to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination in its code of conduct"

Obviously, this is contrary to Catholic Faith Teaching. God created man and woman, other genders do not exist and changing ones identity is an abomination in Gods eyes. It would be a grave disservice to the students to allow this.

This is just the continuation of the homosexual agenda imposed on our Catholic schools by the secular government

Bill 13 which was a homosexual bill in the guise of anti bullying opened up the can of worms.

This brought on the allowing of gay clubs, gay propaganda on the walls, in books, gay trips, talks, assemblies etc Basically this was a normalization and promotion of the gay lifestyle. Then entered Wynes Radical sex ed curriculum.

Inserting these words in the code of conduct would not only send a bad message but would be acted out directly or indirectly in the classroom on the walls, in the books etc. Also, the Catholic school Registration Form, if allowed, will no longer show 2 genders but various genders.

So in summary, now they will be taught its ok to be gay, its ok to be trans, its ok to change your identity, its ok to be referred to as xyz, same sex marriage is ok same sex relationships is ok and fornication is ok. Its ok to date and fornicate in grade 6 as the sex ed encourages.

What confusion, what a betrayal of the Catholic school students, parents and God! What a culture of death! What psychological child abuse! What oppression! What a total promotion of anti-Catholic doctrine! What a further promotion of a sexual, secular, Anti-Christ culture.

The scariest repercussion of inserting these words in the code of conduct is that with bill 89 (Supporting Children, Youth an Families Act 2017) is that if that "indoctrinated" child wants to change his or her identity and the parents object to it, they can be charged with child abuse and the child is taken away and becomes "property of the state or government and the community". Inserting these words in the code of conduct would facilitate the usage of bill 89 against parents

it will encourage the government to use bill 89 to take the children away. The discriminating and redundant Bill 13 already provides for this secularism, no bullying against gays and all genders. The code of conduct already provides against no bullying against anyone, respect for all, which encompasses EVERYONE.

We are doing a good job at preparing them for the relativism that is taught in the universities, do whatever you want mentality. The whatever feels good mentality is taught and it doesn't matter if its immoral, if its wrong. We have done a good job at confusing them, instead of teaching them the "Catholic Faith" so that they are able to identify and refuse this culture, this secularism in the universities and their lives.

So, the Catholic School Board is not only exposing the children to a secular, sexualized sex, homo sex education, gender theory, when their focus should be Jesus and learning their abc and 123, it has allowed the promotion of this Culture of death on our children. The children are sexualized, they are indoctrinated to this immoral culture

They are conditioned to change their mentality (even the Pope referred to this) the Catholic belief system they are being brought up at home by their parents.

This is psychological child abuse, this is oppression. I ask myself what's next drag queens in our schools, the normalization of pedophilia?

We surely are conditioning the children for that.

I was reading a "Lifesite" news article about a Freedom Rally in Washington Dc where 200 Lgbt men and women rallied to show the freedom they found in "following Jesus"

and the conversion story of an Angel Colon who is now married and has 3 children. He states "Our identity is in Jesus not in our sexuality"

These are the type of things students should hear and not promoting immorality in our schools. Yes, Bring the students back to Jesus out of the Confusion

I suggest a special class for the homosexuals and trans etc. or a special school just for them so the rest are not confused or influenced.

I suggest a survey be sent to all the parents of elementary students and to high school students regarding this and a survey to correct the past ie bill 13, Wynes Sex Ed curriculum. The parents and the students will surely vote NO against it ALL. this would be fair

and democratic.

But the best solution for all is for you our Catholic School Trustees to say NO to this and to use Their Power to go back and correct the past and teach about sexuality according to Gods law, according to the bible and use Pope John 11 Theology of the Body in Catholic schools. We should be teaching about hope,

love and charity about love, marriage and babies and that sex outside of marriage is fornication, and that sin just brings unhappiness.

We should be teaching CHASTITY. We need to go back to basics in health class and teach about the ills of sex outside of marriage,

ie stds and aids and other repercussions like unwanted pregnancies and abortion.

None of the latter is currently taught. We need to teach Chastity.

Lets indoctrinate the children back to Gods Laws back to traditional values and give them hope and joy.

Imagine killing babies/Abortion would be a thing of the past if students are indoctrinated about Chastity as they should be in Catholic schools.

Since Premier Doug Ford (who also called the Sex Ed child abuse) did not keep his

promise to repeal the radical sex Ed, I ask and I hope that you will be the first school board to go back and correct the past.

Make Catholic schools Catholic again. What you have allowed is Child Abuse !Oppression! A downright betrayal of God of our Catholic Faith.

We have allowed the infringing of our denominational rights, our parental rights and the right to practice true Catholic Faith in our Catholic schools

You have allowed the government to compromise catholic faith teaching in regards to sexuality in a Big way.

Now Please Use your Authority to Indoctrinate the students back to the traditional catholic values !

It is time that YOU our Catholic School Trustees who have the AUTHORITY to take back our Catholic schools. We have the right to bring up our children as Catholics and not have the schools confuse them. You have the power, denominational rights, the constitution behind you and you will have a huge support base the silent majority will back you.

It is time the trustees and the archdiocese to take back their power. Use your Authority! Be heroes

Please this time do what the Catholic parents and students expect do what god would expect and NOT what the secular anti-Christ government expects

You have that power for this CHANGE You have the power to fix the damage for future student lives and souls. You have the power to stamp out this culture of death in our

Catholic schools and unconfuse and give the YOUTH HOPE once again. Indoctrinate the children back to Chastity.

Even the Pope is against this (better late than never lol) ! and refers to an this "gender theory" as "changing the mentality" (or indoctrinization) as "ideological colonization". Yes this sure is oppression. Stop this oppression Stop this psychological child abuse! It has been since 2011.

You have the power !Take authority!and stop this and correct the past ,the students lives and souls are in your hands!

Be heroes to the children and parents. Be heroes in Gods eyes. Actually it is your Duty! because YOU have the POWER. With great power comes great responsibility. Jesus expects it. Your own lives and souls demands it.

"If Catholics would rise up and be truly catholic the world would change overnight" Mother Angelica



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Name	Ina Rocha	
Committee	Student Achievement and Well-Being Catholic Education Human Resources	
Date of Presentation	5/28/2019	
Topic of Presentation	Changes to the Code of Conduct Policy	
Topic or Issue	Adding terms of non-discrimination to the policy	
Details	Adding terms "gender identity" "gender expression" "family status" and "marital status" to the policy	
Action Requested	Requesting board to voter against adding the terms to the policy	
I am here as a delegate to speak only on my own behalf	{ 1) I am here as a delegation to speak only on my own behalf }	
I am an official representative of the Catholic School Parent Commi tee (CSPC)		
I am an official representative of student government		
I am here as a spokesperson for another group or organization		
I have read, understand and agree to comply with the rules for Delegations as per the TCDSB Delegations Policy T.14.	I Agree	
Submittal Date	5/27/2019	

Trustees, staff, parents and guests, my name is Ina Rocha and I am a parent in Ward 8. I am here tonight to request that the board NOT amend its Code of Conduct to include four new words, “gender identity,” “gender expression,” “marital status,” and “family status.”

These terms cannot be applied without interfering with the distinctive nature of Catholic schools. Since the Constitution guarantees the denominational rights of Catholic schools, I remind all Trustees that they are Constitutionally protected when they decide that a policy is unsuitable for Catholic schools.

The terms “gender identity” and “gender expression” express the idea that people can choose a gender that may not match their biology. This school of thought Pope Francis calls “gender ideology.” The Pope has spoken out repeatedly against both the problem of what he calls gender ideology infiltrating schools as well as against same sex marriage. In a speech to the Polish bishops he gave in 2016 he said:

“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 is terrible!”

It should be noted that scientists such as the neuroscientist Dr. Debra Soh, support Francis’ binary view of sexuality. In a recent op-ed in the *Globe and Mail* she wrote about Ontario’s sex ed curriculum “A curriculum that teaches gender fluidity is misleading and will impair a child’s ability to have an accurate understanding of the world.” [Soh, D. (2018, July 16) “Ontario’s sex-ed backlash isn’t about children’s safety, *Globe and Mail*]

About same sex marriage Pope Francis has said, “This mission which is entrusted to them, is all the more important inasmuch as the image of the family — as God wills it, composed of one man and one woman in view of the good of the spouses and also of the procreation and upbringing of children — is deformed through powerful adverse projects supported by ideological trends.” [Address to Équipes de Notre Dame, September 10, 2015].

As a parent I would object to adding language to the Code that might be perceived to shelter staff and teachers living in relationships or pursuing gender changes that are contrary to the teachings of the faith.

Trustees, I know that protecting children from the insidious effects of ideological colonization as Pope Francis requests, as well as preserving the Catholic nature of our schools are both things you take seriously. I hope to see evidence that of that in your votes not to add these four terms to the Code of Conduct, when the Code of Conduct comes to a vote.

Thank you for your attention.



TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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Name	Elio Freitas
Committee	Student Achievement and Well-Being Catholic Education Human Resources
Date of Presentation	5/28/2019
Topic of Presentation	Changes to the Code of Conduct Policy
Topic or Issue	Adding terms to the Code of Conduct Policy
Details	Adding terms "gender identity" "gender expression" "family status" and "marital status" to the policy
Action Requested	Requesting Board not add the proposed terms to the Policy
I am here as a delegate to speak only on my own behalf	{ 1) I am here as a delegation to speak only on my own behalf }
I am an official representative of the Catholic School Parent Committee (CS C)	No Dante Alighieri
I am an official representative of student government	
I am here as a spokesperson for another group or organization	
I have read, understand and agree to comply with the rules for Delegations as per the TCDSB Delegations Policy T.14.	I Agree
Submittal Date	5/27/2019

Student Achievement Committee, May 28, 2019

Parent delegate, Elio Freitas

Trustees, Director, staff, and members of the TCDSB community, my name is Elio Freitas and I am a parent with children in the board in Ward 10. I understand that the board has been considering adding new categories to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination in its Code of Conduct. The proposed additions are, "gender identity," "gender expression," "marital status" and "family status."

I have a problem with this, as I see a direct conflict between the teaching about gender embodied in the terms "gender identity" and "gender expression" and what the Catholic faith teaches about sex and gender.

To say that someone can adopt a gender identity implies that gender can be chosen and molded at will. Pope Francis has spoken out against this view of gender in his encyclical *Laudato Si*.

I have a quote to read from that document, a rather long one, but please bear with me.

"Pope Benedict XVI spoke of an 'ecology of man', based on the fact that 'man too has a nature that he must respect and that he cannot manipulate at will'... Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology. Also, valuing one's own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment. It is not a healthy attitude which would seek to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it." [No. 155]

To insert the terms gender identity and gender expression into the Code of Conduct seems dangerous to me because it implies approval of a teaching about gender which Catholics cannot approve.

Moreover the law protects Catholic schools from being forced into saying things they should not say.

The Supreme Court has ruled that that public authorities must respect the denominational aspect of Catholic schools, in the recent case *Loyola v. Quebec*, (2015), saying:

A secular state does not — and cannot — interfere with the beliefs or practices of a religious group unless they conflict with or harm overriding public interests. A secular state respects religious differences, it does not seek to extinguish them (para. 43).

Trustees, please vote against the addition of these four terms to the Board's Code of Conduct. Our students are already protected in the current policy from maltreatment based on their gender or sexual orientation. No more is needed. Remember that our schools need to have policies that reflect our Catholic lens through which we see the world.



POLICY SECTION: SAFE SCHOOLS

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: Code of Conduct

POLICY NO: S.S.09

Date Approved: November 7, 2013	Date of Next Review: November, 2016	Dates of Amendments:
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Cross References:

- Education Act Part XIII, Behaviour, Discipline and Safety
- Program/Policy Memorandum 128, 2012 *The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct*
- O. Reg. 472/07 Behaviour, Discipline and Safety of Pupils
- Police/School Board Protocol (~~Revised 2013~~)
- S.S.04: ~~Access to School Premises and Trespass~~ **Access to Students in Schools**
- **S.S.14: Trespass**
- ~~S.S.05: Expulsions~~ **S.S.01 – Suspension and Expulsion**
- ~~S.S.06: Suspensions~~
- S.S.10: Progressive Discipline
- S.S.11: Bullying Prevention and Intervention
- T. 07: Community Engagement

Appendix

- Appendix A: TCDSB Code of Conduct S.S.09 Guidelines
- Appendix B: Toronto Police/School Board Protocol

Purpose:

This Policy affirms that all students, parents, and teachers and other school staff have the right to be safe, and to feel safe, in their school community. The purpose of this Policy is to set out how schools will implement and enforce the provincial Code of Conduct and all other rules related to the provincial standards that promote and support respect, civility, responsible citizenship, safety and well-being for all individuals at TCDSB facilities for educational or other activities.



POLICY SECTION: SAFE SCHOOLS

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: Code of Conduct

POLICY NO: S.S.09

Scope and Responsibility:

This Policy extends to all individuals or organizations engaged in education or other activities while in schools of the Toronto Catholic District School Board. The Director of Education, supported by the Superintendent of Safe Schools and school principals, is responsible for this policy.

Alignment with MYSP:

Living Our Catholic values

Fostering Student Achievement and Well-Being

Achieving Excellence in Governance

Inspiring and Motivating Employees

Strengthening Public Confidence

Financial Impact:

Generally, there is no significant financial impact on the TCDSB.

Legal Impact:

~~The Education Act requires school boards and all schools of a board to develop a Code of Conduct that contains clearly articulated standards of behaviour, and outlines what responsibilities are held by stakeholders to promote a safe and accepting school climate.~~



POLICY SECTION: SAFE SCHOOLS
SUB-SECTION:
POLICY NAME: Code of Conduct
POLICY NO: S.S.09

Policy:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is committed to ensuring that schools be an example of Christian Community that promote, maintain, and encourage responsibility, respect, civility, equity, inclusivity, academic excellence and well-being in a safe learning and teaching environment. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable and accepted, and is supported through a whole school approach. The Code of Conduct for all schools of the TCDSB will be based on the Board's Code of Conduct, allowing for some local standards of behaviour consistent with input from students, parents, staff members and other community members in the school community.

Regulations:

1. The TCDSB Code of Conduct is consistent with the provincial Code of Conduct and clearly sets out the standards of behaviour for all members of the school community including: but not limited to, students, parents, volunteers, teachers and other staff members, board staff, trustees, visitors, third-party service providers and permit holders while on board premises **or at school-related activities.** ~~(Appendix A)~~ **The TCDSB code of conduct is also applicable to all members of the school community for behaviour occurring off school premises or outside of school hours that negatively impacts school climate.**



POLICY SECTION: SAFE SCHOOLS

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: Code of Conduct

POLICY NO: S.S.09

~~The Code of Conduct applies to all students while at school, on school buses, at school-related activities, or in other circumstances that could have an impact on the school climate.~~

2. Each school's **code of conduct** will clearly ~~set out~~ **describe** ~~what is~~ acceptable and ~~what is~~ unacceptable behavior for all members of the elementary, secondary and **continuing** education school communities, referencing students, parents, staff members, board staff, **trustees**, visitors, volunteers, third-party service providers, permit holders, and other members of the community.
3. ~~All TCDSB employees who work directly with students must respond to any student behavior that is contrary to the Code of Conduct and likely to have a negative impact on the school climate.~~

Board employees who work directly with students – including administrators, teachers and other school staff – must respond to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on school climate if it is safe to do so. If the board employees feel it is not safe to respond, they are expected to verbally inform the principal as soon as possible.

4. ~~All TCDSB employees who become aware that a student, registered in a TCDSB school may have engaged in a serious incident shall report the matter to the principal as soon as reasonably possible. The Safe Schools Reporting Form Part~~



POLICY SECTION: SAFE SCHOOLS

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~~I must be completed by the employee and submitted to the principal by the end of the school day.~~

Any board employee who becomes aware that a pupil student at a school of the board may have engaged in a serious student incident for which the pupil may be suspended or expelled shall report the matter to the principal as soon as reasonably possible. The employee must consider the safety of others and the urgency of the situation in reporting the incident, but, in any case, must report it to the principal no later than the end of the school day using the Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form - Part I. In cases where an immediate action is required, a verbal report to the principal may be made and the written report must be made when it is safe to do so. In addition to board employees, school bus drivers, early childhood educators and other staff in board-operated extended-day programs, employees and contractors of third-party operators, and other individuals who are not employees of the board and come into direct contact with pupils on a regular basis are subject to these same reporting requirements.

5. The Code of Conduct at each school of the TCDSB will be reviewed annually. In developing and reviewing the local standards of behaviour, the principal shall take into consideration the views of the Catholic School ~~Advisory Council~~ **Parent Council (CSPC)** and additionally should seek input from students, staff, parents and other members of the school community.
6. The Code of Conduct will be communicated to the school's community annually.



POLICY SECTION: SAFE SCHOOLS

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7. ~~In the situation~~ Where the TCDSB enters into agreement with a third party with respect to rental of school space, or any individual or organization respecting the permitted use of a school and/or premises operated by the Board, the standards of behaviour consistent with the Board's Code of Conduct must be followed.
8. The TCDSB will collaborate with the other district school boards in the city of Toronto and Toronto Police Services to review and revise the mandatory Police/School Board Protocol. The Protocol defines the working relationship and appropriate responses to incidents where police involvement ~~of intervention~~ is requested or required in relation to school related incidents. (~~Appendix B~~)
9. The TCDSB will collaborate with other district school boards, Toronto Police Services and community organizations to provide coordinated prevention and intervention programs and services in support of safe and respectful school communities.
10. The Board will conduct a thorough review of its Code of Conduct every three (3) years by consulting with Catholic School Advisory Councils of the Board and other stakeholders.

Definitions:

Police/School Board Protocol

This protocol has been developed by the four publicly funded district school boards operating within the city of Toronto and Toronto Police Service with the clear purpose of supporting schools as safe, caring, inclusive and accepting places for



POLICY SECTION: SAFE SCHOOLS

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learning and teaching. The Protocol clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of school officials and police officers in situations where the police are present at school for a school related incident or in other situations.

Safe and Accepting School Teams

Each school must have in place a Safe and Accepting Schools Team responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive and accepting school climate. The team must include at least one parent, one teacher, one non-teaching staff member, one community partner, and the principal. The team should include at least one student. The Chairperson of this team must be a staff member.

At TCDSB, members of the Safe and Accepting School Teams will have opportunities to meet, provide input into discussions, review data from the student surveys, and provide advice to the principal about school safety and Ministry of Education initiatives related to school climate and safety.

School Climate

The learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions.



POLICY SECTION: SAFE SCHOOLS

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Third-Party Service Provider

Any organization, not internal to a school board, that provides services for the TCDSB. Some examples include: regulated health professionals, bus companies, cafeteria operators, etc.

Evaluation and Metrics:

The effectiveness of the policy will be determined by measuring the following:

1. Anonymous Safe School Climate surveys administered to representative groups of TCDSB students and parents.
2. The Safe and Accepting Schools Team at each school will annually review safe schools data to assess the effectiveness of the school's Code of Conduct and inform of any changes required.

TCDSB Code of Conduct Policy S.S. 09

Appendix A - Guidelines

Preamble:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive community rooted in the love of Christ. We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge and to lead lives of faith, hope and charity. Through our Catholic values, we believe in the worth and dignity of every person and that people thrive in a safe, healthy and compassionate environment. One of the goals of the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan requires that, in order to create equitable learning environments for all students, we will provide all students with safe, healthy learning environments by promoting a positive school climate, inclusive and accepting of all pupils, ~~and by promoting the prevention of bullying.~~

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The TCDSB Code of Conduct is consistent with the requirements set out in the Provincial Code of Conduct, by establishing standards of behaviour for all members of the school community. The following goals are foundational to the Board's Code of Conduct:

1. To ensure that all members of the school community, especially people in positions of authority, are treated with respect and dignity.
2. To promote responsible citizenship by encouraging appropriate participation in the civic life of the school community.
3. To maintain an environment where conflict and difference can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility.
4. To encourage the use of non-violent means to resolve conflict.
5. To promote the safety of people in the schools and board sites.
6. To discourage the use of alcohol, and illegal drugs, and, except by a medical cannabis user, cannabis.
7. To prevent bullying in schools.

Standards of Behaviour

Respect, Civility, and Responsible Citizenship

All members of the school community must:

- respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws;
- demonstrate honesty and integrity;
- respect differences in people, their ideas, and their opinions;
- treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement;
- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of, for example, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability;
- respect the rights of others;
- show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others;
- take appropriate measures to help those in need;
- seek assistance from a member of the school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully;
- respect all members of the school community, especially persons in positions of authority;
- respect the need of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching;
- not swear at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority.

Safety

All members of the school community must not:

- engage in bullying behaviours;
- commit sexual assault;
- traffic in weapons or illegal drugs;
- give alcohol to a minor;
- commit robbery;
- be in possession of any weapon, including firearms;
- use any object to threaten or intimidate another person;

- cause injury to any person with an object;
- be in possession of, or be under the influence of, or provide others with alcohol or illegal drugs;
- inflict or encourage other to inflict bodily harm on another person;
- engage in hate propaganda and other forms of behaviour motivated by hate or bias;
- commit an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property or to property located on the premises of the school.

Role and Responsibilities

Toronto Catholic District School Board

The Board will provide direction to its schools to ensure opportunity, academic excellence, and accountability in the education system. It is the responsibility of the Board to:

- develop policies that set out how schools will implement and enforce the provincial Code of Conduct and all other rules that it develops that are related to the provincial standards that promote and support respect, civility, responsible citizenship, and safety;
- establish a process that clearly communicates the provincial Code of Conduct and TCDSB's code of conduct to all parents, students, principals, teachers, other school staff, and members of the school community in order to obtain their commitment and support;
- review these policies regularly with those listed above;
- seek input from school councils, Parent Involvement Committees, and the Special Education Advisory Committee;
- develop effective intervention strategies and respond to all infractions related to the standards for respect, civility, responsible citizenship, and safety;
- provide opportunities for all of the staff to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to develop and maintain academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment.

Principals

Under the direction of the Director of Education, principals take a leadership role in daily operation of a school. They provide this leadership by:

- demonstrating care for the school community and a commitment to academic excellence in a safe, inclusive, and accepting teaching and learning environment;
- holding everyone under their author accountable for his or her behaviour and actions;
- empowering students to be positive leaders in their school and community;
- communicating regularly and meaningfully with all members of their school community.

Teachers and Other School Staff

Under the leadership of their principals, teachers and other school staff maintain order in the school and are expected to hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour. As role models, teachers and other school staff uphold these high standards when they;

- help students work to their full potential and develop their sense of self-worth;
- empower students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school, and community;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents;
- maintain consistent standards of behaviour for all students;
- demonstrate respect for all students, staff, parents, volunteers, and other members of the school community;
- prepare students for the full responsibilities of citizenship.

Students

Students are to be treated with respect and dignity, In return, they must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others, and for the responsibilities of citizenship through acceptable behaviour, Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when a student:

- comes to school prepared, on time, and ready to learn;

- shows respect for himself or herself, for others, and for those in authority;
- refrains from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others;
- follows the established rules and takes responsibility for his or her own actions.

Parents

Parents play an important role in the education of their children, and can support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe, inclusive, accepting, and respectful learning environment for all students. Parents fulfil their role when they:

- show an active interest in their child's school work and progress;
- communicate regularly with the school;
- help their child be neat, appropriately dressed, and prepared for school;
- ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time;
- promptly report to the school their child's absence or late arrival;
- show that they are familiar with the provincial Code of Conduct, the board's code of conduct, and school rules;
- encourage and assist their child in following the rules of behaviour;
- assist school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues involving their child.

~~The Toronto Catholic District School Board will:~~

~~a) Provide direction to all schools to ensure opportunity, academic excellence, and accountability in the education system by:~~

- ~~Developing policies that set out how schools will implement and enforce the provincial Code of Conduct and all other rules related to the provincial standards that promote and support respect, civility, responsible citizenship, and safety;~~
- ~~Establishing a process that clearly communicates the provincial Code of Conduct and TCDSB Code of Conduct to all parents/guardians, students, principals, teachers, other school staff, and members of the school community in order to obtain their commitment and support;~~

- Seeking input and reviewing the TCDSB Code of Conduct and related policies regularly in consultation with principals, teachers and other staff members, students, parents, parish priests, volunteers, community partners/agencies, Catholic School Advisory Councils, Safe and Accepting School Teams, Parent Involvement Committee, Special Education Advisory Committee, and other groups that may not be traditionally consulted;
- Providing opportunities for all staff to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to develop and maintain academic excellence **and well-being** in a safe **inclusive and accepting** learning and teaching environment.

b) Ensure that Respect, Civility and Responsible Citizenship are followed by all members of the school community.

The standards of behaviour apply to all individuals involved in the publicly funded school system including, but not limited to, students, parents, volunteers, teachers and other staff members, superintendents, senior board staff, board personnel, trustees, visitors, permit holders/third party with respect to rental of school space, co-op employers, crossing guards, bus drivers, service providers, guests and delivery personnel whether they are present on school property, on school buses, at school-related events or in other circumstances that could have an impact on the school climate.

