

# CLEVELAND DIOCESE ISSUES MODEL LGBT POLICY

The Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, under the leadership of Bishop Edward C. Malesic, has issued a policy for Catholic parishes and schools on sexuality and gender identity that is a model for all Catholic entities, nationwide. Predictably, LGBT activists and their supporters in the media and politics are unhappy, and some are seriously misrepresenting the policy.

In explaining his position, Bishop Malesic restated Church teachings on this matter. “The human person,” he said, “created in the image and likeness of God, deserves the utmost respect, for each person’s dignity is inherent and inviolable.” This set the tone for his policy.

Contrary to what some are saying, the policy does not forbid students who suffer from gender dysphoria—or confusion about their biological sex—from attending Catholic schools. None will be denied. But what will not be tolerated are public denunciations of Church teachings on sexuality. This would include strictures on homosexuality and gender identity. In other words, everyone is welcome to attend Catholic schools, but no one is allowed to publicly resist what the Church teaches.

Policy specifics include notifying parents if their child is experiencing gender dysphoria. Correct pronouns—those which reflect the biological sex of the student—must be used to describe students. Boys’ bathrooms are for boys, not girls, and vice versa. Sports competition allows only biological girls to compete against girls, not boys who think they are girls.

School functions, such as dances, must respect the biological

differences between the sexes. Personal appearances and attire should also reflect these differences. No one may undergo sex-reassignment surgery. And all school records will mirror the biological sex of the student.

None of this should be considered controversial, but in some quarters it is.

Benjamin Huelkamp is an LGBT activist who maintains that “the majority of American Catholics are actually supportive of the LGBTQ community.” Wrong. They are not.

A Pew Research Center survey of Christians last year found that Catholics are considerably more likely to say that “society has become too accepting of transgender people” now than they were in 2017. A plurality of Catholics support requiring students to use the public bathrooms of their biological sex, and a plurality want to make it illegal to teach gender ideology in the schools. Six-in-ten want biological boys and girls to compete against those of their own sex, and not against each other. Almost two-in-three oppose adding new gender options to government documents.

The LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland issued a statement saying the Cleveland diocese’s policy used “harmful rhetoric towards the LGBTQ+ community.” This is a lie. It cited not one example.

Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb said that “the new policy forces LGBTQ+ kids to hide their authentic selves and attend school in fear of persecution of who they are.” This is also a lie. It should also be noted that the “authentic selves” of students is their biological sex, not some socially contrived notion of who they think they are.

We are delighted that Bishop Malesic did not shy away from this issue. By issuing a clear and specific policy on sexuality and gender identity he did Catholics in the Cleveland community a favor. Indeed, he did Catholics

everywhere a favor.