



THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC BIOETHICS CENTER

US Bishops Draw Unambiguous Line on Gender Transitioning in Catholic Health Care

BROOMALL, Pa., March 20, 2023—The ethicists of The National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) join the US bishops in unequivocally reiterating that Catholic anthropology and moral teaching are incompatible with medicalized mutilations that hide behind the misnomer of “gender-affirming care.” This guidance is contained in the [Doctrinal Note on the Moral Limits to Technological Manipulation of the Human Body](#), released by US Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Doctrine on March 20, 2023.

The body-soul union and human sexual differentiation are principles of human anthropology, whose validity has been demonstrated time and again by medical science. By promoting incorrect gender identities, so-called transitioning interventions tear away from reality and reject the dignity of the body. They put patients on the road to heartache, leading to only apparent happiness with deeper suffering and, for many, a lifetime of destructive chemicals and surgeries.

Against this tidal wave of transgender activism, authentic care for people with gender dysphoria must be rooted in a proper understanding of the order within creation and an accurate application of Catholic ethical principles. When it comes to the truth of one’s identity, the bishops rightly emphasize the foundational grammar of being human and being sexed. Moreover, the principles of totality and integrity cannot be manipulated to make gender ideology consistent with this natural order. First, the altered organs are not pathological. Second, the modifications are not tolerated as a means of protecting the health of the whole body but are the desired result. Applauding the reasoning in the *Doctrinal Note*, NCBC President Joseph Meaney said, “It is very important for the Church to speak clearly on the transgender issue, where there is so much cultural confusion. [Pope Francis has done this many times](#) and most recently said, ‘Gender ideology, today, is one of the most dangerous ideological colonizations.’”

Catholic health care must develop new models of promoting the authentic good of persons and provide a space in which clinicians can find ways to help patients without mutilating their bodies or undermining their well-being. In particular, children and adolescents need help to appreciate the good of their own bodies and protection from misguided advocates who are pushing radical medical interventions. In addition, by clearly stating Catholic teaching, the *Doctrinal Note* bolsters the religious liberty protections of those who are being coerced to violate their beliefs and prudential medical judgment.

The National Catholic Bioethics Center provides education, guidance, and resources to the Church and society to uphold the dignity of the human person in health care and biomedical research, thereby sharing in the ministry of Jesus Christ and his Church. The NCBC envisions a world in which the integral understanding of the human person underlying Catholic teaching on respect for human life and dignity is better understood and more widely embraced in America and worldwide. More information can be found at ncbcenter.org.

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