All members must:

- Respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws;
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity;
- Respect differences in people, their ideas, and their opinions;
- Treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement;

- ~~Respect and treat others fairly, regardless of, for example, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or other;~~
- ~~Respect the rights of others;~~
- ~~Show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others;~~
- ~~Take appropriate measures to help those in need;~~
- ~~Seek assistance from a member of the school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully;~~
- ~~Respect all members of the school community, especially persons in positions of authority.~~
- ~~Respect the need of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching.~~

c) **Ensure that a safe and positive climate is promoted in all schools and board sites by:**

- ~~Promoting strategies and initiatives to address inappropriate behaviour, and to foster a positive school climate that supports student achievement in all areas identified in the *Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations* and the *TCDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan*;~~
- ~~Ensuring that all members of the school community, especially people in positions of authority, are treated with respect and dignity.~~
- ~~Promoting responsible citizenship by encouraging appropriate participation in the civic life of the school community;~~
- ~~Maintaining an environment where conflict and difference can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility;~~
- ~~Encouraging the use of non-violent means to resolve conflict;~~

- Promoting the safety of people in the schools.

d) ~~Develop awareness/prevention/intervention strategies and will respond to all infractions related to the standards for respect, civility, responsible citizenship, safety including bullying prevention in schools.~~

~~Developing awareness/prevention/intervention strategies and will respond to all activities related to the standards for respect, civility, responsible citizenship, safety including bullying prevention in schools.~~

The Board will ensure that the following behaviours are responded to promptly and addressed through a progressive discipline approach and consistent with the Education Act and board policies for suspensions and expulsions. **Mitigating and Other Factors must be considered by the principal.**

Education Act Section 306 Suspension

~~Under subsection 306 (1) of the Education Act, a principal shall consider whether to suspend a pupil if he/she has engaged in any of the following activities on school property, at a school related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate~~

- 1) Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person
- 2) Possession alcohol or illegal drugs
- 3) Possessing cannabis, unless the pupil is a medical cannabis user.**
- 4) Being under the influence of alcohol
- 5) Being under the influence of cannabis, unless the user is a medical cannabis user.**

- 6) Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority
- 7) Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school
- 8) Bullying

Any other activity that is an activity for which a principal may suspend a pupil under a policy of the board. At TCDSB, these activities include: **Under Board policy, activities for which a principal may suspend a pupil include:**

- Persistent opposition to authority
- Habitual neglect of duty
- Use of profane or improper language
- Theft
- Aid/incite harmful behaviour
- Physical assault
- **Being under the influence of illegal drugs**
- **Sexual harassment**
- Racial harassment
- Fighting
- Extortion
- Inappropriate use of electronic communications/media **equipment**
- Conduct injurious to the moral tone of the school or to the physical or mental well-being of others

~~Education Act Section 310 Suspension, Investigation and Possible Expulsion~~

~~Under subsection 310 (1) of the Education Act, a principal shall suspend a pupil if he/she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate. The principal will conduct an investigation to determine whether to recommend to the board that the pupil be expelled.~~

- ~~1) Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm~~
- ~~2) Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person~~
- ~~3) Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner~~
- ~~4) Committing sexual assault~~
- ~~5) Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs~~
- ~~6) Committing robbery~~
- ~~7) Giving alcohol to a minor~~
 - ~~• Bullying, if,
 - ~~i. The pupil has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying, and~~
 - ~~ii. The pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the~~
 - ~~iii. safety of another person.~~~~
 - ~~• Any activity listed in subsection 306 (1) of the Act that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor basis.~~

8. Give Cannabis to a minor.

9. Any other activity that, under a policy of a board, is an activity for which a principal must suspend a pupil and conduct an investigation to determine whether to recommend to the board that the pupil be expelled. **Under board policy** At TCDSB, these activities include:

- Possession of explosive substance
- Serious or repeated misconduct.
- Refractory conduct
- Conduct injurious to the moral tone of the school or to the physical or mental well-being of others

It is also an expectation of the TCDSB Code of Conduct that, in addition to students, all members of the school community not engage in any activity that may compromise school safety or security.

e) **Ensure that principals take a leadership role in their respective school by demonstrating commitment to academic excellence and student well-being in a safe, inclusive and accepting teaching and learning environment. Principals will provide this leadership by:**

- Demonstrating care for the school community and a commitment to academic excellence in a safe, inclusive and accepting teaching and learning environment;
- Holding everyone under their authority accountable for his or her behaviour and actions in order to maintain proper order and discipline within the school and to ensure the highest standard of respect, civility and responsible behaviour;

f) **Ensure that, under the leadership of the principal, teachers and staff will maintain order in the school and are expected to role model and to hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour. As role models, teachers and other school staff uphold these high standards when they:**

- Help students work to their full potential and develop their sense of self-worth;

- ~~Empower students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school, and community;~~
 - ~~Communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents;~~
 - ~~Maintain consistent standards of behaviour for all students;~~
 - ~~Demonstrate respect for all students, staff, parents, volunteers, and other members of the school community;~~
 - ~~Prepare students for the full responsibilities of citizenship.~~
- g) ~~Ensure that students are treated with respect and dignity and in return students must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others, and for the responsibilities of good citizenship as they work towards the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when students:~~
- ~~Come to school prepared, on time, and ready to learn;~~
 - ~~Show respect for themselves, for others, and for those in authority;~~
 - ~~Refrain from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others;~~
 - ~~Follow the established rules and takes responsibility for their own actions.~~
- h) ~~Expect parents to support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe, inclusive, accepting, and respectful learning environment for all students. Parents fulfill their role when they:~~
- ~~Assist school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues and by supporting the Code of Conduct and all associated policies;~~
 - ~~Show an active interest in their child's school work and progress;~~
 - ~~Communicate regularly with the school;~~
 - ~~Help their child be neat, appropriately dressed, and prepared for school;~~
 - ~~Ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time;~~

- ~~Promptly report to the school their child's absence or late arrival;~~
- ~~Show that they are familiar with the provincial Code of Conduct, the TCDSB Code of Conduct, and school rules;~~
- ~~Encourage and assist their child in following the rules of behaviour;~~
- ~~Assist school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues involving their child.~~

List of TCDSB Policies Related to Code of Conduct

Policy Name & Link:	Relevant Section:	Wording:
Suspension and Expulsion Policy S.S. 01 https://www.tcdsb.org/Board/Policies/Documents/SS01.pdf	1. Activities Leading to a Suspension Pending Possible Expulsion section 7.2 (page 8) 2. Other Factors (page 9) 3. Definitions – Bullying (b) (page 12) 4. Mitigating Factors (page 33)	1. Any activity listed in subsection 306. (1) of the Act that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar basis. 2. Whether the Activity for which the pupil may be suspended was related to any harassment of the pupil because of his or her race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or to any other form of harassment 3. (b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the student and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability or the receipt of special education. 4. Other factors that must be taken into account are: the pupil's history; the use of a progressive discipline approach; whether the Activity for which the pupil may be suspended is related to any harassment of the pupil because of his or her race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or to any other harassment; how the suspension would affect the pupil's ongoing education; the age of the pupil; whether the behaviour was a manifestation of a disability identified in the pupil's individual education plan (IEP); whether appropriate individualized accommodation has been provided (IEP); or whether the suspension is likely to result in an aggravation or worsening of the pupil's behaviour or conduct (IEP).
Records Management and Archives A.20 https://www.tcdsb.org/Board/Policies/Documents/A20.pdf	Personal Information (page 8)	Recorded information about an identifiable individual including; • Information relating to the race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation or marital or family status of the individual;
Progressive Discipline S.S. 10 https://www.tcdsb.org/Board/Policies/Documents/SS%2010%20PROGRESSIVE%20DISCIPLINE%20SEPT%202014.pdf	Other Factors section 3 (page 6)	Whether the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled was related to any harassment of the pupil because of his or her race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or to any other harassment.

List of TCDSB Policies Related to Code of Conduct

Harassment and Discrimination H.M. 14 https://www.tcdsb.org/Board/Policies/Documents/HM14.pdf	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Definitions (page 6) 2. Workplace Sexual Harassment (a) (page 6) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discrimination Unfair treatment because of race, sex, colour, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability, citizenship, family status, record of offences, religion (creed), gender identity or gender expression. 2. engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, or
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy A. 38 https://www.tcdsb.org/Board/Policies/Documents/MFIPPA%20Policy%20A38.pdf	Definitions – Personal Information (page 5)	Refers to recorded information about an identifiable individual, including: a. Information relating to the race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation or marital or family status of the individual,
Dress Code for Pupils S.S.07 https://www.tcdsb.org/Board/Policies/Pages/SS07.aspx	Section G (9) – Compliance	Non-compliance with the Local Dress Code shall include but is not limited to sayings, pictures, and logos that address or display sexual content, substance abuse, violence, profanity, inappropriate references to nationality, race or gender, articles of clothing in serious disrepair.
Bullying Prevention and Intervention S.S. 11 https://www.tcdsb.org/Board/Policies/Documents/S.S.11_BULLYING%20PREVENTION%20AND%20INTERVENTION_META%20POLICY-Nov20,2015.pdf	Regulation 14 (page 5)	Principals will support students who want to establish and lead activities and organizations that promote a safe and inclusive learning environment, the acceptance of and respect for others and the creation of a positive school climate. These activities and organizations may promote gender equity, anti-racism, an understanding and respect for people with disabilities, or an understanding and respect for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The activity or organization must promote a positive school POLICY SECTION: SAFE SCHOOLS SUB-SECTION: POLICY NAME: Bullying Prevention and Intervention POLICY NO: S.S. 11 Page 6 of 8 climate that is inclusive and accepting of all students, and must be consistent with Catholic social teachings and the expectations of the Code of Conduct.
Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education H.M. 24 https://www.tcdsb.org/Board/Policies/Pages/hm24.aspx	DEFINITIONS - <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diversity 2. Discrimination 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

List of TCDSB Policies Related to Code of Conduct

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, or disability, as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, or on the basis of other, similar factors. Discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, has the effect of preventing or limiting access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society. Discrimination may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individual.
<p>Police/ School Board Protocol</p> <p>https://www.tcdsb.org/Board/Policies/Documents/Police-School%20Board%20Protocol%20June2011.pdf</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appendix A – Glossary (page 23) 2. Other Factors section 3 (page 24) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hate-and/or Bias-Motivated Occurrences: An incident (e.g., involving statements, words, gestures) motivated by hatred or bias towards an identifiable group (i.e., a group distinguished by colour, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or ethnic origin) that is publicly communicated and that is willfully intended to promote or incite bias or hatred against such a group. 2. Whether the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled was related to any harassment of the pupil because of his or her race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or to any other harassment.



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

RECOMMENDATION OF GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE TO UPDATE BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICY S.S.11

*Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness.
1 John 2:9*

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
April 29, 2019	May 7, 2019	May 16, 2019

John Shain, Acting Superintendent of Safe Schools
Nadia Adragna, Principal Safe Schools Department

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

Vision:

At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Mission:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.

We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.



Rory McGuckin
Director of Education

D. Koenig
Associate Director
of Academic Affairs

L. Noronha
Associate Director of Facilities,
Business and Community
Development, and
Chief Financial Officer

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report recommends updates to the current Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy S.S.11 to conform to current legislation, ensure equity and to reformat in meta policy format.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 10 hours

B. PURPOSE

This Recommendation Report is on the Order Paper of the Regular Board as it recommends a policy revision.

C. APPENDIX

Appendix A: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy S.S.11

D. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That the Board accept the recommendation of the Governance and Policy Committee and approve the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy S.S.11 as amended and proposed in Appendix A.



POLICY SECTION: SAFE SCHOOLS

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

POLICY NO: S.S. 11

Date Approved: January 23, 2008	Date of Next Review: September 2018	Dates of Amendments: April 4, 2013 September 5, 2013 November 19, 2015- Board
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Cross References:

- Education Act Part XIII, Behaviour, Discipline and Safety
- Program/Policy Memorandum 144, 2012 Bullying Prevention and Intervention
Program/Policy Memorandum 145, 2012 Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour
- **Program/Policy Memorandum 128, The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct**
- Policy/Program Memorandum 149, 2009 Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies for Provision of Services by Regulated Health Professionals, Regulated Social Services Professionals, and Paraprofessionals
- **The Ontario Human Rights Code – Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination**
- **H.M. 24 Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education Policy**
- S.S. 09 Code of Conduct Policy
- **S.S. 01 Suspension and Expulsion Policy**
- **S.S. 10 Progressive Discipline Policy**

Appendix A: Investigation and Reporting of Student Bully Behaviours

Purpose:

This Policy affirms the need for students to feel safe, **included and welcomed** at school. A whole-school approach is required to raise awareness about inclusion, respect and bullying behaviours in order to provide strategies to intervene and prevent bullying for the ~~target~~ **victim**, the witnesses and bystanders, as well as the ~~perpetrator of~~ **student who engages in** bullying behaviours.



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A safe and positive learning environment is essential for student achievement and well-being, **and to** supporting students to reach their full potential.

Scope and Responsibility:

The policy extends to all students of the TCDSB and assigns specific duties to principals and employees of the board to ensure compliance with the policy and legislation. The Director of Education, the Superintendent of Safe Schools, and school Principals are responsible for this policy.

Alignment with MYSP:

Living Our Catholic Values

Strengthening Public Confidence

Fostering Student Achievement and Well-Being

Financial Impact:

~~The TCDSB Safe Schools Department provides professional learning for TCDSB staff, students and parents in a variety of ways. There would also be costs associated with services provided by external agencies~~

Legal Impact:

~~The Education Act requires school boards to develop goals for promoting a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all students and for promoting the prevention of bullying. There may be liability that is associated with failure to provide appropriate prevention and intervention strategies to address bullying behaviours occurring at schools.~~



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POLICY NAME: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

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Policy:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is committed to providing safe, healthy, inclusive, equitable and Christ-centered learning environments that support student achievement and well-being. Bullying adversely affects a student's **well-being and** ability to learn. **Bullying also** ~~and~~ adversely affects the school climate, including healthy relationships. Bullying behaviour will not be accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in other circumstances **(e.g. online)**. ~~where engaging in Bullying behaviours that will have an impact on the school climate,~~ **including incidents occurring off school property and outside school hours, will not be accepted.** Bullying behaviours presented by students will be investigated and addressed promptly by the principal, and supports will be provided for the target(s) of bullying behaviours, the individual(s) responsible for the bullying behaviours, and the witnesses and bystanders of the bullying behaviour.

Regulations:

1. Each school in the TCDSB will have a Safe and Accepting Schools Team that will develop a local bullying awareness, prevention and intervention plan consistent with integrating local needs as part of its Safe Schools Plan. The Plan will be posted on each school's portal page.
2. Employees of the board must take seriously all allegations of bullying behaviour and act in a timely, sensitive and supportive manner when responding to students who disclose or report bullying incidents.
3. **Board employees who work directly with students must respond to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate if it is safe to do so. If board employees feel it is not safe to respond, they will be expected to inform the principal verbally as soon as possible.**



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4. Employees, bus drivers, third party service providers, and other individuals identified in the TCDSB Code of Conduct will report to the Principal, as soon as reasonably possible, if they become aware **that** of a student **at a school of the board** who may have engaged in bullying behaviour or any other activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered. **The employee must consider the safety of others and the urgency of the situation in reporting the incident, but, in any case, must report it to the principal no later than the end of the school day. In cases where an immediate action is required, a verbal report to the principal may be made. A written report must be made when it is safe to do so. All employee reports made to the principal, including those made verbally, must be confirmed in writing using the The Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form-Part I must be completed and submitted to the principal by the end of the school day.**

5. The Principal **must investigate all reports submitted by board employees. The principal** will communicate the results of the investigation to the **teacher who made the report. If a board employee who is not a teacher made the report, the principal will communicate the results of the investigation to that employee if the principal considers it appropriate. In all cases, the principal will provide the employee who reported the incident with written acknowledgement using the Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form – Part II.** ~~employee who made the written report.~~
 Where the principal has taken action in response to the incident of bullying, a copy of Reporting Form-Part I and accompanying documentation will be filed in the student's OSR **as per the Ministry of Education requirement.**

6. Principals will investigate any report of bullying and will notify the parent/guardian of the student who was harmed and provide information about the **nature of the** activity that led to the harm, **the nature of the**



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harm to the student and the steps taken to protect the student's safety. The principal will invite parents/ guardians to discuss the supports that will be provided for their child.

7. Principals will notify the parent/guardian of students who **perpetrated engaged in** the bullying behaviours, and provide information about the **nature of the** activity that lead to the harm, the nature of the harm to the other student and the nature of any disciplinary measures taken in response to the activity. The principal will invite parents/guardians to discuss the supports that will be provided for their child.
8. **A principal shall not notify a parent of a student if, in the opinion of the principal, doing so would put the student at risk of harm from a parent of the student, such that notification is not in the student's best interest. When principals have decided not to notify the parents that their child was involved in a serious student incident, they must document the rationale for this decision and notify both the teacher who reported the incident and the appropriate supervisory officer of this decision. Principals should also refer students to board resource staff who, if needed, can make referrals to community-based service providers that can provide the appropriate type of confidential support.**

In circumstances where board employees have reason to believe that a student may be in need of protection, board employees must call a children's aid society according to the requirements of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act.

9. If dissatisfied with the supports in place by the principal in response to the complaint, parents are encouraged to contact the area superintendent. If the matter remains unresolved, parents may request that the superintendent inform and consult with the Associate Director or Director in order to reach a resolution.



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10. Consistent with progressive discipline approaches for correcting inappropriate behaviour, a principal shall consider suspension for a student who engages in bullying behaviours.

~~11. A student will be suspended pending possible expulsion for bullying behaviour if,~~ **Principals must suspend a student for bullying and consider referring that student for expulsion:**

- i. **Only if** ~~The pupil~~ **the student** has previously been suspended for bullying, and the ~~pupil's~~ **student's** continuing presence in the school creates, **in the principal's opinion,** an ~~unreasonable~~ **unacceptable** risk to the safety of another person.
- ii. **If** ~~The~~ **the** bullying was motivated by hate, prejudice or bias.

12. Principals must also suspend a student, and consider referring that student for expulsion for any activity considered for suspension [subsection 306 (1) of the Education Act] if the activity is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or any other similar factor (e.g. socio-economic status, appearance).

13. The principal will ensure resources, programs, intervention and other supports identified in the board bullying awareness and prevention plan are provided to students who have been bullied, students who have witnessed incidents of bullying (bystander) and students who have engaged in bullying behaviour to assist them in developing healthy relationships and practicing pro-social behaviours.

The programs, intervention and other supports will be provided by school-



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based employees of the board, and may be provided by external, third party providers as per the TCDSB Protocol. **For students with special education needs, interventions, supports, and consequences must be consistent with the students' strengths and needs, as well as with the program goals and learning expectations documented in their Individual Education Plan (IEP).**

14. The Board will provide annual professional development programs to educate teachers and other school staff about bullying prevention strategies for promoting a positive, **safe, welcoming, and inclusive** school climate.
15. Schools will provide opportunities for students to participate in bullying prevention and leadership initiatives within their own school.
16. The Board will identify safe reporting procedures in bullying awareness, prevention and intervention plans that allow students, parents, guardians and other persons to report incidents of bullying to staff of a school in a way that minimizes the possibility of reprisal and that ensures incidents of bullying are addressed in a timely, sensitive and supportive manner.
17. Principals will support students who want to establish and lead activities ~~and organizations~~ that promote a safe and inclusive learning environment, the acceptance of and respect for others and the creation of a positive school climate. These activities and organizations may promote gender equity, anti-racism, an understanding and respect for people with disabilities, or an understanding and respect for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The activity ~~or organization~~ must promote a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all students, and must be consistent with Catholic social teachings and the expectations of the Code of Conduct.



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18. Anonymous surveys will be conducted at least once every two years to collect information from students, staff, parents/guardians in order to develop strategies and initiatives that promote a positive school climate and the prevention of bullying.

19. The TCDSB will proclaim the week beginning on the third Sunday in November ~~in~~ **of** each year as Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week.

Definitions:

Bullying

Aggressive and typically repeated behaviour (physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means) by a student where,

- a) the behaviour is intended by the student to have the effect of, or the student ought to know that the behaviour would ~~be~~ likely to have the effect of,
 - i. causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation or harm to the individual's property, or
 - ii. creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and;
- b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the student and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability or the receipt of special education.



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Cyber-bullying

This is a form of bullying that occurs through the use of technology, including the use of a computer, cellular phone or other electronic devices, using instant/text messaging, social networks, e-mail, websites or any other electronic **means** activities, and involves:

- a) creating a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
- b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and
- c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

Safe and Accepting School Teams

Each school must have in place a safe and accepting schools team responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive and accepting school climate. The team must include at least one parent, one teacher, one non-teaching staff member, one community partner, and the principal. The team should include at least one student. The Chairperson of this team must be a staff member.

At TCDSB, members of the safe and accepting school teams will have opportunities to meet, provide input into discussions, review data from the student surveys, and provide advice to the principal about school safety and Ministry of Education initiatives related to school climate and safety.

School Climate

The school climate may be defined as the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions.



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Evaluation and Metrics:

The effectiveness of the policy will be determined by measuring the following:

1. Annual Safe School Climate surveys administered to representative groups of TCDSB students.
2. Anonymous school climate surveys conducted with parents and staff at least every two years.
3. Analysis of Safe Schools Data **as reported in the Safe Schools Annual Report.** ~~:Reporting Forms Part I, Progressive Discipline Incident Logs, Suspensions and Expulsions.~~

CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION
(for Educational Institutions)

“MALE AND FEMALE
HE CREATED THEM”

TOWARDS A PATH OF DIALOGUE
ON THE QUESTION OF GENDER THEORY
IN EDUCATION

VATICAN CITY
2019

INTRODUCTION

1. It is becoming increasingly clear that we are now facing with what might accurately be called an *educational crisis*, especially in the field of affectivity and sexuality. In many places, curricula are being planned and implemented which “allegedly convey a neutral conception of the person and of life, yet in fact reflect an anthropology opposed to faith and to right reason”.¹ The disorientation regarding anthropology which is a widespread feature of our cultural landscape has undoubtedly helped to destabilise the family as an institution, bringing with it a tendency to cancel out the differences between men and women, presenting them instead as merely the product of historical and cultural conditioning.
2. The context in which the *mission of education* is carried out is characterized by challenges emerging from varying forms of an ideology that is given the general name ‘gender theory’, which “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. This ideology leads to educational programmes 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 the individual, one which can also change over time”.²
3. It seems clear that this issue should not be looked at in isolation from the broader question of education in the call to love,³ which should offer,

¹ BENEDICT XVI, *Address to Members of the Diplomatic Corps*, 10 January 2011.

² FRANCIS, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, 19 March 2016, 56.

³ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, 22 November 1981, 6; Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Letter to Families *Gratissimam Sane*, 2 February 1994,

as the Second Vatican Council noted, “a positive and prudent education in sexuality” within the context of the inalienable right of all to receive “an education that is in keeping with their ultimate goal, their ability, their sex, and the culture and tradition of their country, and also in harmony with their fraternal association with other peoples in the fostering of true unity and peace on earth”.⁴ The Congregation for Catholic Education has already offered some reflections on this theme in the document ‘Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education’.⁵

4. The Christian vision of anthropology sees sexuality as a fundamental component of one’s personhood. It is one of its mode of being, of manifesting itself, communicating with others, and of feeling, expressing and living human love. Therefore, our sexuality plays an integral part in the development of our personality and in the process of its education: “In fact, it is from [their] sex that the human person receives the characteristics which, on the biological, psychological and spiritual levels, make that person a man or a woman, and thereby largely condition his or her progress towards maturity and insertion into society”.⁶ As each person grows, “such diversity, linked to the complementarity of the two sexes, allows a thorough response to the design of God according to the vocation to which each one is called”.⁷ In the light of this, “affective-sex education must consider the totality of the person and insist therefore on the integration of the biological, psycho-affective, social and spiritual elements”.⁸

5. The Congregation for Catholic Education, as part of its remit, wishes to offer in this document some reflections which, it is hoped, can

16; Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *General Audience*, 8 April 1981 in *Insegnamenti*, IV/1 (1981), pp. 903-908.

⁴ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decl. On Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 28 October 1965, 1.

⁵ CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *Educational Guidance in Human Love, Outlines for Sex Education*, 1 November 1983.

⁶ CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Persona Humana, Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics*, 29 December 1975, 1.

⁷ *Educational Guidance in Human Love, Outlines for Sex Education*, 5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

guide and support those who work in the education of young people, so as to help them address in a methodical way (and in the light of the universal vocation to love of the human person) the most debated questions around human sexuality.⁹ The methodology in mind is based on three guiding principles seen as best-suited to meet the needs of both individuals and communities: to *listen*, to *reason* and to *propose*. In fact, listening carefully to the needs of the other, combined with an understanding of the true diversity of conditions, can lead to a shared set of rational elements in an argument, and can prepare one for a Christian education rooted in faith that “throws a new light on everything, manifests God’s design for man’s total vocation, and thus directs the mind to solutions which are fully human”.¹⁰

6. If we wish to take an approach to the question of gender theory that is based on the path of dialogue, it is vital to bear in mind the distinction between the ideology of gender on the one hand, and the whole field of research on gender that the human sciences have undertaken, on the other. While the ideologies of gender claim to respond, as Pope Francis has indicated, “to what are at times understandable aspirations”, they also seek “to assert themselves as absolute and unquestionable, even dictating how children should be raised”,¹¹ and thus preclude dialogue. However, other work on gender has been carried out which tries instead to achieve a deeper understanding of the ways in which sexual difference between men and women is lived out in a variety of cultures. It is in relation to this type of research that we should be open to listen, to reason and to propose.

7. Against this background, the Congregation for Catholic Education has seen fit to offer this text to all who have a special interest in education, and to those whose work is touched by the question of gender theory. It is intended for the educational community involved in Catholic

⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 21-47, in which the Christian vision of sexuality is set out.

¹⁰ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, 7 December 1965, 11.

¹¹ *Amoris Laetitia*, 56.

schools, and for all who, animated by the Christian vision of life, work in other types of school. The document is offered for use by parents, students, school leaders and personnel, bishops, priests, religious, ecclesial movements, associations of the lay faithful, and other relevant bodies.

