

# CATHOLIC SCHOOL ATHLETICS AND SEXUALITY



Bill Donohue comments on two issues bedeviling Catholic schools:

The divide between Catholic sexual ethics and secular sexual ethics is being played out in Pennsylvania and Minnesota in a dramatic way.

The *New York Times* reports today that the Diocese of Harrisburg has adopted a policy barring boys on high school wrestling teams from competing with girls from other schools; girls in Catholic schools are also barred from football and rugby teams. The policy is not new: the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference Education Department has explicit rules on this subject. Indeed, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia previously dealt with this issue.

The issue in Minnesota involves transgender students. Because the Minnesota State High School League is considering a policy today that was written in part by LGBT activists—boys and girls may even be allowed to shower together—the Minnesota Catholic Conference has gotten out in front of this matter by opposing any policy that commits Catholic schools to support changes in gender identity.

In both instances, “enlightened” critics have assailed the Catholic policies as being “antiquated,” “pathetic,” and “discriminatory.”

The rationale behind the Pennsylvania policy is clear-headed:

there are nature-based differences between the sexes that need to be observed. Ergo, sports that involve “substantial and potentially immodest physical contact” ought to be treated differently. All but the enlightened ones have the cognitive ability to distinguish between wrestling and ping-pong.

The rationale behind the Minnesota policy is also clear-headed: the enlightened ones need to learn that the term gender refers to social roles for the sexes that take their cues from nature. Moreover, gender identity disorder is a mental illness requiring treatment for the afflicted, not the affirmation of social institutions.