

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a baptized Catholic seeking an exemption from a requirement to provide or refer for gender-affirming counseling and cross-sex hormones or surgeries. This letter explains how the Catholic Church's teachings may lead individual Catholics, including me, [name], to decline to provide these interventions.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that a person may not undergo medical interventions that disregard the meaning and moral value of the human body. As an extension of this, a person may not directly assist another person in doing the same, which includes referral to receive such procedures from another provider. The following authoritative Church teachings demonstrate the principled religious basis on which a Catholic may refuse to cooperate with the administration of, or referral for, gender-affirming counseling and cross-sex hormones or surgeries:

- All persons are called by God to communion with him and with each other (1 John 4:8, 4:16).
- Sexual differentiation is not merely a biological characteristic but a fundamental component of personal identity that enables human beings to express their relationality by cooperating in the creative power of God and reciprocal self-gift with each other through the generation of new life (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and the World*, n. 8; John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, n. 43).
- Actions that separate biological sex and psychological personality “attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality ... [and] fall into the sin of trying to replace the Creator” (Francis, *Amoris laetitia*, n. 56).
- According to “classical moral doctrine,” Catholics in good conscience cannot directly and intentionally participate in or other facilitate the sinful actions of others (Pontifical Academy for Life, *Moral Reflections on Vaccines Prepared from Cells Derived from Aborted Human Foetuses*).

An individual Catholic may invoke these Church teachings to refuse to provide or refer for gender-affirming counseling and cross-sex hormones or surgeries, as carrying out such actions would force one to disobey the judgment of his or her own informed and certain conscience. In fact, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* instructs that following one's conscience is following Christ himself:

In all he says and does, man is obliged to follow faithfully what he knows to be just and right. It is by the judgment of his conscience that man perceives and recognizes the prescriptions of the divine law: “Conscience is a law of the mind; yet [Christians] would not grant that it is nothing more; . . . [Conscience] is a messenger of him, who, both in nature and in grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by his representatives. Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ.” (n. 1778)

Therefore, if a Catholic comes to an informed and sure judgment in conscience that he or she should not participate in the provision or referral of gender-affirming counseling and cross-sex hormones or surgeries in any way, then the Catholic Church requires that the person follow this certain judgment of conscience and refuse. The *Catechism* is clear: “Man has the right to act in conscience and in freedom so as personally to make moral decisions. ‘He must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience. Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters’” (n. 1782).

Sincerely in Christ,

[Name]