LISTENING

Brief Overview

8. The primary outlook needed for anyone who wishes to take part in *dialogue* is *listening*. It is necessary, above all, to listen carefully to and understand cultural events of recent decades. The 20th century brought new anthropological theories and with them the beginnings of gender theory. These were based on a reading of sexual differentiation that was strictly sociological, relying on a strong emphasis on the freedom of the individual. In fact, around the middle of the last century, a whole series of studies were published which accentuated time and again the role of external conditioning, including its influence on determining personality. When such studies were applied to human sexuality, they often did so with a view to demonstrating that sexuality identity was more a social construct than a given natural or biological fact.

9. These schools of thought were united in denying the existence of any original given element in the individual, which would precede and at the same time constitute our personal identity, forming the necessary basis of everything we do. According to such theories, the only thing that matters in personal relationships is the affection between the individuals involved, irrespective of sexual difference or procreation which would be seen as irrelevant in the formation of families. Thus, the institutional model of the family (where a structure and finality exist independent of the subjective preferences of the spouses) is bypassed, in favour of a vision of family that is purely contractual and voluntary.

10. Over the course of time, gender theory has expanded its field of application. At the beginning of the 1990's, its focus was upon the possibility of the individual determining his or her own sexual tendencies without having to take account of the reciprocity and complementarity of male-female relationships, nor of the procreative end of sexuality. Furthermore,

it was suggested that one could uphold the theory of a radical separation between gender and sex, with the former having priority over the latter. Such a goal was seen as an important stage in the evolution of humanity, in which “a society without sexual differences” could be envisaged.¹²

11. In this *cultural context*, it is clear that *sex* and *gender* are no longer synonyms or interchangeable concepts, since they are used to describe two different realities. Sex is seen as defining which of the two biological categories (deriving from the original feminine-masculine dyad) one belonged to. Gender, on the other hand, would be the way in which the differences between the sexes are lived in each culture. The problem here does not lie in the distinction between the two terms, which can be interpreted correctly, but in *the separation of sex from gender*. This separation is at the root of the distinctions proposed between various “sexual orientations” which are no longer defined by the sexual difference between male and female, and can then assume other forms, determined solely by the individual, who is seen as radically autonomous. Further, the concept of gender is seen as dependent upon the subjective mindset of each person, who can choose a gender not corresponding to his or her biological sex, and therefore with the way others see that person (*transgenderism*).

12. In a growing contraposition between nature and culture, the propositions of gender theory converge in the concept of ‘queer’, which refers to dimensions of sexuality that are extremely fluid, flexible, and as it were, nomadic. This culminates in the assertion of the complete emancipation of the individual from any *a priori* given sexual definition, and the disappearance of classifications seen as overly rigid. This would create a new range of nuances that vary in degree and intensity according to both sexual orientation and the gender one has identified oneself with.

13. The duality in male-female couples is furthermore seen as in conflict with the idea of “polyamory”, that is relationships involving more than two individuals. Because of this, it is claimed that the duration of relationships, as well as their binding nature, should be flexible, depending on the shifting desires of the individuals concerned. Naturally, this has consequences for the sharing of the responsibilities and obligations

¹² *Idem.*

inherent in maternity and paternity. This new range of relationships become 'kinship'. These are: based upon desire or affection, often marked by a limited time span that is determined, ethically flexible, or even (sometimes by explicit mutual consent) without any hope of long-term meaning. What counts is the absolutely free self-determination of each individual and the choices he or she makes according to the circumstances of each relationship of affectivity.

14. This has led to calls for public recognition of the right to choose one's gender, and of a plurality of new types of unions, in direct contradiction of the model of marriage as being between one man and one woman, which is portrayed as a vestige of patriarchal societies. The ideal presented is that the individual should be able to choose his or her own status, and that society should limit itself to guaranteeing this right, and even providing material support, since the minorities involved would otherwise suffer negative social discrimination. The claim to such rights has become a regular part of political debate and has been included in documents at an international level, and in certain pieces of national legislation.

Points of Agreement

15. From the whole field of writing on gender theory, there have however emerged some positions that could provide points of agreement, with a potential to yield growth in mutual understanding. For instance, educational programmes on this area often share a laudable desire to combat all expressions of unjust discrimination, a requirement that can be shared by all sides. Such pedagogical material acknowledges that there have been delays and failings in this regard.¹³ Indeed, it cannot be denied that through the centuries forms of unjust discrimination have been a sad fact of history and have also had an influence within the Church. This has brought a certain rigid *status quo*, delaying the necessary and progressive inculturation of the truth of Jesus' proclamation of the *equal dignity of men and women*, and has provoked accusations of a sort of masculinist mentality, veiled to a greater or lesser degree by religious motives.

¹³ Cf. FRANCIS, *Address to the Participants in the General Assembly of the Members of the Pontifical Academy for Life*, 5 October 2017.

16. Another position held in common is the need to educate children and young people *to respect every person* in their particularity and difference, so that no one should suffer bullying, violence, insults or unjust discrimination based on their specific characteristics (such as special needs, race, religion, sexual tendencies, etc.). Essentially, this involves educating for active and responsible citizenship, which is marked by the ability to welcome all legitimate expressions of human personhood with respect.

17. A further positive development in anthropological understanding also present in writing on gender has centred on *the values of femininity*. For example, women's 'capacity for the other' favours a more realistic and mature reading of evolving situations, so that "a sense and a respect for what is concrete develop in her, opposed to abstractions which are so often fatal for the existence of individuals and society".¹⁴ This is a contribution that enriches human relationships and spiritual values "beginning with daily relationships between people". Because of this, society owes a significant debt to the many women "who are involved in the various *areas of education* extending well beyond the family: nurseries, schools, universities, social service agencies, parishes, associations and movements".¹⁵

18. Women have a unique understanding of reality. They possess a capacity to endure adversity and "to keep life going even in extreme situations" and hold on "tenaciously to the future".¹⁶ This helps explain why "wherever the work of education is called for, we can note that women are ever ready and willing to give themselves generously to others, especially in serving the weakest and most defenceless. In this work they exhibit a kind of *affective, cultural and spiritual motherhood* which has inestimable value for the development of individuals and the future of society. At this point, how can I fail to mention the witness of so many Catholic women and Religious Congregations of women from every continent who have made education, particularly the education of boys and girls, their principal apostolate?"¹⁷

¹⁴ CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Letter to Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World*, 31 May 2004, 13.

¹⁵ JOHN PAUL II, *Letter to Women*, 29 June 1995, 9.

¹⁶ CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Letter to Bishops*, 13.

¹⁷ JOHN PAUL II, *Letter to Women*, 9.

Critique

19. Nonetheless, real life situations present gender theory with some valid *points of criticism*. Gender theory (especially in its most radical forms) speaks of a gradual process of denaturalisation, that is a move away from *nature* and towards an absolute option for the decision of the feelings of the human subject. In this understanding of things, the view of both sexuality identity and the family become subject to the same ‘liquidity’ and ‘fluidity’ that characterize other aspects of post-modern culture, often founded on nothing more than a confused concept of freedom in the realm of feelings and wants, or momentary desires provoked by emotional impulses and the will of the individual, as opposed to anything based on the truths of existence.

20. The underlying presuppositions of these theories can be traced back to a *dualistic anthropology*, separating body (reduced to the status of inert matter) from human will, which itself becomes an absolute that can manipulate the body as it pleases. This combination of physicalism and voluntarism gives rise to relativism, in which everything that exists is of equal value and at the same time undifferentiated, without any real order or purpose. In all such theories, from the most moderate to the most radical, there is agreement that one’s gender ends up being viewed as more important than being of male or female sex. The effect of this move is chiefly to create a cultural and ideological revolution driven by relativism, and secondarily a juridical revolution, since such beliefs claim specific rights for the individual and across society.

21. In practice, the advocacy for the different identities often presents them as being of completely *equal value* compared to each other. This, however, actually negates the relevance of each one. This has particular importance for the question of sexual difference. In fact, the generic concept of “non-discrimination” often hides an ideology that denies the difference as well as natural reciprocity that exists between men and women. “Instead of combatting wrongful interpretations of sexual difference that would diminish the fundamental importance of that difference for human dignity, such a proposal would simply eliminate it by proposing procedures and practices that make it irrelevant for a person’s

development and for human relationships. But the utopia of the ‘neuter’ eliminates both human dignity in sexual distinctiveness and the personal nature of the generation of new life”.¹⁸ The anthropological basis of the concept of family is thus emptied of meaning.

22. This ideology inspires educational programmes and legislative trends that promote ideas of personal identity and affective intimacy that make a radical break with the actual *biological difference* between male and female. Human identity is consigned to the individual’s choice, which can also change in time. These ideas are the expression of a widespread way of thinking and acting in today’s culture that confuses “genuine freedom with the idea that each individual can act arbitrarily as if there were no truths, values and principles to provide guidance, and everything were possible and permissible”.¹⁹

23. 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. Through his bodily composition he gathers to himself the elements of the material world; thus they reach their crown through him, and through him raise their voice in free praise of the Creator”.²⁰ Because of this dignity, “man is not wrong when he regards himself as superior to bodily concerns, and as more than a speck of nature or a nameless constituent of the city of man”.²¹ Therefore, “the expressions ‘the order of nature’ and ‘the order of biology’ must not be confused or regarded as identical, the ‘biological order’ does indeed mean the same as the order of nature but only in so far as this is accessible to methods of empirical and descriptive natural science, and not as a specific order of existence, with an obvious relationship to the First Cause, to God the Creator God”.²²

¹⁸ FRANCIS, *Address to the Participants in the General Assembly of the Members of the Pontifical Academy for Life*, 5 October 2017, 3.

¹⁹ *Amoris Laetitia*, 34.

²⁰ *Gaudium et Spes*, 14.

²¹ *Idem*.

²² K. WOJTYŁA, *Love and Responsibility*, London 1981, pp.56-57.

REASONING

Rational Arguments

24. Taking into account our historical overview, together with certain points of agreement identified, and the critique that has been made of gender theory, we can now move to some considerations on the issue based on the light of reason. In fact, there are rational arguments to support the *centrality of the body* as an integrating element of personal identity and family relationships. The body is subjectivity that communicates identity of being.²³ In the light of this reality, we can understand why the data of biological and medical science shows that ‘sexual dimorphism’ (that is, the sexual difference between men and women) can be demonstrated scientifically by such fields as genetics, endocrinology and neurology. From the point of view of genetics, male cells (which contain XY chromosomes) differ, from the very moment of conception, from female cells (with their XX chromosomes). That said, in cases where a person’s sex is not clearly defined, it is medical professionals who can make a therapeutic intervention. In such situations, parents cannot make an arbitrary choice on the issue, let alone society. Instead, *medical science* should act with purely therapeutic ends, and intervene in the least invasive fashion, on the basis of objective parameters and with a view to establishing the person’s constitutive identity.

25. The *process of identifying sexual identity* is made more difficult by the fictitious construct known as “gender neuter” or “third gender”, which has the effect of obscuring the fact that a person’s sex is a structural determinant of male or female identity. Efforts to go beyond the con-

²³ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, 6 August 1993, 48.

stitutive male-female sexual difference, such as the ideas of “intersex” or “transgender”, lead to a masculinity or femininity that is ambiguous, even though (in a self-contradictory way), these concepts themselves actually presuppose the very sexual difference that they propose to negate or supersede. This oscillation between male and female becomes, at the end of the day, only a ‘provocative’ display against so-called ‘traditional frameworks’, and one which, in fact, ignores the suffering of those who have to live situations of sexual indeterminacy. Similar theories aim to annihilate the concept of ‘nature’, (that is, everything we have been given as a pre-existing foundation of our being and action in the world), while at the same time implicitly reaffirming its existence.

26. Philosophical analysis also demonstrates that *sexual difference* between male and female is constitutive of human identity. Greek and Roman thinkers posit *essence* as the aspect of being that transcends, brings together and harmonizes male-female difference within the unity of the *human person*. Within the tradition of hermeneutical and phenomenological philosophy, both sexual distinction and complementarity are interpreted in symbolic and metaphorical terms. Sexual difference in relationships is seen as constitutive of personal identity, whether this be at the level of the horizontal (in the *dyad* “man-woman”) or vertical (in the *triad* “man-woman-God”). This applies equally to interpersonal “I-You” male-female relationships and to family relationships (You-I-We).

27. The *formation of one’s identity* is itself based on the principle of otherness, since it is precisely the direct encounter between another “you” *who is not me* that enables me to recognise the essence of the “I” who is me. Difference, in fact, is a condition of *all cognition*, including cognition of one’s identity. In the family, knowledge of one’s mother and father allows the child to construct his or her own sexual identity and difference. Psychoanalytic theory demonstrates the *tri-polar value* of child-parent relationships, showing that sexual identity can only fully emerge in the light of the synergetic comparison that sexual differentiation creates.

28. The physiological *complementarity* of male-female sexual difference assures the necessary conditions for procreation. In contrast, only re-

course to reproductive technology can allow one of the partners in a relationship of two persons of the same sex to generate offspring, using ‘in vitro’ fertilization and a surrogate mother. However, the use of such technology is not a replacement for natural conception, since it involves the manipulation of human embryos, the fragmentation of parenthood, the instrumentalization and/or commercialization of the human body as well as the reduction of a baby to an object in the hands of science and technology.²⁴

29. In so far as this issue relates to the world of education, it is clear that by its very nature, education can help lay the foundations for peaceful dialogue and facilitate a fruitful meeting together of peoples and a meeting of minds. Further, it would seem that the prospect of a broadening of reason to include the *dimension of the transcendent* is not of secondary importance. The dialogue between Faith and Reason, “if it does not want to be reduced to a sterile intellectual exercise, it must begin from the present concrete situation of humanity and upon this develop a reflection that draws from the ontological-metaphysical truth”.²⁵ The evangelizing mission of the Church to men and women is carried out within this horizon.

²⁴ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and the Dignity of Procreation, *Donum Vitae*, 22 February 1987, 4.

²⁵ BENEDICT XVI, *Address to the Participants of the sixth European Symposium of University Professors*, Rome, 7 June 2008.

PROPOSING

Christian Anthropology

30. The Church, mother and teacher, does more than simply listen. Remaining rooted in her original mission, and at the same time always open to the contribution of reason, she puts herself at the service of the community of peoples, offering it a way of living. It is clear that if we are to provide well-structured educational programmes that are coherent with the true nature of human persons (with a view to guiding them towards a full actualisation of their sexual identity within the context of the vocation of self-giving), it is not possible to achieve this without a clear and convincing *anthropology* that gives a meaningful foundation to sexuality and affectivity. The first step in this process of throwing light on anthropology consists in recognising that “man too has a nature that he must respect and that he cannot manipulate at will”.²⁶ This is the fulcrum on which to support a human ecology that moves from the “respect for our dignity as human beings” and from the necessary relationship of our life to “moral law, which is inscribed into our nature”.²⁷

31. Christian anthropology has its roots in the narrative of human origins that appears in the Book of Genesis, where we read that “God created man in his own image [...] male and female he created them.” (Gen. 1,27) These words capture not only the essence of the story of creation but also that of the life-giving relationship between men and women, which brings them into intimate union with God. The *self* is completed

²⁶ BENEDICT XVI, *Address at the Reichstag Building, Berlin*, 22 September 2011.

²⁷ FRANCIS, Encyclical Letter on Care for Our Common Home *Laudato Si'*, 24 May 2015, 154-155.

by the one who is *other than the self*, according to the specific identity of each person, and both have a point of encounter forming a dynamic of reciprocity which is derived from and sustained by the Creator.

32. The Holy Scripture reveals the wisdom of the Creator's design, which "has assigned as a task to man his body, his masculinity and femininity; and that in masculinity and femininity he, in a way, assigned to him as a task his humanity, the dignity of the person, and also the clear sign of the interpersonal communion in which man fulfils himself through the authentic gift of himself".²⁸ Thus, *human nature* must be understood on the basis of the *unity of body and soul*, far removed from any sort of physicalism or naturalism, since "in the unity of his spiritual and biological inclinations and of all the other specific characteristics necessary for the pursuit of his end".²⁹

33. This "unified totality"³⁰ integrates the vertical dimension (human communion with God) with the horizontal dimension constituted by the interpersonal communion that men and woman are called to live.³¹ One's identity as a human person comes to authentic maturity to the extent that one opens up to others, for the very reason that "in the configuration of our own mode of being, whether as male or female, is not simply the result of biological or genetic factors, but of multiple elements having to do with temperament, family history, culture, experience, education, the influence of friends, family members and respected persons, as well as other formative situations".³² In reality, "the essential fact is that the

²⁸ JOHN PAUL II, *General Audience*, 8 April 1981 in *Insegnamenti*, IV/1 (1981), p. 904.

²⁹ *Veritatis Splendor*, 50.

³⁰ Cf. *Idem*.

³¹ "Man and woman constitute two modes of realising, on the part of the human creature, a determined participation in the Divine Being: they are created in the 'image and likeness of God' and they fully accomplish such vocation not only as single persons, but also as couples, which are communities of love. Oriented to unity and fecundity, the married man and woman participate in the creative love of God, living in communion with Him through the other." *Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education*, 26. See also CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love*, 28 October 2013, 35-36.

³² *Amoris Laetitia*, 286.

human person becomes himself only with the other. The 'I' becomes itself only from the 'thou' and from the 'you'. It is created for dialogue, for synchronic and diachronic communion. It is only the encounter with the 'you' and with the 'we' that the 'I' opens to itself".³³

34. There is a need to reaffirm the metaphysical roots of sexual difference, as an anthropological refutation of attempts to negate the male-female duality of human nature, from which the family is generated. The denial of this duality not only erases the vision of human beings as the fruit of an act of creation but creates the idea of the human person as a sort of abstraction who "chooses for himself what his nature is to be. Man and woman in their created state as complementary versions of what it means to be human are disputed. But if there is no pre-ordained duality of man and woman in creation, then neither is the family any longer a reality established by creation. Likewise, the child has lost the place he had occupied hitherto and the dignity pertaining to him".³⁴

35. Seen from this perspective, education on sexuality and affectivity must involve each person in a process of learning "with perseverance and consistency, the meaning of his or her body"³⁵ in the full original truth of masculinity and femininity. It means "learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning [...] Also, valuing one's own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognise myself in an encounter with someone who is different [...] and find mutual enrichment".³⁶ Therefore, in the light of a *fully human and integral ecology*, women and men will understand the real meaning of sexuality and genitility in terms of the intrinsically relational and communicative intentionality that both informs their bodily nature and moves each one towards the other mutually.

³³ BENEDICT XVI, *Address to the General Assembly of the Italian Episcopal Conference*, 27 May 2010.

³⁴ BENEDICT XVI, *Address to the Roman Curia*, 21 December 2012.

³⁵ *Amoris Laetitia*, 151.

³⁶ *Laudato Si'*, 155.

The Family

36. The family is the natural place for the relationship of reciprocity and communion between man and woman to find its fullest realisation. For it is in the family that man and woman, united by a free and fully conscious *pact of conjugal love*, can live out “a totality in which all the elements of the person enter - appeal of the body and instinct, power of feeling and affectivity, aspiration of the spirit and of will”.³⁷ The family is “an anthropological fact, and consequently a social, cultural fact”. On the other hand, to “qualify it with ideological concepts which are compelling at only one moment in history, and then decline”³⁸ would mean a betrayal of its true significance. The family, seen as a natural social unit which favours the maximum realisation of the reciprocity and complementarity between men and women, precedes even the socio-political order of the State whose legislative freedom must take it into account and give it proper recognition.

37. Reason tells us that two fundamental rights, which stem from the very nature of the family, must always be guaranteed and protected. Firstly, the family’s right to be recognised as the primary pedagogical environment for the educational formation of children. This “primary right” finds its most concrete expression in the “most grave duty”³⁹ of parents to take responsibility for the “well-rounded personal and social education of their children”,⁴⁰ including their sexual and affective education, “within the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving”⁴¹. This is at once an *educational right and responsibility* that is “essential, since it is connected with the transmission of human life; it is original and primary with regard to the educational role of others, on ac-

³⁷ CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1643

³⁸ FRANCIS, *Address to Participants in the International Colloquium on the Complementarity Between Men and Women Sponsored by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, 17 November 2014, 3.

³⁹ *Code of Canon Law*, can. 1136; cf. *Code of Canons of the Oriental Churches*, can. 627.

⁴⁰ *Gravissimum Educationis*, 3.

⁴¹ *Amoris Laetitia*, 280.

count of the uniqueness of the loving relationship between parents and children; and it is irreplaceable and inalienable, and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others”.⁴²

38. Children enjoy another right which is of equal importance: to “grow up in a family with a father and a mother capable of creating a suitable environment for the child’s development and emotional maturity” and “continuing to grow up and mature in a correct relationship represented by the masculinity and femininity of a father and a mother and thus preparing for affective maturity”.⁴³ It is precisely within the *nucleus of the family unit* that children can learn how to recognise the value and the beauty of the differences between the two sexes, along with their equal dignity, and their reciprocity at a biological, functional, psychological and social level. “Faced with a culture that largely reduces human sexuality to the level of something common place, since it interprets and lives it in a reductive and impoverished way by linking it solely with the body and with selfish pleasure, the educational service of parents must aim firmly at a training in the area of sex that is truly and fully personal: for sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person - body, emotions and soul - and it manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love”.⁴⁴ Of course, such rights exist hand in hand with all the other fundamental rights of the human person, especially those concerning freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Wherever such things are held in common, those involved in education can find room for collaboration that is fruitful for all.

The School

39. The primacy of the family in educating children is supplemented by the subsidiary role of schools. Strengthened by its roots in the Gospel, “The Catholic school sets out to be a school for the human person and

⁴² *Familiaris Consortio*, 36.

⁴³ FRANCIS, *Address to Members of the Delegation of the International Catholic Child Bureau*, 11 April 2014.

⁴⁴ *Familiaris Consortio*, 37.

of human persons. “The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ’s teaching: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school”. This affirmation, stressing man’s vital relationship with Christ, reminds us that it is in His person that the fullness of the truth concerning man is to be found. For this reason the Catholic school, in committing itself to the development of the whole man, does so in obedience to the solicitude of the Church, in the awareness that all human values find their fulfilment and unity in Christ. This awareness expresses the centrality of the human person in the educational project of the Catholic school”.⁴⁵

40. The Catholic school should be an educating community in which the human person can express himself and grow in his or her humanity, in a process of relational dialogue, interacting in a constructive way, exercising tolerance, understanding different points of view and creating trust in an atmosphere of authentic harmony. Such a school is truly an “*educating community*, a place of differences living together in harmony. The school community is a place for encounter and promoting participation. It dialogues with the family, which is the primary community to which the students that attend school belong. The school must respect the family’s culture. It must listen carefully to the needs that it finds and the expectations that are directed towards it”.⁴⁶ In this way, girls and boys are accompanied by a community that teaches them “to overcome their individualism and discover, in the light of faith, their specific vocation to live responsibly in a community with others”.⁴⁷

41. Christians who live out their vocation to educate in schools which are not Catholic can also offer witness to, serve, and promote the truth about the human person. In fact, “the integral formation of the human person, which is the purpose of education, includes the development of all the human faculties of the students, together with preparation for

⁴⁵ CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 28 December 1997, 9.

⁴⁶ *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools*, 58.

⁴⁷ CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *The Catholic School*, 19 March 1977, 45.

professional life, formation of ethical and social awareness, becoming aware of the transcendental, and religious education”.⁴⁸ *Personal witness*, when joined with professionalism, contributes greatly to the achievement of these objectives.

42. *Education in affectivity* requires language that is appropriate as well as measured. It must above all take into account that, while children and young people have not yet reached full maturity, they are preparing with great interest to experience all aspects of life. Therefore, it is necessary to help students “to develop a critical sense in dealing with the onslaught of new ideas and suggestions, the flood of pornography and the overload of stimuli that can deform sexuality”.⁴⁹ In the face of a continuous bombardment of messages that are ambiguous and unclear, and which end up creating emotional disorientation as well as impeding psycho-relational maturity, young people “should be helped to recognise and seek out positive influences, while shunning the things that cripple their capacity for love”.⁵⁰

Society

43. An overall perspective on the situation of contemporary society must form a part of the educational process. The *transformation of social and interpersonal relationships* “has often waved ‘the flag of freedom’, but it has, in reality, brought spiritual and material devastation to countless human beings, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. It is ever more evident that the decline of the culture of marriage is associated with increased poverty and a host of other social ills that disproportionately affect women, children and the elderly. It is always they who suffer the most in this crisis”.⁵¹

⁴⁸ CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *Lay Catholics in School: Witnesses to Faith*, 15 October 1982, 17.

⁴⁹ *Amoris Laetitia*, 281.

⁵⁰ *Idem*.

⁵¹ FRANCIS, *Address to Participants in the International Colloquium on the Complementarity Between Men and Women Sponsored by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, 17 November 2014, 2.

44. In the light of all of this, the family must not be left to face the challenges of educating the young on its own. The Church, for its part, continues to support families and young people within communities that are open and welcoming. Schools and local communities are called, in particular, to carry out an important mission here, although they do not substitute the role of parents but complement it.⁵² The notable urgency of the challenges faced by the work of human formation should act as stimulus towards reconstructing the *educational alliance between family, school and society*.

45. It is widely acknowledged that this educational alliance has entered into crisis. There is an urgent need to promote a new alliance that is genuine and not simply at the level of bureaucracy, a shared project that can offer a “positive and prudent sexual education”⁵³ that can harmonise the primary responsibility of parents with the work of teachers. We must create the right conditions for a constructive encounter between the various actors involved, making for an atmosphere of transparency where all parties constantly keep others informed of what each is doing, facilitating maximum involvement and thus avoiding the unnecessary tensions that arise through misunderstandings caused by lack of clarity, information or competency.

