

Diocese of Knoxville



Policy on the Human Body
As a Constitutive Aspect of the Human Person

Promulgated By:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard F. Stika".

Most Reverend Richard F. Stika
Bishop of Knoxville

Date: Jul 25, 2021

Attested By:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sean K. Smith".

Deacon Sean K. Smith
Chancellor

Date: 1-25-2021



Policy on the Human Body As a Constitutive Aspect of the Human Person

The Church teaches that our differences as male and female are part of God’s good design in creation, that our bodies—including our sexuality—are gifts from God, and that we should accept and care for our bodies as they were created. In fact, “being man’ or ‘being woman’ is a reality which is good and willed by God” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 369). A person cannot change his or her sex. A person should accept and seek to live in conformity with his or her sexual identity (sometimes called “gender identity”) as given by God. The human person is a body-soul union, and the body—created male or female—is a constitutive aspect of the human person. Therefore, the Catholic Church teaches that the removal or destruction of healthy sexual and reproductive organs is a type of mutilation and thus, intrinsically evil. Procedures, surgeries, and therapies designed to assist a person in “transitioning” his or her sex are morally prohibited. “Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his or her God-given biological sex and the sexual identity that corresponds with that gift. 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.” See (Catechism of the Catholic Church (“CCC”), 2333. “Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way.” See CCC, 2335. Having a proper understanding of the human body—and more generally, of the moral law—enhances, rather than restricts, man’s freedom. As St. John Paul II stated in his encyclical Veritatis Splendor. “[T]here can be no freedom apart from or in opposition to the truth.” (Veritatis Splendor, 96).

- 1. It is the policy of the Diocese of Knoxville that all Catholic parishes, schools, institutions, departments, entities, charities agencies, juridic persons, or other affiliated entities, and any subdivision thereof, shall respect the biological sex of the human person as given by God and shall apply all policies and procedures in relation to that person according to that person’s God-given biological sex.**
- 2. All clergy, employees, and volunteers shall conduct themselves in accord with their God-given biological sex.¹**
- 3. Diocesan schools partner with families to educate and form students consistent with the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church, and so families are expected to live in accord with Gospel values, particularly regarding actions and behaviors that are public. Students and parents (or legal guardians) shall conduct themselves in accord with their God-given biological sex.**

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

¹ This policy make explicit what is already implicit in *The Mission, Vision and Operating Principles of the Diocese of Knoxville* in the Lay Employee Handbook dated July 23, 2020.