

SIoux FALLS DIOCESE'S NORMS ON SEXUALITY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on guidelines issued by the Diocese of Sioux Falls on sexuality:

The Diocese of Sioux Falls has issued a policy on human sexuality that is fair, yet firm, and in complete agreement with Catholic moral theology and social teachings. Bishop Donald E. DeGrood has the wisdom and courage not to duck the hard questions that such a policy entails, especially these days.

In a time when sexual engineers in government, the schools and the healthcare industry are busy promoting the virtues of sexual reassignment surgery for young people—all in the name of transgender rights—it is refreshing to see a senior member of the Catholic Church directly confront the mythologies that gender ideology entertains.

More important, Bishop DeGrood has alerted school administrators, teachers, coaches and guidance counselors of their obligation to remain faithful to Catholic teachings in a time when those who do so are subjected to insult and abuse.

“All persons have inherent human dignity and are thus deserving of innate respect as a person. Bullying, harassment, or threats or acts of violence against any student based on that student’s perceived sex, same-sex attraction, or perceived gender identity, will not be tolerated.”

Those are the first words of the policy on human sexuality. They reflect the centrality of Catholic teachings on the human person, and they make clear that while transgender ideology will not be countenanced, no student, regardless of his sex or perceived sex, will be treated unfairly.

Unfair critics of this policy will seize on some of the more specific parts of it. "Students may not advocate, celebrate, or express same-sex attraction in such a way as to cause confusion or distraction in the context of Catholic school classes, activities, or events." Similarly, "Students may not advocate, celebrate, or express transgenderism in such a way as to cause confusion or distraction in the context of Catholic school classes, activities or events."

Other parts of the policy that will be criticized by some include the following. "Students are to wear only those uniforms and conform to all dress codes in accord with his or her biological sex." Boys can only use bathrooms for boys. Ditto for girls. Everyone will use the correct pronouns when referring to boys ("he," "him," etc.) and girls ("she," "her," etc.). Boys cannot play girls' sports, and vice versa.

Bishop DeGrood's commonsensical policy is accompanied by a well-written letter he released on August 4. "Some people have come to accept transgender ideology out of a wish to express affirmation or tolerance for others. Insofar as this is motivated by the innate desire to love others, it contains a seed of goodness. But at the same time, there are serious concerns around what transgender ideology claims or teaches."

The next sentence is critical. "Given the relatively brief period it has been part of our human experience," he says, "there is also a seeming lack of regard for transgenderism's consequences for individuals and the human family."

Yes, transgenderism is an ideology: it is a pernicious set of ideas that denies the biblical truths about male and female.

The bishop pulls no punches about it. Gender ideology "asserts that men can become pregnant and women can become fathers. It also teaches that a person might not be a man or a woman at all but might be a blend of both, or neither. It variously asserts that one's gender might be wrongly 'assigned' at birth

and also that it may be 'fluid' and change throughout one's life."

Not only does this mean the adoption of a distorted vocabulary to refer to transgender persons, the bishop says, it may mean "using surgery or drugs to 'affirm' one's asserted transgender identity. These can include powerful drugs to stop normal pubertal development in adolescents, hormones to spur the development of cross-sex secondary sexual characteristics in post-pubescent aged youth or adults, and/or surgeries to one's face, torso, or reproductive organs to give the appearance of being the opposite sex."

The wording is precise and a much needed antidote to the reigning madness on this subject.

Kudos to Bishop DeGrood. Not only is his policy a model for every diocese, it is a model for every school in the nation, public or private. Let him know your support.

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