46. Across this educational alliance, pedagogical activity should be informed by *the principle of subsidiarity*: “All other participants in the process of education are only able to carry out their responsibilities *in the name of the parents, with their consent* and, to a certain degree, *with their authorization*”.⁵⁴ If they succeed in working together, family, school and the broader society can produce educational programmes on affectivity and sexuality that respect each person’s own stage of maturity regarding these areas and at the same time promote respect for the body of the other

⁵² Cf. *Amoris Laetitia*, 84.

⁵³ *Gravissimum Educationis*, 1.

⁵⁴ JOHN PAUL II, Letter to Families *Gratissimam Sanę*, 2 February 1994, 16; cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE FAMILY, *Human Sexuality: Truth and Meaning. Educational Guidelines in the Family*, 8 December 1995, 23.

person. They would also take into account the physiological and psychological specificity of young people, as well as the phase of neurocognitive growth and maturity of each one, and thus be able to accompany them in their development in a healthy and responsible way.

Forming Formators

47. All who work in human formation are called to exercise great responsibility in the work of effectively implementing the pedagogical projects in which they are involved. If they are people of personal maturity and balance who are well-prepared, this can have a strongly positive influence on students.⁵⁵ Therefore, it is important that their own formation includes not only professional qualifications but also cultural and spiritual preparedness. The *education of the human person*, especially developmentally, requires great care and ongoing formation. Simply repeating the standard points of a discipline is not enough. Today's educators are expected to be able "to accompany their students towards lofty and challenging goals, cherish high expectations for them, involve and connect students to each other and the world".⁵⁶

48. School managers, teaching staff and personnel all share the responsibility of both guaranteeing delivery of a high-quality service coherent with the Christian principles that lie at the heart of their educational project, as well as interpreting the challenges of their time while giving the daily witness of their understanding, objectivity and prudence.⁵⁷ It is a commonly-accepted fact that "modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses".⁵⁸ The *authority of an educator* is therefore built upon the concrete combination "of a general formation, founded on a positive

⁵⁵ Cf. *Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education*, 79.

⁵⁶ CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion*, Vatican City, 2014, Chapter II, 7.

⁵⁷ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *Educating Together in the Catholic School. A Mission Shared by Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful*, 8 September 2007, 34-37.

⁵⁸ PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 8 December 1975, 41.

and professional constructive concept of life, and of constant effort in realising it. Such a formation goes beyond the purely necessary professional training and addresses the more intimate aspects of the personality, including the religious and the spiritual”.⁵⁹

49. When the ‘formation of formators’ is undertaken on the basis of the Christian principles, it has as its objective not only the formation of individual teachers but the building up and consolidation of an entire *educational community* through a fruitful exchange between all involved, one that has both didactic and emotional dimensions. Thus, dynamic relationships grow between educators, and professional development is enriched by well-rounded personal growth, so that the work of teaching is carried out at the service of humanization. Therefore, Catholic educators need to be sufficiently prepared regarding the intricacies of the various questions that gender theory brings up and be fully informed about both current and proposed legislation in their respective jurisdictions, aided by persons who are qualified in this area, in a way that is balanced and dialogue-orientated. In addition, university-level institutes and centres of research are called to offer their own specific contribution here, so that adequate, up-to-date and life-long learning on this topic is always made available to educators.

50. Regarding the specific task of education in human love, undertaken “with the aid of the latest advances in psychology and the arts and science of teaching”,⁶⁰ formators need to have “a suitable and serious psycho-pedagogic training which allows the seizing of particular situations which require a special solicitude”.⁶¹ As a consequence, “a clear vision of the situation is required because the method adopted not only gradually conditions the success of this delicate education, but also conditions co-operation between the various people in responsibility”.⁶²

⁵⁹ *Educational Guidance in Human Love*, 80.

⁶⁰ *Gravissimum Educationis*, 1.

⁶¹ *Educational Guidance in Human Love*, 81.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 83.

51. The autonomy and freedom of teaching is recognised today in many legal systems. In such a context, schools can collaborate with Catholic institutes of higher education to develop a deepened understanding of the various aspects of education in sexuality, with the further aim of creating new teaching materials, pedagogic reference works and teaching manuals that are based on the “Christian vision of man and women”.⁶³ To this end, pedagogues, those who work in teacher-training and experts on literature for children and adolescents alike can all contribute to the creation of a body of innovative and creative tools that, in the face of other visions that are partial or distorted, offer a solid and integrated education of the human person from infancy onwards. Against the background of the renewal of the education alliance, collaboration at local, national and international level between all parties involved must not limit itself to sharing of ideas or useful swapping of best practice but should be made available as a key means of permanent formation of educators themselves.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 22.

CONCLUSIONS

52. In conclusion, the *path of dialogue*, which involves listening, reasoning and proposing, appears the most effective way towards a positive transformation of concerns and misunderstandings, as well as a resource that in itself can help develop a network of relationships that is both more open and more human. In contrast, although ideologically-driven approaches to the delicate questions around gender proclaim their respect for diversity, they actually run the risk of viewing such difference as static realities and end up leaving them isolated and disconnected from each other.

53. The Christian educational proposal fosters deeper dialogue, true to its objective “to promote the realisation of man and woman through the development of all their being, incarnate spirits, and of the gifts of nature and of grace by which they are enriched by God”.⁶⁴ This requires a sincere effort *to draw closer to the other* and it can be a natural antidote to the “throw-away” and isolation culture. In this way, we restate that “the original dignity of every man and woman is therefore inalienable and inaccessible to any power or ideology”.⁶⁵

54. Catholic educators are called to go beyond all ideological reductionism or homologizing relativism by remaining faithful to their own gospel-based identity, in order *to transform positively the challenges of their times into opportunities* by following the path of listening, reasoning and proposing the Christian vision, while giving witness by their very presence, and by

⁶⁴ *Educational Guidance in Human Love*, 21.

⁶⁵ FRANCIS, *Address to the Delegation from the 'Dignitatis Humanae' Institute*, 7 December 2013.

the consistency of their words and deeds⁶⁶. Formators have the attractive educational mission to “teach them sensitivity to different expressions of love, mutual concern and care, loving respect and deeply meaningful communication. All of these prepare them for an integral and generous gift of self that will be expressed, following a public commitment, in the gift of their bodies. Sexual union in marriage will thus appear as a sign of an all-inclusive commitment, enriched by everything that has preceded it”.⁶⁷

55. The culture of dialogue does not in any way contradict the legitimate aspirations of Catholic schools to maintain their own vision of human sexuality, in keeping with the right of families to freely base the education of their children upon *an integral anthropology*, capable of harmonizing the human person’s physical, psychic and spiritual identity. In fact, a democratic state cannot reduce the range of education on offer to a single school of thought, all the more so in relation to this extremely delicate subject, which is concerned on the one hand with the fundamentals of human nature, and on the other with natural rights of parents to freely choose any educational model that accords with the dignity of the human person. Therefore, every educational institute should provide itself with organizational structures and didactic programmes that ensure these parental rights are fully and concretely respected. If this is the case, the Christian pedagogy on offer will be able to provide a solid response to anthropologies characterized by fragmentation and provisionality.

56. The programmes dealing with formation in affectivity and sexuality offered by Catholic centres of education must take into consideration the age-group of the students being taught and treat each person with the maximum of respect. This can be achieved through a *way of accompanying* that is discrete and confidential, capable of reaching out to those who are experiencing complex and painful situations. Every school should therefore make sure it is an environment of trust, calmness and openness, particularly where there are cases that require time and careful discernment.

⁶⁶ Cf. *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools*, conclusion.

⁶⁷ *Amoris Laetitia*, 283.

It is essential that the right conditions are created to provide a patient and understanding ear, far removed from any unjust discrimination.

57. The Congregation for Catholic Education is well aware of the daily effort and unstinting care shown by those who work in schools and in the whole range of formal and informal pedagogic endeavour. The Congregation wishes to encourage them in their pursuit of the work of forming young people, especially those among them who are affected by any form of poverty, and those in need of the love shown them by their educators, so that, in the words of St. John Bosco, young people are not only loved, but know they are loved. This Dicastery would also like to express its warmest gratitude to all Christians who teach in Catholic schools or other types of school, and, in the words of Pope Francis, encourages them “to stimulate in the pupils the openness to the other as a face, as a person, as a brother and sister to know and respect, with his or her history, merits and defects, riches and limits. The challenge is to cooperate to train young people to be open and interested in the reality that surrounds them, capable of care and tenderness”.⁶⁸

Vatican City, 2 February 2019, Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

GIUSEPPE Cardinal VERSALDI
Prefect

Archbishop ANGELO VINCENZO ZANI
Secretary

⁶⁸ FRANCIS, *Address to the Italian Catholic Primary School Teachers Association*, 5 January 2018.

VATICAN PRESS

“Gender theory”/“Gender ideology” – Select Teaching Resources

The following select excerpts from various sources are intended to provide some information (not exhaustive) in the area of “gender theory”/“gender ideology” and may be helpful for educational purposes in the pastoral and public policy context.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Sexual Identity

(No. 2333) “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.”

(No. 2393) “By creating the human being man and woman, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity.”

Body and Soul

(No. 364) “The human body shares in the dignity of “the image of God”: it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit:

Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity. Through his very bodily condition he sums up in himself the elements of the material world. Through him they are thus brought to their highest perfection and can raise their voice in praise freely given to the Creator. For this reason man may not despise his bodily life. Rather he is obliged to regard his body as good and to hold it in honor since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day.”

Modesty

(No. 2521) “Purity requires modesty, an integral part of temperance. Modesty protects the intimate center of the person. It means refusing to unveil what should remain hidden. It is ordered to chastity to whose sensitivity it bears witness. It guides how one looks at others and behaves toward them in conformity with the dignity of persons and their solidarity.”

(No. 2522) “Modesty protects the mystery of persons and their love... Modesty is decency. It inspires one's choice of clothing. It keeps silence or reserve where there is evident risk of unhealthy curiosity. It is discreet.”

(No. 2523) “There is a modesty of the feelings as well as of the body. It protests, for example, against the voyeuristic explorations of the human body in certain advertisements, or against the solicitations of certain media that go too far in the exhibition of intimate things. Modesty inspires a way of life which makes it possible to resist the allurements of fashion and the pressures of prevailing ideologies.”

Privacy

(No. 1907) “First, the common good presupposes respect for the person as such. In the name of the common good, public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person. Society should permit each of its members to fulfill his vocation. In particular, the common good resides in the conditions for the exercise of the natural freedoms indispensable for the development of the human vocation, such as ‘the right to act according to a sound norm of conscience and to safeguard . . . privacy, and rightful freedom also in matters of religion.’”

Mutilation

(No. 2297) “Except when performed for strictly therapeutic medical reasons, directly intended amputations, mutilations, and sterilizations performed on innocent persons are against the moral law.”

[Full text](#)

Pope Francis

Encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* (2015)

(No. 155) “Human ecology also implies another profound reality: the relationship between human life and the moral law, which is inscribed in our nature and is necessary for the creation of a more dignified environment. Pope Benedict XVI spoke of an ‘ecology of man’, based on the fact that ‘man too has a nature that he must respect and that he cannot manipulate at will’. It is enough to recognize that our body itself establishes us in a direct relationship with the environment and with other living beings. The acceptance of our bodies as God’s gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home, whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation. Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology. Also, valuing one’s own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment. It is not a healthy attitude which would seek to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it.”

[Full text](#)

Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (March 19, 2016)

(No. 56) “Yet another challenge is posed by the various forms of an ideology of gender that ‘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. 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 the individual, one which can also change over time.’ It is a source of concern that some ideologies of this sort, which seek to respond to what are at times understandable aspirations, 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 not separated.’ ... It is one thing to be understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life, and another to accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality. Let us not fall into the sin of trying to

replace the Creator. We are creatures, and not omnipotent. Creation is prior to us and must be received as a gift. At the same time, we are called to protect our humanity, and this means, in the first place, accepting it and respecting it as it was created.”

(No. 285) “Beyond the understandable difficulties which individuals may experience, the young need to be helped to accept their own body as it was created, for ‘thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation... An appreciation of our body as male or female is also necessary for our own self-awareness in an encounter with others different from ourselves. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment.’ Only by losing the fear of being different, can we be freed of self-centeredness and self-absorption. Sex education should help young people to accept their own bodies and to avoid the pretension ‘to cancel out sexual difference because one no longer knows how to deal with it.’

(No. 286) “Nor can we ignore the fact that the configuration of our own mode of being, whether as male or female, is not simply the result of biological or genetic factors, but of multiple elements having to do with temperament, family history, culture, experience, education, the influence of friends, family members and respected persons, as well as other formative situations. It is true that we cannot separate the masculine and the feminine from God’s work of creation, which is prior to all our decisions and experiences, and where biological elements exist which are impossible to ignore. But it is also true that masculinity and femininity are not rigid categories. It is possible, for example, that a husband’s way of being masculine can be flexibly adapted to the wife’s work schedule. Taking on domestic chores or some aspects of raising children does not make him any less masculine or imply failure, irresponsibility or cause for shame. Children have to be helped to accept as normal such healthy ‘exchanges’ which do not diminish the dignity of the father figure. A rigid approach turns into an over accentuation of the masculine or feminine, and does not help children and young people to appreciate the genuine reciprocity incarnate in the real conditions of matrimony. Such rigidity, in turn, can hinder the development of an individual’s abilities, to the point of leading him or her to think, for example, that it is not really masculine to cultivate art or dance, or not very feminine to exercise leadership. This, thank God, has changed, but in some places deficient notions still condition the legitimate freedom and hamper the authentic development of children’s specific identity and potential.”

[Full text](#)

[Address to Priests, Religious, Seminarians and Pastoral Workers during the Apostolic Journey to Georgia and Azerbaijan \(October 1, 2016\)](#)

“You, Irina, mentioned a great enemy to marriage today: the theory of gender. Today there is a world war to destroy marriage. Today there are ideological colonizations which destroy, not with weapons, but with ideas. Therefore, there is a need to defend ourselves from ideological colonizations.”

[Full text](#)

[Address to the Polish Bishops during the Apostolic Journey to Poland \(July 27, 2016\)](#)

“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!

“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’. He is very perceptive. God created man and woman; God created the world in a certain way... and we are doing the exact opposite. God gave us things in a ‘raw’ state, so that we could shape a culture; and then with this culture, we are shaping things that bring us back to the ‘raw’ state! Pope Benedict’s observation should make us think. ‘This is the age of sin against God the Creator’. That will help us.”

[Full text](#)

[Address to Équipes de Notre Dame \(September 10, 2015\)](#)

“This mission which is entrusted to them, is all the more important inasmuch as the image of the family — as God wills it, composed of one man and one woman in view of the good of the spouses and also of the procreation and upbringing of children — is deformed through powerful adverse projects supported by ideological trends.”

[Full text](#)

[Address to the Bishops of Puerto Rico \(June 8, 2015\)](#)

“The complementarity of man and woman, the pinnacle of divine creation, is being questioned by the so-called gender ideology, in the name of a more free and just society. The differences between man and woman are not for opposition or subordination, but for communion and generation, always in the ‘image and likeness’ of God.”

[Full text](#)

[General Audience on Man and Woman \(April 15, 2015\)](#)

“For example, I ask myself, if the so-called gender theory is not, at the same time, an expression of frustration and resignation, which seeks to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it. Yes, we risk taking a step backwards. The removal of difference in fact creates a problem, not a solution.”

[Full text](#)

[Address in Naples \(March 23, 2015\)](#)

“The crisis of the family is a societal fact. There are also ideological colonializations of the family, different paths and proposals in Europe and also coming from overseas. Then, there is the mistake of the human mind — gender theory — creating so much confusion.”

[Full text](#)

[Meeting with Families in Manila \(January 16, 2015\)](#)

“Let us be on guard against colonization by new ideologies. There are forms of ideological colonization which are out to destroy the family.”

[Full text](#)

Pope Benedict XVI

Encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est* (2005)

(No. 5) “Yet the contemporary way of exalting the body is deceptive. *Eros*, reduced to pure ‘sex’, has become a commodity, a mere ‘thing’ to be bought and sold, or rather, man himself becomes a commodity. This is hardly man’s great ‘yes’ to the body. On the contrary, he now considers his body and his sexuality as the purely material part of himself, to be used and exploited at will.”

(No. 11) “While the biblical narrative does not speak of punishment, the idea is certainly present that man is somehow incomplete, driven by nature to seek in another the part that can make him whole, the idea that only in communion with the opposite sex can he become ‘complete’... *Eros* is somehow rooted in man's very nature; Adam is a seeker, who ‘abandons his mother and father’ in order to find woman; only together do the two represent complete humanity and become ‘one flesh’. The second aspect is equally important. From the standpoint of creation, *eros* directs man towards marriage, to a bond which is unique and definitive; thus, and only thus, does it fulfil its deepest purpose. Corresponding to the image of a monotheistic God is monogamous marriage.”

[Full text](#)

Address to the Pontifical Council “*Cor Unum*” (January 19, 2013)

“The Christian vision of man is, in fact, a great ‘yes’ to the dignity of persons called to an intimate filial communion of humility and faithfulness. The human being is not a self-sufficient individual nor an anonymous element in the group. Rather he is a unique and unrepeatable person, intrinsically ordered to relationships and sociability. Thus the Church reaffirms her great ‘yes’ to the dignity and beauty of marriage as an expression of the faithful and generous bond between man and woman, and her no to ‘gender’ philosophies, because the reciprocity between male and female is an expression of the beauty of nature willed by the Creator.”

[Full text](#)

Address to the Roman Curia (December 21, 2012)

“These words lay the foundation for what is put forward today under the term ‘gender’ as a new philosophy of sexuality. According to this philosophy, sex is no longer a given element of nature that man has to accept and personally make sense of: it is a social role that we choose for ourselves, while in the past it was chosen for us by society. The profound falsehood of this theory and of the anthropological revolution contained within it is obvious. People dispute the idea that they have a nature, given by their bodily identity, that serves as a defining element of the human being. They deny their nature and decide that it is not something previously given to them, but that they make it for themselves.”

[Full text](#)

Address to the German Bundestag (September 22, 2011)

“...There is also an ecology of man. 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.”

[Full text](#)

Pope St. John Paul II

[Letter to Families \(1994\)](#)

(No. 6) “Man is created ‘from the very beginning’ as male and female: the light of all humanity... is marked by this primordial duality. From it there derive the ‘masculinity’ and the ‘femininity’ of individuals, just as from it every community draws its own unique richness in the mutual fulfillment of persons... Hence one can discover, at the very origins of human society, the qualities of communion and of complementarity.”

(No. 19) “...the human family is facing the challenge of a *new Manichaeism*, in which body and spirit are put in radical opposition; the body does not receive life from the spirit, and the spirit does not give life to the body. Man thus *ceases to live as a person and a subject*. Regardless of all intentions and declarations to the contrary, he becomes merely an *object*. This neo-Manichaean culture has led, for example, to human sexuality being regarded more as an area *for manipulation and exploitation* than as the basis of that *primordial wonder* which led Adam on the morning of creation to exclaim before Eve: ‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh’ (*Gen 2:23*).”

[Full text](#)

[Theology of the Body](#)

Pope John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006)

(No. 9:3) “The account of the creation of man in Genesis 1 affirms from the beginning and directly that man was created in the image of God inasmuch as he is male and female... man became the image of God not only through his own humanity, but also through the communion of persons, which man and woman form from the very beginning.”

(No. 9:5) “Masculinity and femininity express the twofold aspect of man’s somatic constitution... and indicate, in addition... the new consciousness of the meaning of one’s body. This meaning, one can say, consists in reciprocal enrichment.”

(No. 10:1) “Femininity in some way finds itself before masculinity, while masculinity confirms itself through femininity. Precisely the function of sex [that is, being male or female], which in some way is ‘constitutive for the person’ (not only ‘an attribute of the person’), shows how deeply man, with all his spiritual solitude, with the uniqueness and unrepeatability proper to the person, is constituted by the body as ‘he’ or ‘she’.”

(No. 14:4) “The body, which expresses femininity ‘for’ masculinity and, vice versa, masculinity ‘for’ femininity, manifests the reciprocity and the communion of persons.”

[Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith](#)

[Letter on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World \(2004\)](#)

(No. 2) “In this perspective [i.e., that of gender ideology], physical difference, termed sex, is minimized, while the purely cultural element, termed gender, is emphasized to the maximum and held to be primary. The obscuring of the difference or duality of the sexes has enormous consequences on a variety of levels. This theory of the human person, intended to promote prospects for equality of women through liberation from biological determinism, has in reality

inspired ideologies which, for example, call into question the family, in its natural two-parent structure of mother and father, and make homosexuality and heterosexuality virtually equivalent, in a new model of polymorphous sexuality.”

(No. 12) “Male and female are thus revealed as *belonging ontologically to creation* and destined therefore *to outlast the present time*, evidently in a transfigured form.”

[Full text](#)

Persona Humana: Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics (1975)

(III) “... There can be no true promotion of man's dignity unless the essential order of his nature is respected.”

[Full text](#)

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church

(No. 224) “*Faced with theories that consider gender identity as merely the cultural and social product of the interaction between the community and the individual, independent of personal sexual identity without any reference to the true meaning of sexuality, the Church does not tire of repeating her teaching: ‘Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral and spiritual difference and complementarities are oriented towards the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. . . .’* According to this perspective, it is obligatory that positive law *be conformed* to the natural law, according to which *sexual identity is indispensable*, because it is the objective condition for forming a couple in marriage” (emphasis in original, internal citation omitted).

[Full text](#)

Pontifical Council for the Family

Family, Marriage and “De Facto” Unions (2000)

(No. 8) “In the process that could be described as the gradual cultural and human de-structuring of the institution of marriage, the spread of a certain ideology of ‘gender’ should not be underestimated. According to this ideology, being a man or a woman is not determined fundamentally by sex but by culture. Therefore, the very bases of the family and inter-personal relationships are attacked.”

(No. 8) “Starting from the decade between 1960-1970, some theories... hold not only that generic sexual identity (‘gender’) is the product of an interaction between the community and the individual, but that this generic identity is 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 society that ought to change in order to include other genders, together with male and female, in its way of shaping social life.”

[Full text](#)

USCCB: Various Documents

[Chairmen Letter to U.S. Senators regarding ENDA Legislation \(2013\)](#)

“ENDA’s definition of ‘gender identity’ lends force of law to a tendency to view ‘gender as nothing more than a social construct or psychosocial reality, which a person may choose at variance from his or her biological sex.”

[Full text](#)

[ENDA Backgrounder \(2013\)](#)

“ENDA defines ‘gender identity’ as ‘the gender-related identity, appearance, or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of an individual, with or without regard to the individual’s designated sex at birth.’”

“ENDA’s treatment of ‘gender identity’ would lend the force of law to a tendency to view ‘gender’ as nothing more than a social construct or psychosocial reality that can be chosen at variance from one’s biological sex. Second, ENDA’s treatment of ‘gender identity’ would adversely affect the privacy and associational rights of others. In this respect, ENDA would require workplace rules that violate the legitimate privacy expectations of other employees... Third, ENDA would make it far more difficult for organizations and employees with moral and religious convictions about the importance of sexual difference, and the biological basis of sexual identity, to speak and act on those beliefs.”

[Full text](#)

[Chairmen Statement on ENDA-style Executive Order \(2014\)](#)

“[The executive order] lends the economic power of the federal government to a deeply flawed understanding of human sexuality, to which faithful Catholics and many other people of faith will not assent...

“The executive order prohibits ‘gender identity’ discrimination, a prohibition that is previously unknown at the federal level, and that is predicated on the false idea that ‘gender’ is nothing more than a social construct or psychological reality that can be chosen at variance from one’s biological sex. This is a problem not only of principle but of practice, as it will jeopardize the privacy and associational rights of both federal contractor employees and federal employees.”

[Full text](#)

[Chairmen Statement on Department of Labor Regulations \(2014\)](#)

“The regulations published on December 3 [2014] by the U.S. Department of Labor implement the objectionable Executive Order that President Obama issued in July to address what the Administration has described as ‘sexual orientation’ and ‘gender identity’ discrimination in employment by federal contractors. . . . [T]he regulations advance the false ideology of ‘gender identity,’ which ignores biological reality and harms the privacy and associational rights of both contractors and their employees.”

[Full text](#)

[Chairmen Statement on the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act \(2013\)](#)

“Unfortunately, we cannot support the version of the ‘Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013’ passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate (S. 47) because of certain

language it contains. Among our concerns are those provisions in S. 47 that refer to ‘sexual orientation’ and ‘gender identity.’ All persons must be protected from violence, but codifying the classifications ‘sexual orientation’ and ‘gender identity’ as contained in S. 47 is problematic. These two classifications are unnecessary to establish the just protections due to all persons. They undermine the meaning and importance of sexual difference. They are unjustly exploited for purposes of marriage redefinition, and marriage is the only institution that unites a man and a woman with each other and with any children born from their union.”

[Full text](#)

[Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services \(5th Edition\)](#)

(No. 53) “Direct sterilization of either men or women, whether permanent or temporary, is not permitted in a Catholic health care institution. Procedures that induce sterility are permitted when their direct effect is the cure or alleviation of a present and serious pathology and a simpler treatment is not available.”

(No. 70) “Catholic health care organizations are not permitted to engage in immediate material cooperation in actions that are intrinsically immoral, such as abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, and direct sterilization.”

[Full text](#)

For further related USCCB resources, see:

- [USCCB, *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan* \(2009\)](#)
- [USCCB, *Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care* \(2006\)](#)
- [Made for Each Other \(video, viewer’s guide, and resource booklet\), available at \[www.marriageuniqueforareason.org\]\(http://www.marriageuniqueforareason.org\).](#)

**“Speaking the truth in love”:
Pastoral Guidelines for Educators Concerning Students Experiencing Gender Incongruence**

Catholic education plays an important role in helping young people to develop a personal relationship with Christ. Among those entrusted to the care of Catholic educators are some students who experience difficulty identifying with their biological sex. Such individuals need to be reassured that they are loved and accepted in all of their complexity by God and by the Church. Our faith cares deeply about sexuality because she cares deeply about love; because God is love, and we are made in the image of God. Though this image has been obscured by the wounding effects of original sin, Jesus Christ came to restore and redeem this image within us. To gradually resonate ever more with this redeemed image of God in every part of our being and life is the very path to the joy and peace of heart we most desire.

Catholic educators seek to help and accompany all students who struggle in any way. They strive to do so by “speaking the truth in love.” (Ephesians 4:15) The phenomenon of gender incongruence, though rare, presents a particular challenge to Catholic educators, namely, how to accompany individuals who struggle with gender dysphoria (distress) while proclaiming the Church’s life enhancing understanding of human sexuality. It is recognized and appreciated that Catholic schools have been doing so quietly and effectively on a case by case basis. This resource is a response to requests from school administrators for pastoral guidance as they think about how to institutionalize approaches that are authentically Catholic. The Archdiocese recognizes that in our province, the task of developing guidelines and policies lies with school boards. This resource is offered to help inform the drafting of such documents from a Catholic perspective.

Catholic schools should keep in mind that Section 19 of the Ontario Human Rights Code contains provisions for the protection of the denominational character of Catholic schools. Section 19 of the Ontario *Human Rights Code* states, “This Act shall not be construed to adversely affect any right or privilege respecting separate schools enjoyed by separate school boards or their supporters under the *Constitution Act, 1867.*” The *Education Act* likewise contains a protection in section 1(4) which reads, “This Act does not adversely affect any right or privilege guaranteed by section 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1867 ...*” In addition, any requirements which might be imposed on Catholic schools by the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* are curtailed by s. 93(3) of the *Constitution Act, 1867* as specifically mentioned in s. 29 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Catholic schools therefore have the constitutional right to teach about gender from a Catholic perspective and otherwise govern their schools in accordance with the Catholic world-view.

This resource consists of two parts: the first part offers some guiding principles for responding to students in a pastoral way while the second part provides suggestions to assist with the school’s responsibility of providing clarity on the topic of sexual identity to all students. It is important that we get *both* of these aspects right. A compassionate response to individual students need not dilute a robust presentation of Catholic teaching on human sexuality to all students. Rather, it can be viewed as an opportunity to clarify and deepen our understanding and teaching of the faith. Failure to get this right runs the risk of alienating numbers of young people from the faith. As educators of the young, we always bear in mind the caution, “do not hinder them” (Matt 19:14). The Catholic school should always be a place where a student encounters the person of Christ.

PART I – RESPONDING TO INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Humility and Caution

Responding to the phenomenon of gender incongruence calls for humility. The causes of this phenomenon are not well understood, nor have effective interventions been thoroughly studied for those navigating this complex challenge. For some, the experience of gender incongruence can be a life-long challenge. Recent studies suggest that, for a significant number of young people, the experience of gender incongruence is transitory and resolves in adulthood.¹ Such information provides an important caution when considering interventions for children and adolescents.

Another reason for humility and caution is that gender incongruence can often be accompanied by other issues of an emotional/psychological nature. There is often more going on with the person than simply an experience of gender incongruence. In our rush to affirm gender identity, we can fail to respond to these other issues. Individual attentiveness is required as no two individuals present with the same challenges. We cannot assume that we understand everything about a student's situation simply because of a label.

We do know that gender incongruence is a reality for some students and that it is usually experienced as a struggle, at times involving dysphoria to the point of seriously threatening the well-being of the individual. Students who identify as transgender are at an elevated risk of self-harm, up to and including suicide. Some become estranged from their families and whatever social supports they have had previously. A school community should be a safe harbor for such individuals while supporting the student's family.

The Role of Parents

Students are entrusted to the care of educators by parents. This is recognized in law when the teacher is described as acting *in loco parentis*. Our faith respects parents as the child's first educators, not just chronologically but, more significantly, as those entrusted by God with the rearing and ultimate well-being of their children. Parents should always be involved in any decision about exceptional responses to their child.

Pastoral Care

Helpful guidance for providing a pastoral response to students concerning matters of sexuality was recently provided by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario with the publication of *The Human Person, Love and Sexuality: A Resource for Catholic Educators* (2016). Educators are strongly encouraged to read this document. In it can be found a rich elaboration of the following four principles for authentic Christian pastoral care of students struggling with sexual identity:

- All authentic pastoral care begins with and is continually guided by the vision of the human person, love, and sexuality.
- The pastoral care of the Church must reach out to all with an unconditional love.

¹ T.D. Steensma, R. Biemond, F. deBoer and P.T. Cohen-Kettenis, "Desisting and Persisting Gender Dysphoria After Childhood: A Qualitative Study" *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry* (2010)

- Pastoral care must meet a person wherever they are along the path of their spiritual and moral life.
- For pastoral care to be effective, Jesus Christ, the true shepherd, must be known and his voice heard.

Identity

Our response to students experiencing gender incongruence is informed by how we frame our understanding of the phenomenon. Some have described ‘three lenses’ through which we approach this topic: an integrity lens, a disability lens and an identity lens.² Our faith is rich in teachings about how the complementarity of the two sexes points to God’s plan for us - the integrity lens. The Church attends to research about how to best remediate dysphoria - the disability lens.

The identity lens concerns how individuals understand themselves, their purpose and their sense of belonging. We are all created as relational beings. Catholic educators should strive to reassure each student that he or she is a valued member of the school community. Failure to address this need can lead a young person to seek and find identity and a sense of belonging elsewhere, often on-line in unsupervised ways. Some will self-identify in reductive terms of gender identity categories or labels rather than grounding their identity in an integral or whole vision of the person, created in the image of God.

Parental Requests for Specific Accommodations

While accompaniment involves listening and patience on the part of educators, sometimes schools are asked by parents to provide specific accommodations. Boards determine how such parental requests are registered and processed.

Teachers may need some guidance when responding to students experiencing gender incongruence. A team approach, with help from knowledgeable colleagues, in addition to the student’s parents, is a good practice. If an outside advocate is involved, there should be agreement concerning respect for the Catholic identity of the school and an agreement to adhere to the guidelines provided. In-servicing for staff members should occur as a particular need arises, rather than mounting a system-wide series of workshops. That way, professional learning is personally relevant and the extent of the phenomenon is not exaggerated.

Individuals navigating gender incongruence use a variety of strategies to cope. These strategies can range from accommodations related to language to physical alterations of the body. In the following sections, we offer guidance for different forms of accommodation that might be requested. In each case, it is important to remember that accommodations are offered in an attempt to meet a struggling student where they are, in the midst of an ongoing journey toward an ever deeper and fuller experience of the Catholic vision of the person and sexuality. As Part II of these guidelines will make clear, these accommodations do not imply a kind of endorsement of the underlying vision of the person often implied in some versions of gender theory.

² Yarhouse, Mark *Understanding Gender Dysphoria* 2015

Medical Intervention

In the Catholic vision of the person, the human body holds a place of central importance in reflecting the image of God³ and thus, also, the identity and vocation of the human person. Attempts to change the sex of the person are seriously in tension, indeed contradiction, with this image of God imprinted in the body.⁴

As noted above, the causes of gender incongruence are not fully understood, and the experience of gender incongruence can often be accompanied by other emotional and psychological realities. Any response must be guided by a sound and whole Catholic vision of the human person. The proper role of the family must be respected. Schools should not be involved in interventions proposing to change the sex of a person.

Names and Pronouns

For the Catholic faith, the truthful use of language is of the highest value. Jesus Christ is truly the Word – the truth – become flesh. For this reason, it is of great importance that our language reflect the truth of the identity and vocation of the human person, created body and soul in the image of God.

Moreover, our faith recognizes that “everyone’s name is sacred. The name is the icon of the person. It demands respect as a sign of the dignity of the one who bears it.”⁵ While a name given at baptism is for eternity⁶, people sometimes ask to be addressed by another name. In order to meet a student in the midst of the difficult challenges facing them, accommodations concerning preferred names and even pronouns can, at times, be part of a Catholic response. Pastoral care has to begin where the person currently is. The use of a requested pronoun can be received by the student as a sincere gesture of good will. It can be a first step in an ongoing path of pastoral care, aimed at opening a relationship with the person. As already noted, such gestures do not imply an endorsement of any underlying vision of the human person implied in versions of gender theory. Decisions about pronouns and names need to be seen in a bigger picture of an ongoing path of pastoral care. They should never be seen as a once-and-for-all decision. It is a first step on a path, and is part of an ongoing relationship and dialogue with the student that will hopefully grow deeper as the relationships of trust and mutual respect grow deeper.

Non-conforming Expression

Following the pastoral logic presented above, accommodations concerning non-conforming styles of expression can be part of a compassionate Catholic response. This need not be seen as reinforcement of a misperception, but rather an effort to be respectful and patient.

Washrooms / Change Rooms

“Teaching modesty to children and adolescents means awakening in them respect for the human person”⁷. The provision of a universal single student washroom is an accommodation which is usually

³ Catechism of the Catholic Church 364

⁴ Catechism of the Catholic Church 2297

⁵ Catechism of the Catholic Church 2158

⁶ Catechism of the Catholic Church 2159

⁷ Catechism of the Catholic Church 2524

feasible for institutions. When such facilities are already available in all schools, this helps to reduce the stigmatization that can occur when a facilities accommodation is brought about in a school because of a particular student. Such washrooms may be labeled 'universal' or simply 'student washroom', but the term 'gender neutral' should be avoided. Symbols that present a third type of sexual identity should likewise not be used.

We have seen recently a move away from sex-specific washrooms and change rooms towards universal facilities with individual stalls in the design of public spaces. While this change might diminish the ability of a school to communicate the important physical difference between male and female, it does not prevent educators from teaching young people about this fundamental complementary distinction, created by God (Gen 1:27).

Athletics

The provision of female-only and male-only spaces and activities in a Catholic school is consistent with our understanding of the complementary differences between the sexes and the responsibility to provide for the safety and flourishing of all students.

In competitive sports, issues of safety, modesty, and fairness are of primary importance when considering which students should be allowed to participate in particular events. Male and female students should not be put in athletic situations that would threaten safety, modesty, and fairness.

School Clubs and Events

As schools strive to provide a sense of inclusion and belonging for all students, and because those experiencing gender incongruence are different from one another, educators should refrain from referring to those who experience gender incongruence as a separate 'community'.

Student leaders, usually well-informed about issues in the broader culture, often strive to help their fellow students. While campaigns to combat any type of bullying are commendable, student leaders may require adult mentoring about how to best support those experiencing gender incongruence without being drawn into types of 'gender activism' that implicitly contradict Catholic teaching.

PART II - PROVIDING CLARITY FOR ALL STUDENTS CONCERNING SEXUAL IDENTITY

The provision of appropriate accommodations to individuals experiencing gender incongruence does not prevent the school from teaching the Church's life enriching understanding of human sexuality. Any ambiguity arising from a particular accommodation can serve to remind us of the responsibility to proclaim the Church's understanding of human sexuality to all students in a manner that is clear, respectful and attractive.

Gender Theory Concerns

Recent Church documents have expressed serious concern about any ideology of gender that “denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman”⁸. To be clear, concern about philosophical and/or theological error is not the same as expressing disapproval of those who experience gender incongruence. Gender theory is not one system of thought but is an umbrella term that refers to various approaches. While some gender theories may be useful in examining the socially influenced roles that people play, there are five aspects commonly associated with gender theory which conflict with Catholic teaching:

- a suppression of complementarity between the sexes
- a suppression of the meaning and goodness of the body
- a view of the body and soul as being separate
- a radical separation of sex and gender
- a commitment to total self-determination

Catholic educators need to address these aspects and provide clarity to all students.

1) Concerning perspectives that suppress the complementary distinction between the sexes

“The human body itself - precisely in the complementarity of the male and female bodies - has been deeply imprinted by God with an image of Holy Trinity’s own communion of life-giving love, as well as the love of Jesus Christ for his Bride the Church. Moreover, it is by living in truth the ‘language’ of the image of God in our body that we cooperate in shaping this divine image of love within ourselves, which alone is the path to fulfillment and joy. It is only within this integral vision that the deepest identity of the human person can be discovered and questions of sexual identity most fully understood. Without this whole vision of the person and of human life, seen in light of our origin and destiny, and the integrity of our creation as a union of body and soul in the image of God who is an inseparable communion of life-giving love, it becomes difficult to understand the specific teachings of the Church on questions such as homosexuality and gender identity, let alone to see how those teachings might ultimately prove a path to joy and life.”⁹

The Challenge for Schools:

More than ever, students today need to be taught about the complementarity of the sexes. Educators are called to teach a Catholic understanding of human sexuality, without downplaying its integral procreative dimension. An understanding of the sacramental dimension of marriage can help young people to better understand sexual morality. Opportunities to teach about complementarity arise in Family Life studies, Religious studies and in health and physical education classes. Age-appropriate resources, inspired by Saint John Paul II’s reflections known as Theology of the Body, can be helpful with this task.

⁸ *Amoris Laetitia* 56

⁹ *The Human Person, Love and Sexuality* ACBO 2016 p.17

2) Concerning perspectives that suppress the meaning and goodness of the body

“The body is not something that we merely have - to be freely used and manipulated by the “real,” interior person. Rather, it is part of who we are. This reality of our creation takes on its fullest meaning and importance when we realize that into this very union of body and soul God has deeply imprinted something of himself. As the book of Genesis tells us, we have been made, male and female, in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27) [...] what we do with our bodies matters greatly in God’s plan”¹⁰

The body reveals the person. Even more, it reveals and communicates something of the divine image itself in the person, “the body, in fact, and only the body is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it.”¹¹ The body is not a thing to be manipulated: “man may not despise his bodily life. Rather he is obliged to regard his body as good and to hold it in honor since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day.”¹² The human person, made in the image and likeness of God, is not an object to be used.

The Challenge for Schools:

Students need to be taught respect for the body. Such respect can be promoted through Family Life studies, in health and physical education and in science classes. Teaching about the incarnational, sacramental dimension of our faith in Religion class can help students appreciate the goodness of the body.

Respect for the body is demonstrated through the championing of various life issues and when explaining the evils of pornography, prostitution and substance abuse. Many adolescents, of both sexes, struggle to achieve a healthy body image and may benefit from media studies that examine how social media can distort and aggravate this aspect of growing into adulthood.

3) Concerning perspectives that view the body and soul as separate

We are integral beings, “body and soul but truly one.”¹³ “This integral vision of the human person stands in contrast to the view of the human body that underlies many approaches to sexuality in our time. Often, the human body is seen not as holding any meaning or purpose in itself, but rather, simply as one part of the “real” person whose interior experiences, thoughts, and desires offer the sole measure of how the body should or should not be used. As such, the human person is divided and reduced to one or more isolated aspects of their identity (e.g. sexual attractions or desires, gender expression, etc.), obscuring the vision of the whole person and the path to joy, often with serious consequences.” [...] “Our sexual identity can never be separated from the image of God deeply inscribed in the union of our body and soul.”¹⁴

¹⁰ *The Human Person, Love and Sexuality* ACBO 2016 p.6

¹¹ St. John Paul II, *Theology of the Body* 19.4

¹² Catechism of the Catholic Church 364

¹³ Catechism of the Catholic Church 362-368

¹⁴ *The Human Person, Love and Sexuality* ACBO 2016 p.17

The Challenge for Schools:

By teaching about the integral nature of the person, educators provide an antidote to a mind-body dualism which is prevalent in secular culture, an attitude which is reinforced as students spend more time in discarnate activities on-line and with video games.

Christ teaches us the unity of body and soul through His Resurrection. In addition to the opportunities that arise across the curriculum to teach about the integral nature of the person, Religion class provides an opportunity to teach and joyfully proclaimed our belief in the resurrection of the body.

Engagement with physical reality, for example in the study of science, can lead to a deeper appreciation of our connectedness to creation through our own embodiment.

Teachers need to be clear when using metaphorical language. For example, while an expression such as 'a girl trapped in the body of a boy' might be used to describe a real feeling, students should understand that it does not describe a physical reality. Likewise, comparing a person to technology, implied in the expression 'hardwiring' and likening a person's essence to 'software' should be avoided.

4) Concerning perspectives that attempt to radically separate sex and gender

The Church rejects the radical separation of the concepts of sex and gender: "in this view of the human body, questions of gender and sexuality are often presented as pure social constructs, disconnected from any meaning in the human body, that can and should be manipulated by the individual based on his or her own experiences, attractions, and desires. In contrast, a full vision of the human person recognizes that sexual identity, gender expression, and gender roles do indeed have a social dimension to them to which a person and the surrounding culture contributes. However, it is precisely the work of human growth that sees the integration of these cultural and psychological factors with the total and integral vision of the human person's identity - a union of body and soul in the image of God, created male and female - recognizing that so often the social and cultural dimensions surrounding us are also marked by the obscuring and disintegrating effects of original sin. Understanding gender as a mere social construct, thus, proves deeply incomplete and dissatisfying. It is imprecise and misleading, and does not express accurately how the various dimensions of the human person are integrated in the work of human growth. In a Catholic vision of the person, sexual and gender expression is deeply connected to the meaning of the human body - for we are inherently a union of body, mind, and spirit."¹⁵

The Challenge for Schools:

Students hunger to know what is real. Catholic educators should reassure students that truth is not subjective, that truth can be known. Students need help knowing how to confront a pervasive relativism which arises from the view that reality is not discovered but socially constructed.

At an age-appropriate level, teachers can help students to understand the concept of gender for the purpose of examining how we function as a society, while taking care to teach the immutability of one's God-given sex. It needs to be emphasized that "biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender)

¹⁵ *The Human Person, Love and Sexuality* ACBO 2016 p.17

can be distinguished but not separated.”¹⁶ Caution is required so that discussions of gender do not sow confusion or anxiety in the minds of children concerning their own identity.

Ongoing vigilance is required to make sure that teaching materials used in the school support a Catholic understanding of human sexuality. This includes screening books made available in book fairs, materials in the library, and the provision of posters and pamphlets from outside agencies. Visual teaching aids designed for children, for example, with diagrams that separate and reduce a person’s identity and sexuality with arrows to the brain and genitals, should be avoided. Performances, both live and filmed, should also be screened for appropriateness in this regard.

Care is needed with the language we use to discuss human sexuality. For the sake of greater clarity, schools should consider using the term ‘sex’ instead of ‘gender’ on forms and when referring to sex-specific spaces, activities, programs and schools.

Educators should refrain from referring to students by using labels or group acronyms. As people are free to describe themselves, it is acceptable to refer to ‘a student who identifies as transgender’ rather than speaking about a student who is transgender.

The expressions ‘sex-change’ and ‘transitioning’ should be avoided as they reinforce the error of thinking that sex can be changed.

While gathering student data can provide helpful information, caution is needed concerning how this is done. Catholic schools should refrain from eliciting responses from children about their sexual identity and orientation. The asking, in itself, constitutes a teaching that may confuse children, pose problems about privacy and raises concern about parental involvement.

5) Concerning perspectives that advocate for total personal autonomy

“God created man a rational being, conferring on him the dignity of a person who can initiate and control his own actions.”¹⁷ We are made for freedom and “for freedom Christ set us free” (Galatians 5:1). Modern society has tended to equate freedom with license. Total self-determination, freedom from restraint, is thus valued as one of the highest goods. Freedom properly understood, however, is not license as, “the exercise of freedom does not imply a right to say or do everything.”¹⁸

True freedom is the freedom to do what is right, what is good. Made for love, our freedom lies in the ability to make a gift of ourselves. “God who created man out of love also calls him to love, the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being.”¹⁹ “Man only finds himself by making a sincere gift of himself.”²⁰ “The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes.”²¹ Doing good, doing what God wills, entails humility and sacrifice. Christ teaches us humility and acceptance when we hear him praying in the garden, “yet not my will but yours be done” (Mt 26:39, Mk 14:36, Lk 22:42, Jn 6:38). Our path to the fulfillment we seek is not to be found in total self-determination. We do not create

¹⁶ Synod 15 Relatio Finalis 58

¹⁷ Catechism of the Catholic Church 1730

¹⁸ Catechism of the Catholic Church 1740

¹⁹ Catechism of the Catholic Church 1604

²⁰ *Gaudium et Spes*, 24

²¹ Catechism of the Catholic Church 1733

ourselves nor we do we determine our identity. Our identity is given to us. Sex is not 'assigned' by society but rather is identified, often before birth. - "before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, before you were born I set you apart" (Jeremiah 1:5). Through a life-long process of discernment, we discover who we are called to be.

The Challenge for Schools:

An attitude of total personal autonomy is prevalent in secular culture and reinforced by personal choice made available by information technology. In light of this, the Christian virtues of humility and intentional sacrifice are counter-cultural. Students, trying to understand the world, often have an appetite for that which is counter-cultural. Teaching about our vocation to love as being the path to joy is a lesson which truly empowers students.

Teaching the art of self-gift entails teaching about self-mastery and sacrifice. Awareness of pride and humility will equip students to face the challenges of life. An understanding of the redemptive aspect of suffering will also help to prepare students for the crosses they will encounter in life. A healthy appreciation of our fallen state will help students to recognize the many and complex ways that original sin affects our lives and experiences, as well as the need for redemption, made available to all in Christ.

Addressing student concerns about the environment provides an opportunity to make connection between accepting our bodily givenness and stewardship - "thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation. Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology."²² Discussion about the proper use of technology is another opportunity to help students identify the utilitarian impulse which seeks domination over all nature, including our own human nature.

Conclusion – Our Need of Christ

The role of the teacher is an increasingly complex one, yet remains a joyful opportunity to assist parents in bringing young people to personally encounter Christ, including those students who struggle with sexual identity. "Sexual and gender identity concerns remain complex and not fully understood. They are not experienced in exactly the same way by all who navigate such concerns. This can create a certain complexity even in the terminology that is used. It is critical to remember, however, that at the heart of these issues lie persons - loved by God, and desiring love whose experience of navigating gender identity questions can often be isolating, accompanied by fear and anxiety. Into this potentially painful reality, the Church's pastoral care must enter, meeting these persons in the midst of the difficult terrain they face, accompanying them with an understanding heart, accurate knowledge, and a sound and whole vision of the person on the path to holiness and fullness of life and joy that Christ promises and makes possible to all."²³

Office of the Liaison for Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Toronto - 2019

²² *Laudato Si* 155

²³ *The Human Person, Love and Sexuality* ACBO 2016 p.17



The Human Person, Love, and Sexuality

A Resource for Catholic
Educators

Education Commission of the
Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario

*I came that
they may have
life, and have
it abundantly.*

John 10:10



2016

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Introduction

I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. John 10:10

With these simple words, Our Lord sets before us the ultimate promise of the Christian life and of all that the Church does and teaches: that we might have life abundantly. St. Paul describes this promise in remarkable words: “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). St. Peter describes this life as “indescribable and glorious joy” (1 Peter 1:8).

It is this promise that for centuries has motivated Christians to reach out to the marginalized, to teach and found schools, to care for the sick and abandoned in her hospitals and orphanages, to accompany the dying, to seek out the lost and lonely and bring them friendship and hope. It is for the sake of this abundant life and joy that countless Christian martyrs have been willing to follow the example of the Good Shepherd even to laying down their lives that others might know the one who is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). And it is this promise of joy and abundant life that lies at the heart of the Christian vision of the human person, love, and sexuality.

Our culture is marked by many voices promising happiness and freedom in exploring and expressing one’s sexuality. For young people this can be especially confusing as they begin to mature and develop both physically, emotionally, and spiritually. At the same time, we are aware of the reality of broken families and hurt lives that have resulted from infidelity and divorce, the impact of social media and the widespread use of pornography, the decriminalization of prostitution, promiscuity and the promotion of a casual “hook up” approach to sexuality, and the scourge of sexual assault. All of these realities in our society reveal that sexuality and sexual expression, when broken, can deeply injure the human person and leave lasting wounds.

Sexuality and its expression touch the deepest realms of the human person - how we relate to ourselves and others, and how we are called by God to love. The Church cares deeply about the human person and sexuality because she cares about our call to image God in our human relationships of love. God is love (1 John 4:8). It is ultimately from this understanding of God that the Church’s vision of the human person, love, and sexuality emerges: a vision that reveals that every single human being without exception has immeasurable value; a vision of human love and sexuality as a vocation to love as God loves - revealing in the creation of the human person, body and soul, male and female, our deepest meaning and identity. Far from being closed-minded or exclusionary - a mere set of rules and prohibitions - the Christian vision of the human person and human sexuality offers the fullest possible understanding of the human person - a union of body and soul, created out of love, to fulfil a purpose revealed by God, that promises fullness of life now and which will be eternal with God. It is a vision that reveals the beauty and wonder of our life and destiny as human beings, one that we shape and form through our free choices and actions, in cooperation with grace, into the image of the one who is the way, the truth, and life itself - Jesus Christ.

At the same time, the Catholic Church is not unaware of the challenges and obstacles to those who desire to live this vision of human love and sexuality. The Church is not a community for the perfect - for those who have no faults, struggles or weaknesses, who seek only to condemn and lay heavy burdens

on others. It is to be a community of healing and strength by which God the Father welcomes all his children - calling them to a life beyond their imagining (Ephesians 3:20) and providing the means to reach this life, with grace that abounds infinitely more than the effects of weakness, struggle, and sin (Romans 5:20). Every member of the Church has inherited the brokenness resulting from original sin - the fall. Every member of the Church is a sinner in need of healing, mercy, and forgiveness. It is this that Jesus Christ - the Good Shepherd - came to give, and it is this that we must give to each other.

THE AIM AND STRUCTURE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is intended as a resource for Catholic educators in their work of teaching the Human Development and Sexual Health elements of the 2015 Health and Physical Education Curriculum. Its aim is to present and explain the vision of the human person, love, and sexuality that underlies the teachings of the Catholic faith, setting this vision within the broader framework of the moral and spiritual life.

This document is divided into two parts. In the first part we will present the Catholic Christian vision of human life and love, including the meaning of sexuality, chastity and marriage. This is the essential context for understanding the Church's teaching in the area of same-sex attraction and gender identity, and we hope that it might assist Catholic educators not only in their work of handing on the Catholic faith to their students, but also as a guide for providing pastoral care. In the second part of this document, we will consider how the integral vision of the human person, love, and sexuality shapes the Catholic faith's approach to questions of sexual identity. We will also consider the meaning and purpose of the Church's approach to pastoral care, as well practical guidance for offering pastoral care to those who are experiencing feelings of same-sex attraction or in some way questioning their sexual or gender identity.

The Human Person, Love, and Sexuality: The Vision of the Catholic Faith

The Church cares deeply about the dignity of the human person, love and sexuality because God is love. This foundational perspective ultimately leads to the beautiful vision of the human person and the gift of human sexuality in God's plan for our happiness and joy. Unfortunately, too often, questions of sexuality do not begin with this vision and thus the understanding of the Catholic faith is not presented from this perspective, but rather simply as a list of rules and prohibitions. Disconnected from the vision of the person and God's plan and promise for human life, the specific teachings of the Christian faith that deal with these realities can become, as St. John Paul II warned, "a mere set of principles which are increasingly difficult to understand and rules which are increasingly hard to accept."¹

Thus, to understand the Christian meaning of human sexuality, one must first step back and see the larger vision of human life revealed by God that underlies what the Church believes and teaches. In essence, the Catholic Christian vision of human life serves as a guide for the fundamental questions of the Church's moral and spiritual teaching: Why is the Church concerned about morality at all? How can we know if anything is right or wrong, good or bad, if our care and support will ultimately be helpful or harmful? How do we know the meaning and value of the human person and thus what it means to care or love?

To answer these questions, all people of good will, whether Christian or not, must first ask about the ultimate horizon or vision that allows us to understand our lives most fully. What are our lives for? What are we to do with them? Only an adequate moral horizon can help us see our way clearly through the challenging moral and pastoral realities that are part of human life. Like any journey or task in life, to know what we are to do with our lives, and how we can help each other when life presents challenges and pain, we must first know what our lives are for, where we are going, and the way and means to get there. Only then can we know what, along the way, will be helpful or harmful to us. If we lose sight of the moral vision or horizon, not only is it hard to understand the specific moral teachings of the Church, but it is also becomes impossible to know how we are to care for people in a manner that upholds their true value and dignity. Everything that the Catholic faith proposes about morality comes out of these first and fundamental realities.

THE IMAGE OF GOD AND THE MORAL LIFE

The starting point of the Catholic vision of the human person is the simple but profoundly important fact that we are made by God. Our life is not a product of mere chance or impersonal forces. It is, in its most ultimate origin, a free and personal choice of life-giving love by God. God's love creates life. Human life comes from God. It is a gift to us, and is always, without exception, a good.

In this first work of our creation, at our origin, our mother and father became cooperators and co-workers in God's own work as Father and Creator. Through them, God formed us in the womb (Psalm 139:13). In the great wonder and design of his Creation, there is something of our parents in us. With

¹ Pope John Paul II, Address to the Young People of Eurasia University in Kazakhstan (September 23, 2001), n. 4.

Adam, a mother or father, gazing on their child, can exclaim: “Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh!” (Genesis 2:23)

This joyful exclamation further reveals that the human being is an embodied being, created as a union of body and soul. As honest reflection on our own experience confirms, the body is not something that we merely *have* - to be freely used and manipulated by the “real,” interior person. Rather, it is part of who we *are*. This reality of our creation takes on its fullest meaning and importance when we realize that into this very union of body and soul God has deeply imprinted something of himself. As the book of Genesis tells us, we have been made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27) - the Most Holy Trinity - who is in essence a community of life-giving love - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This image of inseparable life and love - of God’s own inner life - has been imprinted into our very bodies. How this image serves as the guide and meaning of human sexuality, we will consider shortly, but already we can begin to see how it is that what we do with our bodies matters greatly in God’s plan. Our fundamental identity comes from this image of God’s life in us, present in every human being. And it is this image in us that makes human life sacred, and that grounds each person’s inviolable dignity.

But this is only the beginning of the Christian vision of the human person. The image of God - so central to the entire meaning of our life, our identity, and purpose - is not simply something *already* in us, it is also something that we must *become*. God’s creation of us is not yet finished! In a sense, God not only *has* made us, he *is* making us. And in this ongoing work of creation, we are called to cooperate. Here we see the first hint of the entire meaning of the moral life, of God’s law and commandments, conscience, grace, and the virtues. Our life is a work that has been entrusted to us. Freedom is the gift given to us that we might share in our own interior creation. It has a purpose and guide: that we might freely cooperate in completing the image of God in us - life-giving love - and so enter into communion with God and know the joy and abundant life that is his.

This is the call to holiness. That God, who first asked our parents’ cooperation in our creation, now asks our own cooperation to complete his work, to deepen and perfect his image in us. As St. Gregory of Nyssa said: We become in a certain way our own parents. We create ourselves by the choices we make. Our choices and actions don’t just bring about consequences outside of us, they form in us profound and lasting spiritual traits, for good or ill.² Every time we act, every choice we make, every good we do or sin we commit, every time we seek forgiveness, we are forming in ourselves deep and lasting traits of our moral and spiritual character. We are moving ourselves toward or away from the image of the life and love-giving Holy Trinity, toward or away from the indescribable and glorious joy of being filled with the utter fullness of God (cf. Ephesians 3:19). This is beatitude - happiness - communion with the very source of life and love forever. It is for this that we were made.

Already, we can begin to see why the Church cares so deeply about people and the moral life. It is not about following an arbitrary or antiquated set of rules. It is about becoming a kind of person. It is about

² “It is precisely through his acts that man attains perfection as man, as one who is called to seek his Creator of his own accord and freely to arrive at full and blessed perfection by cleaving to him. Human acts are moral acts because they express and determine the goodness or evil of the individual who performs them. They do not produce a change merely in the state of affairs outside of man but, to the extent that they are deliberate choices, they give moral definition to the very person who performs them, determining his profound spiritual traits. This was perceptively noted by Saint Gregory of Nyssa: [...] ‘we are in a certain way our own parents, creating ourselves as we will, by our decisions.’” Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis splendor*, Regarding Certain Fundamental Questions of the Church’s Moral Teaching (August 6, 1993), n. 71.

using our freedom to shape ourselves after the image of God in which we have been made. Our life is a work. It is entrusted to us by the One who loves us dearly and wants us to share in making it. It is in understanding this connection between our free choices, our ultimate destiny, and the part we play in shaping our lives in the image of God revealed to us in Scripture and Tradition that we gain the understanding and desire to take up the task of the moral life with courage and perseverance, even when it is challenging.

This vision of the image of God - of God's desiring to draw us into the very work of our creation through the gift of our freedom - is a beautiful testament to God's love for us - that he would make us to share so closely in his own life-giving love. Unfortunately, our faith reveals, and human experience amply confirms, that this divine image within us has been profoundly wounded and obscured. This is the tragic reality of sin and evil - that the very gift of freedom given that we might shape and guide our actions after the image of God could be turned toward a rejection of the very source of life and love. That the very gift of God that alone brings unity and flourishing to the many dimensions of the person - body, soul, freedom, and desires - could be rejected, with the disastrous consequences of disintegration, obscurity, weakness, and chaos within the human person.

This is the reality of "original sin" that the book of Genesis recounts, and which has marked in each of us a deep wound - a profound spiritual disability - that now, together with our own personal sins, both obscures our ability to recognize the plan and image of God imprinted in our body and soul - the very image that we are called to become - and disrupts the integrity, harmony, and direction of our desires and freedom. The entire history of salvation - from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Israel - is one continuous story of God's gradual work to restore his Creation - to teach us anew who we are and what our life is for. In his work to draw his people back, God made covenants with them, gave them the law - his great plan for them, his means of caring for them and showing them their dignity. But the disintegrating and obscuring power unleashed by Adam and Eve's denial of God's gift of himself could not ultimately be overcome by humanity's own efforts. There was nothing that we had in our own power that could restore the image of God in us. So the Father sent the full and perfect "image of God" - his own Son - to reveal the plan that had become obscured, and even more, to enter in the very heart of the disorder of sin and death - to bring restoration and re-integration. The true image of God - Jesus Christ - restores the image of God in us from within.

To become the image of God, then - which is the very call to holiness and fullness of life - is ultimately to become like Christ - the one and true "image of God." This allows us to understand the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, so often emphasized by St. John Paul II, that it is only Jesus Christ who "fully reveals humanity to itself and brings to light its very high calling."³ Jesus Christ - fully God and fully human - is the image of God, and it is only in communion with the life he offers and the strength he gives that we are able to take up the task of shaping our lives after the image of God. Ultimately, this opens the door to the entire understanding of the spiritual and moral life - the sacraments and prayer, the law and commandments, our own sacrifices and crosses. Each, in different ways, is given by God to powerfully assist us in the work of shaping our lives after the image of Christ. United to him, we come to see as he sees, we gain grace - Christ's own life and strength - to go out with him to continue his work among our brothers and sisters. We become his hands and feet, his messengers of Good News.

³ Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, On the Church in the Modern World (December 7, 1965), n. 22.

It is only in this whole truth of the image of God - as both a gift given and a work to be done, obscured, weakened, and disintegrated by sin, redeemed by the true image of God - Jesus Christ - that we can understand the vision that guides our moral life and the Church's teaching and pastoral care. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* concisely captures this vision.

The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God; it is fulfilled in his vocation to divine beatitude. It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself to this fulfilment. By his deliberate actions, the human person does, or does not, conform to the good promised by God and attested by moral conscience. Human beings make their own contribution to their interior growth; they make their whole sentient and spiritual lives into means of this growth. With the help of grace they grow in virtue, avoid sin, and if they sin they entrust themselves as did the prodigal son to the mercy of our Father in heaven. In this way they attain to the perfection of charity.⁴

BECOMING THE IMAGE OF GOD: COMPLETING OUR CREATION IN COOPERATION WITH GRACE

But the question naturally remains: How do we know what to do with our freedom in order to take up the task that is entrusted to us, to cooperate in completing this work of our creation? How can we know, especially in the area of human sexuality, and especially in the midst of the weakened and obscured vision caused by original sin, what reflects and forms the image of God in us - thus leading to lasting joy - and what does not? Amidst all the voices that promise happiness, how can we recognize the way that leads to true peace and abundant life?

The Meaning and Purpose of Law: God's Map Leading Us to Life

In the Church's constant tradition, the response to these questions, which are none other than the fundamental questions of morality, can be known by reason and faith, or, in other words, by the natural law - which guides our reason - and by Divine Revelation - God's Law revealed in Scripture and the Tradition of the Church and accepted through faith. Before elaborating on these sources of truth which attune our lives to the Good Shepherd's voice, however, it is important first to say something about the meaning and value of law in general. At first glance, the idea of law and commandments can seem the polar opposite of all the goods we have been speaking of so far: abundant life, joy, and freedom. Law is often misunderstood and described as something that takes away or limits freedom, rather than enabling and protecting it. Nothing could be further from an authentic Christian moral vision and understanding of the meaning and purpose of law. Neither, moreover, is this the way in which laws and rules are generally understood in our everyday life.

To use a rather common example, a trip from Ottawa to Toronto in a car is possible because of the order created by the rules of the road, traffic lights, lane markers, signs, and guardrails. These "laws and commandments" of the road do not limit our freedom. Rather, they facilitate it and, moreover, they protect the common good of our life together in society. Similarly, the flourishing musician, whose music brings joy, is not the one who ignores the rules of music and simply does whatever he wishes. Neither is the excellent athlete the one who ignores or invents the rules of a game, but rather the one who aims all her skill and drive toward the purpose of the game. For the musician and athlete, flourishing, freedom, and joy are the fruit of years of development, growth, and of hard and persevering work following an ordered and wise plan, reflected in the laws of music and sport. These are simply analogies, but

⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1700.

fundamentally, they help to illustrate what is at heart an essential characteristic of morality: the laws and commandments of morality reflect a wise ordered plan aimed at freedom and flourishing, abundant life and joy. Authentic human freedom is clearly not the ability to do whatever we want. This is not true for music, for sports, and it is not true for life. Our free choices can certainly promote our flourishing and fulfillment. But if not guided by the authentic good, they can just as easily lead us to evil and enslavement to harmful practices.

But just as the rules of the game of hockey might seem obscure and even arbitrary if all we ever did was read the rule book - if we never saw the beauty of the game being played - so also to isolate the laws and commandments of morality from the vision of a flourishing life of deep and lasting joy - reflected most clearly in the lives of the saints - obscures the meaning and beauty of the moral and spiritual life, making the law and commandments seem obscure and arbitrary.

With this understanding of and appreciation for the meaning and value of the law and commandments, we can see a hint already of why God's Law is praised in such unequivocal terms in the Sacred Scripture. It is described as the product of wisdom and intelligence (Deuteronomy 4:5-8). Speaking of God's laws, Psalm 19 says: "More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb" (Psalm 19:10).

In essence, the law becomes a map for our journey in life. It guides one toward one's destination. It is meant to facilitate freedom and warn against and protect from danger. The purpose of God's Law - the Commandments - is to form our freedom - to enlighten it - according to the true and wise plan of our Creator for our flourishing and happiness, enabling us to live that truth through our free moral choices.

Returning then to the question with which we began: How can we know this wise and providential plan of our Creator? How do we know the laws and commandments - the true map - that lead to life? The Church's conviction is that the answer to these questions can be found through reason and faith - from the natural law and from Divine Revelation in Sacred Scripture and Tradition.

The Natural Law: God's Plan Imprinted in Creation and Known through Reason

What is the natural law? If law in general is like a map of God's wise and providential plan to direct us toward flourishing and abundant life, the natural law is the dimension of this map or plan imprinted into Creation by God and into the very gift of our human reason. It is the intelligible plan and wisdom imprinted by God into his Creation, including the creation of the human being (cf. Proverbs 8:12-26). Reason is one of the gifts given to us by which we grasp this intelligible plan. This is what we mean when we speak of human nature and the natural law. Human nature and the natural law do not simply refer to our physical or biological dimensions as if these could somehow be separated off from the rest of the human person. Natural law is not simply laws of human biology made into laws of morality. The human person is always and at all times a unity of body and soul. We are neither angels nor mere animals, we are human beings. In everything we do, we are fully both an embodied being and a spiritual being.

Thus, when we look at ourselves and at the creation around us, we are able to discern more than simply the physical laws of nature. By virtue of the union of body and soul and the intelligible plan of the Creator imprinted into this union, we are able to discern in ourselves and in creation signs of a more

profound plan and ordering.⁵ The natural law is precisely our sharing, through our reason, in the Divine Reason itself - God's wise and providential guidance of all things for their flourishing.

Divine Revelation: God's Plan Known through Sacred Scripture and Tradition

But human reason alone is not a perfect conduit of the divine plan and order. Simple observation tells us that while people often agree on a significant range of human conduct, there remain important issues of moral action relevant for society as a whole on which agreement proves more difficult. Why is this? There are a few reasons why human reason alone proves an imperfect means for understanding the divine ordering of human life. First, because human beings are ultimately made for a life that surpasses the purely natural order. As we have seen, each and every human being is called to communion with God, made to share in the utter fullness of God - what eye has not seen nor ear heard. Human beings need an assistance that goes beyond reason alone to navigate the path toward their divine destiny - the fullness of life.

But even remaining within the realm of human reason, the further away one moves from the most basic principles of the natural moral law such as "do good and avoid evil," and the more one has to reason about specific scenarios, the more careful and diligent one's reasoning must be. This requires time and the necessary effort of seeking knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. At the same time, our reasoning and judgment (as even common experiences of daily life confirm) can become obscured by sin and by strong emotions that have become unhinged and out of sync with the good, obscuring our ability to recognize and choose the good. As we will see, it is virtue that helps to develop in us the capacity to orient our emotions, reason, and will toward the good, thus enabling us to see and choose the good more readily.

For all of these reasons, God supplements the natural law - that imprinting of his wise and providential plan for our flourishing into our very creation - with divinely revealed law through both the Sacred Scripture and the Tradition of the Church, together with her teaching magisterium. Reason and faith. This is how we hear the voice of the Good Shepherd, the map that guides us to living waters and green pastures, to abundant life.

Conscience: Connecting God's Plan to the Concrete Circumstances of Life

But how do we navigate by this map of natural and revealed law in the midst of the concrete and particular scenarios of daily life, complete with their many variables and unique circumstances? How does this map become a personal guide for the many choices we must make every day? This is the role of conscience. Our conscience is ultimately how God enables each of us to connect the natural law and divinely revealed law to the actual concrete circumstances of our daily life - where we actually live out the moral and spiritual life day by day. In a way, God's gift of conscience is like a GPS receiver that helps us position ourselves and navigate by the map of God's plan. The analogy of the GPS is simply that - an analogy. But it can help illustrate some fundamentally important elements of conscience. For example, GPS coordinates are always specific to a point in time, here and now. They tell you where you are, right now, always relative to an underlying map. Similarly, conscience is a judgment about the good to be done at a particular moment in time. In a sense, it asks: Where am I on the map of God's providential

⁵ "The person, by the light of reason and the support of virtue, discovers in the body the anticipatory signs, the expression and the promise of the gift of self, in conformity with the wise plan of the Creator. It is in the light of the dignity of the human person... that reason grasps the specific moral value of certain goods towards which the person is naturally inclined." Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor* (August 6, 1993), n. 48.

plan of natural and revealed law, and in what direction must I move with this choice or action to continue on the path of the Good Shepherd? Like a GPS, conscience is always and inseparably dependent on the objective underlying map of God's plan, which is held in trust and passed on by the Church and her pastors - the magisterium. Just as the coordinates of a GPS point to a position on a map, and do not invent the map, so too the judgment of conscience offers a position relative to an objective map - the natural and revealed law of our Creator - the objective wise and providential plan of God for our lives known through the Church. Conscience does not create the map.

Thus, similar to a GPS, if one's knowledge of the map is incomplete, or if it has become damaged or obscured, or if something is wrong with the GPS unit itself, its position can be erroneous. What is worse, one may travel for a long time in a wrong or dangerous direction before realizing the original erroneous bearing. So too can a judgment of conscience be erroneous and lead one into harm. Thus the critical need to form and inform one's conscience. Conscience depends on our diligent seeking to learn and understand the map that guides the Christian life.

Virtue: Strength to Face the Obstacles that Can Obscure God's Plan

But law and conscience are not the only elements necessary for recognizing and navigating by the voice of the Good Shepherd. Just as fog, wind, and storms can interfere with navigation even when one's maps and GPS are in order, so too can sin and strong emotions that have become unhinged and out of sync with the good obscure our ability to recognize and choose the good. It would be like having the map, and even a functioning GPS, but there are storms raging that make it barely possible to read the map or to accurately judge where you are or where you are to go. You end up carried along by whatever is the strongest wind hitting you at that moment.

To understand the Catholic moral vision, and the work entrusted to us of shaping our interior creation after the image of God, one can thus never simply speak of the law and commandments. For these are inseparably tied to and dependent on the virtues. The virtues clear out the fog and storms that affect our ability to navigate. At the same time, they sharpen our focus on the details of the map, making clearer our location and direction. Just as the traveller rejoices in the absence of storms and fog, so too the virtues make living the moral life not only easier, but profoundly joyful, even when it is difficult.

Our emotions and drives are given to us precisely to propel us toward the good. When they are focused in on the good and in sync with it, they are powerful forces for good. But sin (both the effects of original sin as well as our own personal sins) and vice (the opposite of virtue) throw our emotions and drives into chaos - obscuring the good and making it very difficult to choose the good even when it is recognized. Virtues bring all the powers of the human person together to become strengths - intellect, will, and emotions - harmonizing them with the good. As a result, it becomes easier to both recognize and do the good. When this happens, our will, emotions and intellect become powerful forces carrying us on the path of life.

Grace: Sharing in the Life and Power of Jesus Christ

It is precisely because of our divine destiny and because of the utterly debilitating and obscuring wound of sin that one more essential piece of the moral puzzle has been given by God - grace. As we have seen, the work entrusted to us, the completion of our creation in which we participate, is ultimately to be formed into the image of Jesus Christ - the Son of God - the one who alone is able to destroy all that separates us from the Father. Our prayer, acts of charity and fasting, and most importantly and substantially, the sacraments, all unite us to Christ. By our growth in and fidelity to these pillars of the

spiritual and moral life, Jesus Christ begins to act in us, helping us to see as he sees, judge as he judges, and find joy as he finds joy. From within, he helps form us into his image. This is the whole of the Christian life!

Our Catholic faith speaks of three virtues that our union with Jesus Christ gives to us: faith, hope, and love. These theological virtues, then, literally lift our eyes to the stars, so that we do not simply navigate by the limits of this world, but rather have our eyes set on the divine life for which we are made. Furthermore, the seven-fold Gifts of the Holy Spirit act as wind in our sails, propelling us forward in the spiritual and moral life toward our goal.

By grace, most especially the sanctifying grace of the sacraments, the Holy Spirit who is the very Spirit of Jesus Christ and the Father illumines the intellect and enflames the heart so that we can truly see and desire what is good. This is what our Catholic faith calls the “New Law.” It is not new in that it replaces a previous moral law, but new in that it offers to us a new and divine source of power and vision. It is the kind of law reflected in the Beatitudes, where we read: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matthew 5:8). With purity of heart, we shall see God. This is the very fullness of life - indescribable and glorious joy.

SEXUALITY AND THE LIVING IMAGE OF GOD

We come now to the question of how sexuality and our sexual identity and expression are to be understood within this vision of human life and the human person. Why is the Church concerned about sexuality at all? Why does it matter what we do with our bodies, or how we express our identity, desires, and attractions? We have seen that the image of God, which stands at the centre of the meaning and dignity of human life, is both something imprinted in us in our creation as body and soul, and also something that we must become by our free actions, guiding ourselves by the “maps” of God’s plan (his natural and revealed laws), by conscience, the virtues, and grace.

To know who God is, then, is to learn both our own truest identity - made in his image - and the person we are to become by our actions. In St. John’s first letter, God reveals the fundamental essence of his identity: God is love (1 John 4:8). Love and the expression of love - to which human sexual expression is closely tied - are therefore at the heart of the very meaning of human life and the Christian faith. The Church’s concern for sexuality ultimately arises from her concern for love.

In essence, to say that God is love is to say that we have been made by love, in the image of love, and for love. As St. John Paul II wrote in his very first letter to the entire Church: “Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it.”⁶ He would confirm these words many years later in his letter on the Gospel of Life: “The meaning of life is found in giving and receiving love, and in this light human sexuality and procreation reach their true and full significance.”⁷

Understood in this light, one can appreciate why the meaning and moral implications of questions of sexual identity can become a charged and sensitive topic. For any question that touches the meaning and expression of human love, touches close to the heart of who the human person is. It is precisely for

⁶ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979), n. 10.

⁷ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium vitae*, On the Value and Inviolability of Human Life (March 25, 1995), n. 81.

this reason, also, that questions of sexuality are not trivial. Reflection and dialogue within a community about appropriate and inappropriate expressions of sexuality are reasonable and necessary. Love is never purely private. In varying ways, it touches and affects relationships of friendship and of family life, especially the relationship of parent and child, even relationships between strangers in a community. We owe questions of sexual identity and expression serious reflection, dialogue, and a serious effort of understanding. At the very centre of this reflection, then, is the question of the meaning of love, and the place of sexuality in the plan of love.⁸

Sexuality, Self-Giving Love, and Marriage:

The Image and Sign of the Fullness of God's Love in Jesus Christ

If God is love and we are made - body and soul - in the image of God, then something of the image of God's very life, and the guide for our path to abundant life and joy will be revealed and lived through the human body. Far from being a purely "spiritual" reality, the book of Genesis reveals to us that the image of God has been inscribed deeply into our very bodies as male and female: "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27-28).

The human body - male and female - thus reflects something of God. It speaks a "language about God" (literally, a "theology"), revealing something of our Creator and Father and his plan for us.⁹ Speaking of this reality, St. John Paul II wrote: "The body, in fact, and only the body is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it."¹⁰ What is the invisible mystery communicated by the human body, made male and female? That the life of God itself is a communion of persons - free, total, faithful, and fruitful self-giving and life-giving love - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That God himself is an inseparable communion of life and love, of pure gift, and that we have been made to image and share in this!¹¹

Speaking of the communion of man and woman in marriage, St. John Paul II once said: "In this entire world there is not a more perfect, more complete image of God, Unity and Community. There is no other human reality which corresponds more, humanely speaking, to that divine mystery."¹²

By making us male and female, our Creator has imprinted into our very bodies an image - an icon - of his own life - calling man and woman to a communion in love that is so powerful that, imaging his own love, it can give birth to new life! Just as God, who is total self-giving love, gives new life through that love, both in the original creation of man and woman and in Jesus Christ's re-creation in redemption through the Cross, so too the full use of the powers of sexuality, by which the total love of husband and wife -

⁸ Clarity in the meaning of love is all the more important given the general imprecision of the word 'love' in the English language. We 'love' everything from food, to music, to people. Such disparate uses of the word love cannot possibly mean the same thing.

⁹ It is important to be clear that when we speak of the love of the Holy Trinity as being reflected in the love of husband and wife, we are discovering an image - a sign - that is intended to express and point to an infinitely deeper reality. We are not saying that the love of the Holy Trinity is a sexual love. Rather, we are saying that the total body and soul expression of love lived in marriage has been shaped by God to reflect and reveal to us something of the total and inseparable life-giving love that is the heart of the life of God.

¹⁰ Pope John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, Pauline Books, 2006, n.19, §4.

¹¹ "God is love: God's very being is love. By sending his only Son and the Spirit of Love in the fullness of time, God has revealed his innermost secret: God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange." *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §221

¹² Pope John Paul II, Homily on the Feast of the Holy Family (December 30, 1988).

body and soul - is expressed, must always be inseparably open to the creation of new human life. This inseparable connection of the unitive and procreative meanings of the sexual act, so foundational for Catholic moral teaching in sexuality, far from being an arbitrary or merely biological imposition, reveals the full depth of the image of God imprinted within our body and soul. God is a communion of life-giving love. And this is the image he has imprinted in us and the image that we must become.

St. John Paul II speaks of it in these words: "The fact that man 'created as man and woman' is the image of God means not only that each of the them individually is like God, as a rational and free being. It also means that man and woman, created as a 'unity of the two' in their common humanity, are called to live in a communion of love, and in this way to mirror in the world the communion of love that is in God... Only in this way can we understand the truth that God in himself is love (cf. 1 Jn 4:16)." ¹³

The astounding conviction of Christianity is that the human body is imprinted with an image of the divine. It reflects the meaning of human sexuality in God's plan and the essence of human life - that we are made for gift - self-giving love. What we do with our bodies, thus, matters greatly.

Christ Restores and Redeems God's Plan for Human Sexuality

But our faith also reveals, and human experience amply confirms, that this noble and divine image has been profoundly wounded and obscured by sin. The effects and disorder introduced by original sin as well as by our own personal sins obscure the meaning and use of our sexuality and its connection to the very image of God's own love in us.

In his wonderful response to sin, God once again reveals the essence of self-giving love that brings new life. He sends his own Son, Jesus Christ, to restore and redeem the wounded and obscured image of God within us. The Good Shepherd "lays down his life for his sheep." Out of love, Jesus Christ gives himself completely on the Cross - Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity - and from this love comes new life - our redemption and re-creation in grace. But what is more, just as God imprinted an image of his own love into man and woman in the beginning - in the first creation of humanity - so too, at the moment of our re-creation, God once again turns to the union of man and woman in marriage to express his life and work. In his letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul reveals that Christ's complete gift of himself on the Cross finds its fullest reflection in the union of husband and wife in marriage: "'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church" (Ephesians 5: 31-32).

The love of a man and woman in marriage which opens to new life now becomes an image of Christ's love for his bride, the Church. As St. John Chrysostom explains: just as the first bride, Eve, was fashioned from the side of Adam as he slept a deep sleep, so too the Church, the bride of Jesus Christ - the new Adam - was fashioned from the blood and water that flowed from his side as he slept the deep sleep of his death on the Cross. Blood and water, which are the sacraments of the Eucharist and Baptism. ¹⁴ The Eucharist becomes a living continuation of this total love. Jesus Christ continues to give himself completely for us, uniting himself to us - Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity - every time we receive Holy Communion, and at the same time forming us gradually ever more into his image through the new life of grace. Moreover, marriage itself becomes a sacrament. Not only does Christ make it the very image of

¹³ St. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, On the Dignity and Vocation of Women (August 15, 1988), §7, See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1702.

¹⁴ St. John Chrysostom, Homily for Good Friday, from the Liturgy of the Hours, Office of Readings for Good Friday.

divine love imprinted in our very bodies, but through the love of marriage, as through each of the seven sacraments, he literally continues the work of redemption and re-creation! (cf. Ephesians 5: 31-32)

The human body - male and female - is literally taken up into the plan of redemption and salvation. Jesus Christ, the true image of God, becomes the meaning and model of human love. Through marriage, as St. Paul tells us, Christ reveals an image of the fullness of God's love for us - his own total self-giving on the Cross, by which we receive new life. The full use of our sexual capacities is a true and authentic reflection and continuation of God's love when it speaks truthfully the "language" of this image imprinted in the union of our body and soul, when it is an expression of the total love of a man and woman in marriage, and open, as Christ's love is, to the gift of new life. Thus, far from being an arbitrary conviction of the Catholic faith, this is why the inseparably free, total, faithful, and fruitful union of man and woman in marriage is the measure of all sexual expression. It has been made the fullest image of the very life of God and of the plan of our salvation!

It is the conviction of the Catholic faith, confirmed in the lived experience of countless Christians, that living our sexuality according to this plan and image of our Creator and Redeemer is the path that leads to abundant life and joy. The image of God within us, thus, calls us away from all uses and expressions of our sexuality that do not reflect the total and life-giving love of God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ for his Bride. Pornography, prostitution, masturbation, contraception, promiscuous or casual sexual encounters, adultery, and same-sex sexual expression: each obscures in some manner the image of life-giving love that God desires us to express and form through our sexual capacities, and thus each impedes the truest joy and life that our hearts desire.

But even the full expression of sexual love between husband and wife, even the great reality of marriage, is but itself a sign and image pointing to a more fundamental and essential love. Marriage, in fact, is meant to be a sign to every human being of the total life-giving love that God has for each person he has created.

Our Hearts are Restless Until They Rest in God: The Fullness of Love

Marriage is an image of the love of Jesus Christ for his Church. It is a sacrament - a sign and source of grace. But the fullness of life and love is not found ultimately in another human person - not even in marriage. Sexual expression is not the height of human life and love. The fullness of human love is found only in God himself. Here we recognize the truth of St. Augustine's words: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you." We are made for God - to love him with all our heart and mind and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5; Luke 10:27), and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, the one who loved us and gave himself for us (cf. Galatians 2:20). This is the call to love at the heart of every single human life - whether a person is single, married, or in a celibate religious vocation, and whether a person experiences same-sex attractions or not. Only this love ultimately brings the peace of heart that each of us desires.

All authentic expressions of love, whether they involve sexual expression or not, must be shaped by the image of God - love's truest meaning - a sacrificial gift of oneself, a gift that is inseparably life and love-giving. For this is the image of Christ's love. Here the Scriptures give us many examples of this love: the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), or our care for the sick, imprisoned, naked, and hungry - the least of Our Lord's brothers and sisters (Matthew 25:31-46). So too our love of God is measured by this image. Christ gives himself to us completely in the Eucharist, and by this union with him we become fruitful in our love, in our acts of charity, prayers, and friendships.

This is the authentic vision of human love and sexuality - known by reason and faith - in which the human person finds his true and full identity: only Jesus Christ, only his love, fully reveals us to ourselves and makes our true calling clear.¹⁵ Only by modelling our love after the image of Christ's love can we fully find ourselves.¹⁶

Chastity, Interior Freedom, and Peace of Heart

This vision of love and sexuality also helps us to understand the fundamental meaning of the virtue of chastity. In speaking of the virtues in general, we described their work of re-aligning or harmonizing with the good the powers of the person: the emotions, attractions, and drives, and the intellect and will. These are given by God to propel us toward the good, but can also be thrown into chaos and misalignment by the effects of both original sin and our own personal sins and vices.

From the meaning of virtue, we can see that chastity, like all of the moral virtues, is not, in its flourishing form, merely about controlling or containing desires, but about bringing them into harmony with the plan God has for our good. Chastity is the moral virtue that gradually heals and harmonizes all the elements of human sexuality so that they direct and drive a person toward true and full love and joy. As we described, the moral virtues clear out the fog and storms that prevent us from seeing clearly our position on the map of God's plan, and the way to navigate toward our destination.

If love is ultimately a gift of oneself, chastity wins for a person mastery over the many dimensions of the self precisely so that we are truly able to give the gift of ourselves. Without mastery over oneself, without a true self-possession, one cannot fully give of oneself. This is the work of the virtue of chastity. It brings the person interior freedom, peace, and integrity as all of the person's powers are gradually harmonized with the work of love according to the image of God.

Chastity cannot be gained without sacrifice and struggle. It will require the support and development of other virtues - courage, perseverance, honesty. Nor can one grow in chastity without continual recourse to the grace of him whose love is perfectly chaste - Jesus Christ. Christ will never allow the one seeking pure love to walk alone, and will always meet us in love when we fall along the way. In the end, God's love working in the virtue of chastity will form in us an interior beauty, the beauty of purity of heart, which allows us to see God (Matthew 5:8). Whatever the difficulty, however long the struggle, the fundamental conviction is that chastity is ultimately the path to interior freedom, joy, and peace of heart.

¹⁵ Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, On the Church in the Modern World (December 7, 1965), n. 22.

¹⁶ Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et spes* (December 7, 1965), n. 24.

Approaching Questions of Sexual Identity

OUR TRUEST IDENTITY: SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GOD BY GRACE

In the first part of this resource, we traced the vision that shapes the Catholic faith's understanding of the human person, love, and sexuality. It is only within this integral vision that the deepest identity of the human person can be discovered and questions of sexual identity most fully understood. Without this whole vision of the person and of human life, seen in light of our origin and destiny, and the integrity of our creation as a union of body and soul in the image of God who is an inseparable communion of life-giving love, it becomes difficult to understand the specific teachings of the Church on questions such as homosexuality and gender identity, let alone to see how those teachings might ultimately prove a path to joy and life.

From this vision of the whole person, we have seen that sexuality and sexual expression in God's plan is deeply connected to our creation as a unity of body and soul in the image of God. The human body itself - precisely in the complementarity of the male and female bodies - has been deeply imprinted by God with an image of Holy Trinity's own communion of life-giving love, as well as the love of Jesus Christ for his Bride the Church. Moreover, it is by living in truth the "language" of the image of God in our body that we cooperate in shaping this divine image of love within ourselves, which alone is the path to fulfillment and joy.

This integral vision of the human person stands in contrast to the view of the human body that underlies many approaches to sexuality in our time. Often, the human body is seen not as holding any meaning or purpose in itself, but rather, simply as one part of the "real" person whose interior experiences, thoughts, and desires offer the sole measure of how the body should or should not be used. As such, the human person is divided and reduced to one or more isolated aspects of their identity (e.g. sexual attractions or desires, gender expression, etc.), obscuring the vision of the whole person and the path to joy, often with serious consequences.

In this view of the human body, questions of gender and sexuality are often presented as pure social constructs, disconnected from any meaning in the human body, that can and should be manipulated by the individual based on his or her own experiences, attractions, and desires. In contrast, a full vision of the human person recognizes that sexual identity, gender expression, and gender roles do indeed have a social dimension to them to which a person and the surrounding culture contributes. However, it is precisely the work of human growth that sees the integration of these cultural and psychological factors with the total and integral vision of the human person's identity - a union of body and soul in the image of God, created male and female - recognizing that so often the social and cultural dimensions surrounding us are also marked by the obscuring and disintegrating effects of original sin.

Understanding gender as a mere social construct, thus, proves deeply incomplete and dissatisfying. It is imprecise and misleading, and does not express accurately how the various dimensions of the human person are integrated in the work of human growth. In a Catholic vision of the person, sexual and gender expression is deeply connected to the meaning of the human body - for we are inherently a union of body, mind, and spirit.

At the same time, and as we have traced in more detail, the Catholic faith reveals the dis-integrating, obscuring, and wounding effect that set into the human condition after the fall - this rejection of the image of God that led to a disrupted ability to see and live the meaning of the human body, a loss of harmony and integrity within the person - between one's body and one's desires, freedom, and experiences. It is precisely because of this wounded and disintegrated human condition - so amply reflected throughout human history - that the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, came to restore and heal the loss of unity, integration, and the obscuring effects in all of us brought about by original sin.

God is love. In this image we were made, and into this image we shape ourselves by our freely chosen actions. Obscured and dis-integrated by sin, Christ gradually restores and redeems the image of God's love in us and reveals to us the fullness of the Father's love for each of us. Jesus Christ thus fully reveals us to ourselves and makes our life's calling clear. By our free actions, and in cooperation and union with Christ through the sacraments, we share in shaping this image of love within us.

This is our truest identity. As close as they touch to the reality of human love, our sexual attractions and inclinations themselves do not define our deepest identity. Rather, we must understand our attractions and inclinations in light of the vision of who we are - our truest identity. We do not understand who we are in light of our attractions. To establish our identity based on our sexual attractions is to limit our horizon, to reduce the human person, and consequently, to obscure the fullness of love which alone fulfills the restless desire of the human heart. Our sexual identity can never be separated from the image of God deeply inscribed in the union of our body and soul.

The vision of the Good Shepherd for life, love, and sexuality touches deeply the core of the human person. It is not about protecting mere rules. Neither is it about giving simplistic answers to the realities and challenges of human life. It is about protecting our truest identity and source of joy - that we are loved uniquely and individually by God the Father and by his Son, Jesus Christ, "who loved us and gave himself for us" (Galatians 2:20). St. Paul himself, in the very passage in which he reveals Jesus Christ's love for his Bride - the Church - as the model of human love, calls this love a profound mystery. Throughout the letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul points to the need for wisdom, prayer, and conversion to fully enter the mysteries of the faith. This is our work. All of us, without exception and no matter what our individual experiences of sexual identity and attractions may be, have had our deepest identity as sons and daughters of our Creator and Father obscured by sin.

But the conviction of the Christian faith, and one that is confirmed in the lives of countless Christians who live it, is that there is nothing, absolutely nothing that can match the joy of love lived according to the plan and image of the one who first loved us (cf. 1 John 4:19). There is nothing at all that can match the truly abundant joy and life that comes when we resonate with the love for which we were made.

This is the whole truth of the human person that guides the Church's pastoral care, marked, as we will see, by unconditional love, welcome, and accompanying. Sexual and gender identity concerns remain complex and not fully understood. They are not experienced in exactly the same way by all who navigate such concerns. This can create a certain complexity even in the terminology that is used. It is critical to remember, however, that at the heart of these issues lie persons - loved by God, and desiring love - whose experience of navigating gender identity questions can often be isolating, accompanied by fear and anxiety. Into this potentially painful reality, the Church's pastoral care must enter, meeting these persons in the midst of the difficult terrain they face, accompanying them with an understanding heart, accurate knowledge, and a sound and whole vision of the person on the path to holiness and fullness of life and joy that Christ promises and makes possible to all.

In this final section we would like to speak to some of the practical questions of welcoming and accompanying the students entrusted to our care who are navigating questions of sexual identity - whether these be questions of same-sex attraction or gender identity. We will set these questions within the larger context of the Church's vision of pastoral care.

PASTORAL CARE AND SEXUAL IDENTITY: WELCOMING AND ACCOMPANYING WITH THE HEART OF CHRIST

The image of God as shepherd of his people recurs throughout the Sacred Scripture and forms for us the meaning and model of pastoral care. Ultimately, the work of pastoral care is the work of God the Son - Jesus Christ - the one Good Shepherd who is always working to gather his beloved flock back to the Father through himself.

From the image of God as shepherd in the Sacred Scripture, there are a number of important and ultimately inseparable dimensions of pastoral care that emerge. First, there is the deep care and unconditional love that God has for each and every member of his flock. He is the one who knows the sheep and calls each by name (John 10:3). He seeks out even the one lost sheep (Matthew 18:12-14; Luke 15:3-7). He has compassion on the people who come to him "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). In the final book of the Bible, the shepherd himself promises to "wipe every tear from [our] eyes" (Revelation 7:17).

Driven by this great love for each of us, Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, not only calls his own to himself, but goes out to all wherever they are, no matter the trouble they are in, no matter the reason, accompanying and protecting them, even carrying them in his arms when necessary. The beautiful 23rd psalm speaks of his rod and staff that comfort and protect, even in the valley of darkness. The prophet Isaiah describes God as the shepherd who gathers the young and weak in his arms (Isaiah 40:11). Jesus himself tells us that the Good Shepherd protects the flock from wolves and thieves, and from false shepherds whose voices do not ultimately lead to life-giving streams and green pastures (cf. John 10:7-15).

In this work of going out to those in need, protecting, and accompanying them, the Good Shepherd's pastoral care has a purpose, a destination. It is not aimless wandering. Jesus speaks of the true sheepfold (John 10:7-9). The 23rd psalm describes the living waters, green pastures, paths of righteousness, and ultimately, the dwelling place of God.

Finally, however much we may truly share in the pastoral work of the Good Shepherd, the true shepherd is ultimately Christ alone. He is the one sent by God the Father to invite back the Father's beloved children after the tragic entry of sin and death into human life. It is his compassionate voice that that we must hear and his merciful voice alone that can lead the sheep through sin and death. All who enter the sheepfold by him will be saved (John 10:9).

These dimensions of the Church's pastoral care form an inseparable whole. If any of the dimensions are missing, not only will our care of God's chosen ones be incomplete, but we may also, however unintended, become the voice that leads God's flock away from true and abundant life and joy. If we are not clear and committed to the full vision of human life - the flourishing of the human person and the meaning of human sexuality - we risk leading those in our care astray. As the Congregation for the

Doctrine of the Faith firmly and rightly notes: “Departure from the Church’s teaching, or silence about it, in an effort to provide pastoral care is neither caring nor pastoral.”¹⁷ Continuing, the Letter acknowledges the fundamental importance of this guiding vision: “Only what is true can ultimately be pastoral.” In essence, these are but the words of Christ himself, who said: “You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:32). At the same time, if our pastoral care does not reach each and every person with Christ’s unconditional love and acceptance, we risk obscuring the great love that our Father and Creator has for each of his precious children, bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20) - the blood of his Son Jesus Christ.

From the Sacred Scriptures, then, we can say that there are four principal and inseparable elements that together form an authentic Christian pastoral care after the model of the Good Shepherd. We will use these four dimensions to organize some practical guidance for approaching the pastoral care of students entrusted to us.

1. All authentic pastoral care begins with and is continually guided by the vision of the human person, love, and sexuality.

Authentic pastoral care must always be guided by the vision of the human person, love, and sexuality passed on by the Catholic faith. Without this, our journeying with, our accompanying, our acceptance and inclusion risks not only remaining superficial, but even leading students away from the path of abundant life and joy. As the life of any healthy family can attest, unconditional loving acceptance is not opposed to offering moral and spiritual guidance. Jesus himself models such care.

And so we make this appeal to all involved in the education and pastoral care of students navigating questions of sexual identity: know and strive to understand the vision of the human person and sexuality taught by the Church. Understand how it is that the Catholic faith always offers a welcome acceptance to persons - an unconditional “yes” - even as the vision and promise says “no” to certain actions and behaviours. This is the way of Jesus Christ. This is the way of all human growth and formation. Always remember that it is the conviction of the Catholic faith and the lived experiences of countless Christians both throughout history and living today that this vision, though demanding, is the path that leads to abundant life and joy, that alone responds to the deepest longings of the human heart.

Teaching the whole truth, however, does not mean indiscriminately presenting information with no concern for how the message is communicated, in what order and quantity, and at what time. This is not the way of human formation, pedagogy, or the model given by Christ himself. Christ’s encounter with the Woman at the Well in John 4 offers us something of a model. Beginning from a simple interaction and conversation, Jesus gradually speaks to her of God, and then of grace, only finally indicating the moral dimensions of her life, which she is then able to see in light of her encounter with Christ.

The skill and discernment of educators and those who provide pastoral care is to know how to gradually unfold the Church’s vision of life and love to individuals in their concrete circumstances. To meet them in whatever circumstances they find themselves and then lead them toward Christ’s vision of the fullness of life.

¹⁷ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* (October 1, 1986), n. 15.

Terminology: Finding an Appropriate Language for Speaking of Sexual Identity

As we have acknowledged, questions of sexual identity require serious reflection. They touch closely the meaning and expression of human love, which lies at the core of human life. This need for serious reflection is true even for questions of terminology. The Catholic faith sees all human beings as persons whose fundamental identity lies in God - our Creator.

Today, the Church provides a badly needed context for the care of the human person when she refuses to consider the person as a “heterosexual” or a “homosexual” and insists that every person has a fundamental identity: the creature of God, and by grace, his child and heir to eternal life.¹⁸

This passage could also be applied to gender terminology such as transgender and cisgender. In her pastoral care, the Church encounters people - individuals - not labels and categories. Individuals are more complex than labels can reflect. This is always true, and is even more acutely true in the period of adolescence. As the bishops of Canada recently expressed:

The terms “gay” and “lesbian” are not used to define people in the Church’s official teachings and documents. Although these words are common terms in current speech, and many people use them to describe themselves, they do not describe persons with the fullness and richness that the Church recognizes and respects in every man or woman. Instead, “gay” and “lesbian” are often cultural definitions for people and movements that have accepted homosexual acts and behaviours as morally good.¹⁹

Ultimately, we speak of persons experiencing a same-sex attraction, or persons who are navigating questions of gender or sexual identity. In the developmental stage of adolescence in particular, these experiences may be episodic or transient. They may also persist past adolescence. Speaking of “sexual orientation” or founding a person’s identity in labels such as transgender in the adolescent stage of development is therefore particularly problematic and should be avoided. Not only does it fail to reflect the possibility of episodic or transient same-sex feelings or gender confusion that can accompany this period of human development, but, more generally, it tends, in a manner similar to all labels and categories, to reduce the human person to one exclusive characteristic.

Understanding the Particular Characteristics of Sexual Identity in Adolescents

This resource is not intended to address the complex and debated question of the origins and development of same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria. For those involved in pastoral care, however, it is important to have access to reliable information about the general affective and psychological development and maturing of the human person through the adolescent stage, as well as the characteristics of same-sex attraction and gender dysphoria and their development in adolescence. One should be attentive that not all materials in this area will consider the human person from the holistic and unified perspective of the Catholic faith. Seeking out professionals in the field of psychology, sociology, and social work who are guided by a Christian vision of the person and sexuality can help one integrate this information into the broader vision of the faith.

¹⁸ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* (October 1, 1986), n. 16.

¹⁹ Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Episcopal Commission for Doctrine, *Pastoral Ministry to Young People with Same-Sex Attraction* (June 2011), n. 2.

Of fundamental importance to the pastoral care of adolescents, however, is the basic point that anxiety and confusion about sexual identity can be an expected and normal element in this period of development. The experience of a same-sex attraction or questions about one's gender identity at an adolescent stage is not, therefore, in and of itself, a confirmation of a persistent or permanent reality, and any suggestion or practice tending to confirm or reinforce these attractions as permanent and enduring would be premature and thus a disservice to the student's ongoing growth and development.

The most appropriate pastoral care at this stage of development is thus individual - one-on-one care - and not group settings. Emphasis should be placed on growth in the foundations of the spiritual and moral life, and on the normal affective growth and maturing that come to all through solid and chaste friendships, acts of charity, and community involvement. Those involved in the pastoral care of adolescents should be particularly attentive to the pervasive exposure of students to a cultural view of sexuality marked by a certain superficiality and an attractive permissiveness, ultimately lacking in the foundational connection between human sexuality and marriage.

2. The pastoral care of the Church must reach out to all with an unconditional love.

There are no exceptions to this. There is no one who falls outside the love and saving power of God. And there is nothing at all that a person can do that would make God love him or her more or less.

In our actions and attitudes, the starting point of all pastoral care is the inherent value of each and every individual human being and the response of unconditional love that this value demands. This, in fact, is the distinctly Christian vision: that every person, from the child in the womb to the dying person, no matter what, is uniquely created and loved by God. It is because of his love that God holds out for each of us, as the prophet Jeremiah says, "plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Pope Benedict XVI in his first letter to the whole Church spoke of the "look of love" that each of us craves, insisting that only by our own ever-deepening relationship with Jesus Christ - coming to see with his eyes - can we offer this look to others.

Going beyond exterior appearances, I perceive in others an interior desire for a sign of love, of concern... Seeing with the eyes of Christ, I can give to others much more than their outward necessities; I can give them the look of love which they crave... If I have no contact whatsoever with God in my life, then I cannot see in the other anything more than the other, and I am incapable of seeing in him the image of God.²⁰

This is the disposition for we must pray when we stand before every one of our brothers and sisters.

Understanding the Experience and Perspective of the Student

In approaching this work of pastoral care, it is important to understand as best one can the experience and perspective of the student who is navigating questions of sexual or gender identity. In the midst of often charged cultural and political debates one must never lose sight of the person, who can often be in a vulnerable and painful situation.

²⁰ Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* On Christian Love (December 25, 2005), n. 18.

Facing confusion about one's sexual identity can be an isolating experience, accompanied by feelings of fear and anxiety, even shame and guilt. Without support, this experience can be a very difficult event for a young person. They are sometimes victims of rejection and abuse, both within and outside of school. When issues of prejudice and bullying are not addressed or when little or no support is offered, schools can even be a hostile place. Without the support of family, friends, the local parish and school communities, young people can feel isolated and overcome by the challenges presented by same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria. They can feel isolated from intimate human relationships and constantly in fear of being discovered and rejected. While feelings of isolation and rejection may at times be experienced by all adolescents, for students facing questions of sexual identity, these feelings can be more prevalent and intense, placing them at risk.

The experience of confusion and fear, isolation and rejection in this area can lead a person to fundamental questions about their self-worth and ability to love. Is my entire capacity for life and love fundamentally broken? Am I incapable of love? Am I even worthy of love? Am I worthless? In an attempt to escape the pain of isolation, fear, and anxiety, some students may choose to leave their homes, schools, and community to live in volatile situations where violence, illness and exploitation are common realities. Even for those who do remain at home, they can experience depression and other mental health issues. For these reasons, these students are at a higher risk for suicidal thoughts and attempts.

It is into this potentially dark and painful experience that the Church's pastoral care must enter. Here, the words of Pope Francis ring true.

I see clearly that the thing the Church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the Church as a field hospital after battle.²¹

It can take a long time and much accompaniment to heal wounds and to lead people to the fuller perspective of life that our Creator offers to each of us in love. But this is the work of pastoral care. It is marked by an understanding heart, unconditional love, accurate knowledge, a sound vision, and a gentle guidance toward Jesus Christ himself, who alone can truly reveal to us the love that defines our life and identity, and our irreplaceable place in his plan.

Condemning All Forms of Hatred, Abuse, and Violence

It is deplorable that homosexual persons have been and are the object of violent malice in speech or in action. Such treatment deserves condemnation from the Church's pastors wherever it occurs. It reveals a kind of disregard for others which endangers the most fundamental principles of a healthy society. The intrinsic dignity of each person must always be respected in word, in action and in law.²²

With these strong words, which apply just as firmly to any question of sexual or gender identity, the Church's magisterium states a fundamental teaching of the Catholic faith: The only acceptable attitude toward another human being is love. There are no exceptions.

²¹ Pope Francis, "A Big Heart Open to God," *America Magazine*, September 30, 2013.

²² Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* (October 1, 1986), n. 10.

Catholic teaching on human life, love, and sexuality, is in no way an obstacle to building a safe, inclusive, and welcoming school for all students. On the contrary, the Catholic faith offers a substantial account of human dignity, respect, and acceptance, of moral action and character, in defence of the right of students to attend school without fear of harassment and violence.

Derogatory remarks or jokes, name-calling or harassment in the school are not to be tolerated. The school should enforce clear policies against any form of harassment and act immediately when it happens, with the necessary and appropriate disciplinary response. It must be clear, at the level of policy as well as overall school culture that no form of harassment, abuse, cruelty, or bullying against students navigating questions of sexual identity is acceptable within a Catholic school community. While this commitment to the dignity of the person is broad-based and includes all students who may be marginalized for any reason, harassment of students experiencing same-sex attractions or gender identity questions will not be tolerated in staff rooms, classrooms, in hallways, or anywhere on school property. The imperative for such a commitment is grounded not primarily in legislation, but in the Catholic vision of the human person.

Following the counsel of the Canadian bishops, it is important also to be conscious of the effects of even subtle forms of exclusion, rejection, or reproving silence.

Take the time to examine your own interior dispositions towards people with same-sex attraction. With the help of God's grace, work hard to remove whatever may prevent you from welcoming them warmly. Be aware that your language and attitudes can inadvertently communicate a message that has nothing to do with the Church's authentic teaching.²³

Christians must not only actively work to overcome hatred and violence with a firm stand of love, but they must also work to heal the wounds and harm caused by this violence, recognizing the tragic consequences that befall vulnerable students when harassment and violence are left unchecked.

3. Pastoral care must meet a person wherever they are along the path of their spiritual and moral life.

In the midst of whatever pain, confusion, sin, or weakness a person is experiencing, charity calls us to pastorally go out and address their needs. Then, with its sight firmly set on the vision of the flourishing human person set before us by our Creator - a vision of holiness and perfection in charity - our pastoral care accompanies the person along the path of spiritual and moral growth, healing, and transforming union with Christ. Along the way, authentic pastoral care protects from dangers and false paths, providing at the same time the means of encouragement and strength for the journey - the living water and support of the sacraments, prayer and the reading of Scripture, spiritual direction and spiritual reading, friendship, and growth in the moral and theological virtues.

Friendship

As John Paul II wrote: "Man cannot live without love." All human beings need relationships marked by intimacy. Unfortunately, intimacy is too often equated with romantic or sexual activity. But as healthy family relationships and friendships attest, intimacy is much broader than sexual contact.

²³ Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Episcopal Commission for Doctrine, *Pastoral Ministry to Young People with Same-Sex Attraction* (June 2011), n. 13.

In our pastoral care, helping students experiencing same-sex attractions to grow in mature, chaste, and strong friendships with both sexes is of tremendous importance. The alternative is potential isolation, with all the negative fruits that this will bring. It is precisely such isolation that can lead students to seek out others, both within and outside of the school, who will simply affirm their sexual and gender experiences as their core identity, offering them an immediate feeling of emotional relief and acceptance. All human beings need the growth and intimacy that come through deep friendships. In fact, the formation of friendships, together with the opportunity for maturation and development they offer, is characteristic of adolescence - this period of life before marriage is an imminent prospect for any person. Friendship, of course, is not something that can be implemented by policy. However, schools and parishes can create opportunities for bringing students together that enable friendships to form. It is a work that requires time and wisdom, but lies at the heart of healing wounds.

Students in our Catholic schools are still growing up, and marriage is not an imminent prospect. They are called to develop true friendships, marked by genuine love and affection, with members of both sexes. This involves learning to communicate about important things, developing their own gifts and learning to cherish the gifts of others, and engaging in a wide variety of wholesome activities together. This time should also be devoted to discerning the future unfolding of personal vocation.²⁴

Growth is Gradual

As is true in all human life, it is important to remember that rarely, if ever, does a person go from hurt to healing, or from a life marked by vices and sins to one of virtue and grace in one step. The moral and spiritual life is a work that involves time and gradual growth. This can make pastoral care quite challenging, as there can often be more failures than successes, more stalling than movement.

The Church speaks of the pastoral law of gradualness, which does not at all mean that God's law applies only gradually or piecemeal to different people at different times. Rather, the law of gradualness requires a decisive "break with sin together with a progressive path towards total union with the will of God and with his loving demands," leaning always and at every moment on the pillars of the spiritual life that we will outline below.²⁵ This applies especially to the work of growing in the virtue of chastity. There are no quick solutions to serious human challenges.

Assessing Moral Responsibility Along the Path of Growth

As we have noted, the path of gradual growth always and of necessity requires first a decisive break with sin. For sin, by its very nature, is an act that turns us away from the path to God. In the pastoral care of students experiencing same-sex attractions, we must be clear that acting on such attractions, engaging in sexual activity, pornography, and masturbation are never acceptable actions.

²⁴ Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Letter to All Involved in Catholic Education* (March 31, 2003), p. 3.

²⁵ "The pastoral 'law of gradualness,' not to be confused with the 'gradualness of the law' which would tend to diminish the demands it places on us, consists of requiring a decisive break with sin together with a progressive path towards total union with the will of God and with his loving demands." Pontifical Council for the Family, *Vademecum For Confessors Concerning Some Aspects Of The Morality Of Conjugal Life* (February 12, 1997), n. 9. The *Vademecum* here cites the following passage from *Familiaris consortio*: "'the law of gradualness' or step-by-step advance cannot be identified with 'gradualness of the law', as if there were different degrees or forms of precept in God's law for different individuals and situations." Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981), n. 34. See also Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor* (August 6, 1993), nn. 103-105.

At the same time, an individual's moral responsibility for a given sin is always connected to its being chosen in freedom. The complexity of the affective and psychological dimensions of the human person can lead to varying degrees of freedom behind the choices we make, and thus varying levels of moral responsibility, or culpability, for the actions we do. As the Church's magisterium writes:

Here, the Church's wise moral tradition is necessary since it warns against generalizations in judging individual cases. In fact, circumstances may exist, or may have existed in the past, which would reduce or remove the culpability of the individual in a given instance; or other circumstances may increase it. What is at all costs to be avoided is the unfounded and demeaning assumption that the sexual behaviour of homosexual persons is always and totally compulsive and therefore inculpable.²⁶

This is ultimately why our Lord tells us not to judge others. Jesus Christ always judged concrete behaviours and actions as good and evil. He continually warns people against sin, and he continues this work through his Church. At the same time, knowing that only he - God - could fully know and judge the interior freedom with which a person acts, and thus their individual moral responsibility for the action, he reminds us that we are not to judge the hearts of any person, no matter their action. This is a great mercy for us all.

On the Assistance of Counselling

The human person is an essential unity of body and soul. Care we give to the body redounds to the soul, and spiritual care always redounds also to the body. To care for a human person, in other words, is always to care for someone who is a union of body and soul. And so, there are times when the pastoral caregiver must be alert to the need for specialized forms of care that can better address the different and complex dimensions of the person. Counselling is one such form of care. As the Canadian bishops write in a passage that can be applied equally to students facing gender dysphoria:

Counselling can be a valuable tool for struggling youth, who may experience a crisis as they grow increasingly aware of homosexual feelings. Young people, particularly adolescents and young men, may be tempted to commit suicide once they can no longer deny or ignore their deep-seated same-sex inclinations. Everyone must be alert to offer hope and assistance to these young people lest despair obscure their judgment. Ensure that professional counsellors or psychologists who see young people are distinguished by their sound human and spiritual maturity. They must be committed to the Christian vision of the human person and sexuality, as well as the Church's teaching on homosexuality and chastity. Their interventions can help your child discern the meaning of a same-sex attraction in a way that leads to greater clarity about sexual identity and the inherent dignity of all children of God.²⁷

²⁶ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* (October 1, 1986), n. 11.

²⁷ Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Episcopal Commission for Doctrine, *Pastoral Ministry to Young People with Same-Sex Attraction* (June 2011), n. 15.

4. For pastoral care to be effective, Jesus Christ, the true shepherd, must be known and his voice heard.

It is the voice of the Good Shepherd alone that has the words of life (John 6:68). The importance of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ cannot be overstated. This is the essential meaning of the new evangelization and a point that Pope Francis has emphasized on numerous occasions, including in reference to the challenging teachings of Christ. Without a relationship with Christ, it can be difficult to recognize Christ's vision for the joy and flourishing of the human person - the aim of his moral and spiritual teachings and of his Church's pastoral care. Pope Francis' words echo those spoken by St. John Paul II: "Religion itself, without the experience of wondrous discovery of the son of God and communion with him who became our brother, becomes a mere set of principles which are increasingly difficult to understand and rules which are increasingly hard to accept."²⁸

To the extent that our pastoral care does not ultimately aim at a relationship with Jesus Christ - to know him and hear his voice - our work is at best incomplete, and at worst misguided. As Catholic educators and as the Church's pastors, this would be our greatest failure - that Jesus Christ was never known by the students entrusted to our care. This also means that we who take up the work of pastoral care must seek ourselves to know Christ more fully and deeply. If Christ is to be our model of pastoral care, if we are to model our love after his, then we must know him intimately.

The meaning of human sexuality that the Church holds in trust is not a set of arbitrary rules based on antiquated notions of the human person. It is a promise from our Creator that will be heard most clearly and convincingly when it is the very voice of the Good Shepherd that speaks it directly to the heart.

If we are to heal wounds, if we are to accompany students, we must know the medicine that truly heals and the food that truly strengthens. We must teach them the spiritual life. Living the elements of the spiritual life requires guidance and direction. The foundations of this life should be proposed to students with the same wisdom and discernment that guides all of our efforts at forming the young. They are offered gradually, proportioned to each student, and always in the context of a relationship of trust.

- **Daily Prayer** - from the simplest of memorized or vocal prayers to the depths of meditation on Jesus Christ in the Scriptures and in the Blessed Sacrament, a set time of daily prayer - even fifteen minutes a day - will gradually reveal wonderful fruit in a person's life.
- **The Mass** - The Mass is the source and summit of the entire Christian life. The Eucharist is fully and truly the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ. By this Communion with the Good Shepherd himself, we are formed in his image and come to know ever more clearly the abundant life and joy he gives.
- **Reading the Sacred Scripture** - The Bible is our personal history. It is the fullest story of our life and its meaning. But most importantly, it is the living Word of God. Reading and meditating on the Scriptures is a sure means of coming to know Jesus Christ. As St. Jerome rightly wrote: "Ignorance of Scripture, is ignorance of Christ."
- **Spiritual Reading** - Carefully chosen classic and contemporary works that open up the spiritual life can offer great strength and wise insight into the struggles and challenges of faithfully living the Gospel.

²⁸ Pope John Paul II, Address to the Young People of Eurasia University in Kazakhstan (September 23, 2001), n. 4.

- **The Sacrament of Reconciliation** - Here is the great “field hospital” of the Church. Here is where Jesus Christ himself, through his shepherds, heals wounds and warm hearts. A regular confessor with whom to celebrate the sacrament of Penance, or Reconciliation, is an absolutely indispensable pillar of the spiritual life.
- **Devotion to Our Blessed Mother Mary and the Saints** - The rosary can be a most wonderful and powerful means of gaining peace of heart and the comfort of our one Mother. The lives of the saints reflect most clearly what it means to shape our lives after the image of Jesus Christ. Moreover, their prayers for us sustain us in our own work of becoming the image of God.
- **Concrete Works of Charity and Sacrifice** - This can be in the school, parish, or even within the student’s own family. Such concrete acts of self-giving and sacrifice build the virtues in us little by little. They can also offer an authentic sense of contribution to something outside of and bigger than oneself - an essential element of gaining a true perspective on our lives.

Finally, in all things and at all times, no matter how often we fail or how hard the struggle becomes, we must never grow discouraged! This is the wisdom of the saints and of Christians throughout history. We keep our eyes set on our goal, and we pray that gradually, as we grow in union with Christ, we may know the fruits of having his Spirit in us - the fruits described by St. Paul in the letter to the Galatians: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22).

Conclusion

In this document we have attempted both to offer concrete pastoral guidance for the care of students navigating questions of same-sex attraction and gender identity, while at the same time, setting this guidance within the broader context of the Catholic understanding of human life, love, and sexuality. It is our hope that this resource might help you in your work of education, formation, and pastoral care of the students entrusted to you.

In the end, a document such as this cannot by itself completely fulfill the challenge of implementing authentic pastoral care. Thus an integral element of this resource document will always be the ongoing close cooperation between the pastors of the Church, educators, and parents. Neither can such a document adequately acknowledge and thank the countless Catholic educators in Ontario who, responding to a true vocation as a teacher, have given so much of their lives to their students out of love, in the hope that they too will come to know the surpassing joy of knowing Jesus Christ, and of seeing the fullest horizon and possibilities of their life.

One could say that Christianity is about many things – being good, helping others, loving God. These are all absolutely true. But at the heart of the Catholic Christian faith lies a promise. It is a promise given by our Father and Creator of abundant life and indescribable and glorious joy. This promise is for every single person that God has made. No matter what. No matter what challenges or failings, strengths or weaknesses one has. No matter what one has done or left undone. As St. Paul so forcefully reminds us: nothing “in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

This is the guiding star of the entire moral and spiritual vision that Christ has left to his Church, and it is the guiding star of the Church's pastoral care. The Christian vision of sexuality *is* challenging. At the same time, it is the path to life-giving joy and peace of heart. This is the conviction of the Catholic faith - witnessed to by Christians throughout history and alive today. The Christian message of sexuality is about life-giving joy. This is why the Church proposes it and defends it. This is why it is worth living for and sacrificing for. Most importantly, it is a promise that, with Christ's assistance, is possible to live. Speaking to those who would present the Church's vision as merely an ideal, one that practically might even be impossible to live, John Paul II echoes the words of St. Paul: Do not empty the cross of its power! (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:17)

Only in the mystery of Christ's Redemption do we discover the "concrete" possibilities of man. "It would be a very serious error to conclude... that the Church's teaching is essentially only an "ideal" which must then be adapted, proportioned, graduated to the so-called concrete possibilities of man, according to a "balancing of the goods in question." But what are the "concrete possibilities of man?" And of which man are we speaking? Of man dominated by lust or of man redeemed by Christ? This is what is at stake: the reality of Christ's redemption. Christ has redeemed us! This means that he has given us the possibility of realizing the entire truth of our being.²⁹

This is not a promise of an easy path through life. But rather, a promise that Christ is with us at every step (Matthew 28:20), helping us to carry our burdens and even making them his own.

Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light (Matthew 11:28).

²⁹ Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor* (August 6, 1993), n. 103.

Resources

CHURCH DOCUMENTS

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition, 1999.

The *Catechism* is the sure and definitive reference point for articulating what the Catholic Church teaches and believes. In its structure and content it is intended to be comprehensive and complete while remaining concise. The second edition, published in 1999, was revised in accordance with the definitive Latin edition, and is thus the standard edition in use today.

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2005.

The *Compendium* is essentially a shorter summary of the contents of the full *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Faithfully reflecting the full *Catechism* in structure and content, it is intended to synthesize - using a very accessible question-and-answer format - the beliefs and life of the Catholic Church.

Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church (YOUCAT), Ignatius Press, 2010

The [YOUCAT Catechism](#) is similar in many respects to the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*. With reference numbers back to the original *Catechism*, it presents the beliefs and life of the Catholic Church in language geared to young people. As such, it can be an excellent teaching resource.

Pontifical Council for the Family. *Love is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive. A Preparatory Catechesis for the World Meeting of Families 2015*. Our Sunday Visitor, 2014.

[Freely available online from the World Meeting of Families website](#), this short book serves as an excellent introduction to the Catholic vision of sexuality and love. Very highly recommended.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (May 31, 2004).

This excellent document presents a succinct and accessible summary of the meaning of the human person's creation as man and woman. In doing so, it provides a short synthesis of the catechesis of John Paul II on the meaning of the human body, love, and sexuality in the divine plan.

Pope John Paul II. Encyclical Letter *Veritatis splendor*, Regarding Certain Fundamental Questions of the Church's Moral Teaching (August 6, 1993).

Veritatis splendor is an important magisterial document on fundamental concepts of morality, including: the meaning of the moral life and its relation to Jesus Christ, the meaning of freedom, law, sin, conscience, and grace.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* (October 1, 1986).

An excellent and concise summary of the Catholic vision behind the Church's teaching on homosexuality, as well as the key dimensions of the pastoral care of persons with same-sex attraction.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Episcopal Commission for Doctrine. *Pastoral Ministry to Young People with Same-Sex Attraction* (June 2011).

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Episcopal Commission for Doctrine. *Pastoral Letter to Young People on Chastity* (January 2011).

Pontifical Council for the Family. *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education within the Family* (December 8, 1995).

A comprehensive treatment of the education and formation of the young in human sexuality, including: the meaning of human love and sexuality, chastity and growth in chastity, the work of parents in educating their children in human sexuality and chastity, with concrete principles on communicating these messages at the various stages of childhood development.

RESOURCES ON HUMAN SEXUALITY

Christopher West. *Theology of the Body for Beginners*. Revised Edition. Ascension Press, 2009.

An excellent introduction to the main themes of St. John Paul II's teachings on human life and sexuality in the Theology of the Body.

Butler, Brian, Jason Evert, Colin MacIver, and Aimee MacIver. *Theology of the Body for Teens: Discovering God's Plan for Love and Life*. Ascension Press, 2011.

Excellent resource for connecting John Paul II's teachings to high school students.

Yarhouse, Mark. *Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture*. InterVarsity Press, 2015.

An important Christian writer in the area of gender identity is the clinical psychologist Dr. Mark Yarhouse. Yarhouse writes with professional competence, humility, and pastoral insight. This work offers a helpful overview of both terminology and the complexity of factors that contribute to gender dysphoria. InterVarsity Press offers [the first chapter of this book as a free sample here](#). Yarhouse has also written extensively on same-sex attraction.

Living the Truth in Love: Pastoral Approaches to Same-Sex Attraction. Edited by Janet Smith and Paul Check. Ignatius Press, 2015.

An excellent resource for teachers featuring a selection of the most important Catholic voices on the topic of homosexuality, including a number of Catholic men and women who themselves live with same-sex attraction.

Courage Apostolate - <http://couragec.org>

The Courage apostolate website offers an extensive selection of resources related to the topic of the Church's pastoral care of persons with same-sex attraction. Three resources to note in particular are:

1. [Desire of the Everlasting Hills](#) - An outstanding documentary video from the Courage apostolate featuring the stories of three men and women navigating their faith and same-sex attraction.
2. [Invited to Courageous Love: The Catholic Church and Homosexuality](#) - A new 5-part catechetical series covering the full range of Catholic teaching, from the meaning of human sexuality to pastoral care.
3. [Authentic Truth and Compassion](#) - A helpful introduction to the Catholic vision of pastoral care and same-sex attraction.

Chastity Project - <http://chastityproject.com>

Offers a wealth of practical resources for the work of education and formation in chastity and human sexuality.

Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF) - www.colf.ca

Co-founded by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Knights of Columbus, COLF offers a wealth of material on topics of family life and sexuality.

Appendix: Some Foundational Terms and Concepts in the Church's Moral Teaching

In this section we offer a brief selection of passages from the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* as a reference for some of the fundamental moral concepts that we have presented over the course of this document. As we noted in the Resources section, the *Compendium* is essentially a shorter summary of the contents of the full *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Faithfully reflecting the full *Catechism* in structure and content, it is intended to synthesize - using a question-and-answer format - the beliefs and life of the Catholic Church. In addition to these passages from the *Compendium*, references are provided to the even fuller descriptions offered in the full *Catechism* as well as other important teaching documents of the Church's magisterium.

The Dignity of the Human Person and the Meaning of the Moral Life

We begin by recalling the concise yet comprehensive summary of the meaning of the Christian moral life that is found in the full *Catechism of the Catholic Church* n. 1700.

The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God; it is fulfilled in his vocation to divine beatitude. It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself to this fulfilment. By his deliberate actions, the human person does, or does not, conform to the good promised by God and attested by moral conscience. Human beings make their own contribution to their interior growth; they make their whole sentient and spiritual lives into means of this growth. With the help of grace they grow in virtue, avoid sin, and if they sin they entrust themselves as did the prodigal son to the mercy of our Father in heaven. In this way they attain to the perfection of charity.

See also: *Gaudium et spes* nn. 12-22

The Natural Law (also called the Natural Moral Law)

Catechism of the Catholic Church nn. 1949-1960

Veritatis splendor nn. 35-53

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church nn. 415-416

415. What is the moral law?

The moral law is a work of divine Wisdom. It prescribes the ways and the rules of conduct that lead to the promised beatitude and it forbids the ways that turn away from God.

416. In what does the natural moral law consist?

The natural law which is inscribed by the Creator on the heart of every person consists in a participation in the wisdom and the goodness of God. It expresses that original moral sense which enables one to discern by reason the good and the bad. It is universal and immutable and determines the basis of the duties and fundamental rights of the person as well as those of the human community and civil law.

The New Law (or Law of the Gospel)

Catechism of the Catholic Church nn. 1965-1974

Veritatis splendor nn. 22-24

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church nn. 420-421

420. What is the New Law or the Law of the Gospel?

The New Law or the Law of the Gospel, proclaimed and fulfilled by Christ, is the fullness and completion of the divine law, natural and revealed. It is summed up in the commandment to love God and neighbor and to love one another as Christ loved us. It is also an interior reality: the grace of the Holy Spirit which makes possible such love. It is “the law of freedom” (Galatians 1:25) because it inclines us to act spontaneously by the prompting of charity. “The New Law is mainly the same grace of the Holy Spirit which is given to believers in Christ.” (Saint Thomas Aquinas)

421. Where does one find the New Law?

The New Law is found in the entire life and preaching of Christ and in the moral catechesis of the apostles. The Sermon on the Mount is its principal expression.

Grace

Catechism of the Catholic Church nn. 1996-2005

Veritatis splendor nn. 22-24; 102-105

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church nn. 423-425

423. What is the grace that justifies?

That grace is the gratuitous gift that God gives us to make us participants in his trinitarian life and able to act by his love. It is called habitual, sanctifying or deifying grace because it sanctifies and divinizes us. It is supernatural because it depends entirely on God’s gratuitous initiative and surpasses the abilities of the intellect and the powers of human beings. It therefore escapes our experience.

424. What other kinds of grace are there?

Besides habitual grace, there are actual graces (gifts for specific circumstances), sacramental graces (gifts proper to each sacrament), special graces or charisms (gifts that are intended for the common good of the Church) among which are the graces of state that accompany the exercise of ecclesial ministries and the responsibilities of life.

425. What is the relationship between grace and human freedom?

Grace precedes, prepares and elicits our free response. It responds to the deep yearnings of human freedom, calls for its cooperation and leads freedom toward its perfection.

Conscience

Catechism of the Catholic Church nn. 1776-1802

Veritatis splendor nn. 54-64, 73-74

Gaudium et spes nn. 16-17; *Dignitas humanae* nn. 3, 14

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church nn. 372-376

372. What is the moral conscience?

Moral conscience, present in the heart of the person, is a judgment of reason which at the appropriate moment enjoins him to do good and to avoid evil. Thanks to moral conscience, the human person perceives the moral quality of an act to be done or which has already been done, permitting him to assume responsibility for the act. When attentive to moral conscience, the prudent person can hear the voice of God who speaks to him or her.

374. How is a moral conscience formed to be upright and truthful?

An upright and true moral conscience is formed by education and by assimilating the Word of God and the teaching of the Church. It is supported by the gifts of the Holy Spirit and helped by the advice of wise people. Prayer and an examination of conscience can also greatly assist one's moral formation.

Virtue

Catechism of the Catholic Church nn. 1762-1770, 1803-1832

Veritatis splendor n. 64

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church nn. 377-390

377. What is a virtue?

A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good. "The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God" (Saint Gregory of Nyssa). There are human virtues and theological virtues.

378-379. What are the human virtues?

The human virtues are habitual and stable perfections of the intellect and will that govern our actions, order our passions and guide our conduct according to reason and faith. They are acquired and strengthened by the repetition of morally good acts and they are purified and elevated by divine grace. The principal human virtues are called the cardinal virtues, under which all the other virtues are grouped and which are the hinges of a virtuous life. The cardinal virtues are: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

384-385. What are the theological virtues?

The theological virtues have God himself as their origin, motive and direct object. Infused with sanctifying grace, they bestow on one the capacity to live in a relationship with the Trinity. They are the foundation and the energizing force of the Christian's moral activity and they give life to the human virtues. They are the pledge of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the faculties of the human being. The theological virtues are faith, hope, and charity.

389. What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are permanent dispositions which make us docile in following divine inspirations. They are seven: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.

390. What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

The fruits of the Holy Spirit are perfections formed in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists twelve of them: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity (Galatians 5:22-23, Vulgate).