



## *Created in the Image and Likeness of God*

### **An Instruction on Some Aspects of the Pastoral Care of Persons with Same-Sex Attraction and Gender Dysphoria**

There is an ever-greater need today for the pastoral care of persons with same-sex attraction and persons with gender dysphoria. Let us open our hearts to the love of God that we may overflow with love and kindness and respect for others. This instruction is not meant to be a complete explanation of the subject. Rather, it provides some orienting considerations for pastoral care. We will consider the following topics: the art of pastoral accompaniment, the meaning and purpose of human sexuality, general approaches to the accompaniment of persons with same-sex attraction and persons with gender dysphoria, and guidance for select pastoral circumstances.

#### **I. The Art of Pastoral Accompaniment**

***Pastoral accompaniment is the initial approach and subsequent establishment of an ongoing relationship of trust with another person to walk together on the path of conversion to follow Jesus Christ in faith.***

Through the art of pastoral accompaniment, we meet people where they are and lead them step-by-step closer to Jesus Christ in a manner that is consistent with the Church's teaching.

Accompaniment requires patience. The path of conversion may take many years. For example, consider St. Monica's accompaniment of her son, St. Augustine. A common error is to force conversion according to a set timeline on another person.

In general, conversion and a change of behavior seldom happen in an instant. St. Augustine listened to the preaching of St. Ambrose for a considerable time before he finally had a change in heart and embraced a life of chastity. Thus, we must be patient and lead others step-by-step along the way. Let us turn to the Sacred Scriptures and reflect on two examples in the ministry of Jesus to guide our own pastoral ministry.

In the encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42), we see a summary of a journey toward faith and discipleship. Notice that Jesus does not begin his conversation with her by pronouncing a moral judgment on her behavior. Rather, he begins with the offer of living water and eternal life. Only after the woman begins to desire this water does the Lord point out the truth of her irregular situation: "You are right in saying, 'I do not have a husband.' For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband." As the woman's journey toward faith continues, Jesus

reveals himself to her as the Messiah, and she testifies to others who also come to believe. Observe that conversion, faith, and discipleship arise from the encounter with Jesus.

A personal encounter with Jesus leads to conversion in the life of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). Initially Zacchaeus is curious about Jesus. Then, when Jesus reaches out and expresses his desire to stay with Zacchaeus, a change occurs in Zacchaeus' heart as he says: "Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor; and if I have extorted anything from anyone, I shall repay it four times over." Observe that Zacchaeus' desire to change his behavior arises after he has a personal encounter with Jesus.

To accompany others, it is insufficient merely to state the Church's teaching. In addition, we must strive to meet people and lead them, step-by-step, as we all walk toward the fullness of truth. Accompaniment requires docility to the Holy Spirit and discernment of the steps along the path. Discernment requires the virtue of pastoral prudence and must be carried out in fidelity to the teachings of the Church. Accompaniment does not dilute the teachings of the Church, but rather, animated by charity, we are to proclaim the Gospel in its fullness.

The path of accompaniment leads first to a deeper encounter with Jesus and a proclamation of the kerygma, the core message of the Gospel. In light of the experience of God's love and with the strength of his grace, people are then able to address sinful behavior. To address the behavior apart from fostering a personal encounter with Jesus and his love is likely to harm the other person. The grace of God makes conversion possible. Thus, we must begin the journey of pastoral accompaniment by striving to foster a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Only then, can we shepherd people step-by-step to embrace and live the fullness of truth.

It is helpful to remember that, depending on the pastoral situation, sometimes we need to be gentle and sometimes we need to be more direct. We observe in the Gospels that Jesus is gentle with some, such as the woman caught in adultery, and firm with others, such as the Scribes and Pharisees. Here again is another area for discernment. St. Therese provides a good example for us in her work with the novices.

It is impossible to act with all in the same manner. With certain souls, I feel I must make myself little, not fearing to humble myself by admitting my own struggles and defects; seeing I have the same weaknesses as they, my little sisters in their turn admit their faults and rejoice because I understand them through experience. With others, on the contrary, I have seen that to do them any good I must be very firm and never go back on the decision once it is made. To abase oneself would not then be humility but weakness. God has given me the grace not to fear the battle; I must do my duty at all costs. I have heard the following on more than one occasion: "If you want to get anything out of me, you will have to win me with sweetness; force will get you nothing." I myself know that nobody is a good judge in his own case, and that a child, whom a doctor wants to perform a painful operation upon, will not fail to utter loud cries and to say that the remedy is worse than the sickness; however, when he is cured a few days later, he is very happy at being able to play and run. It is exactly the same for souls; soon they recognize that a little bit of bitterness is at times preferable to sugar and they do not fear to admit it. (*Story of a Soul*, ICS Publications, 240)

When we explain the teaching of the Church, we must remember that it is good news to a broken world. For example, the sexual revolution and the breakdown of marriages have led to barrenness, broken

hearts, broken lives, and broken families. The Church's teaching, in contrast, fosters steadfast love, fidelity, unity, and fruitfulness. This is good news! The way to healing is embracing Jesus and his teaching.

Finally, Pope Francis offers the following important instruction on accompaniment in *Evangelii Gaudium*:

169. In a culture paradoxically suffering from anonymity and at the same time obsessed with the details of other people's lives, shamelessly given over to morbid curiosity, the Church must look more closely and sympathetically at others whenever necessary. In our world, ordained ministers and other pastoral workers can make present the fragrance of Christ's closeness and his personal gaze. The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this "art of accompaniment" which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. Ex 3:5). The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life.

170. Although it sounds obvious, spiritual accompaniment must lead others ever closer to God, in whom we attain true freedom. Some people think they are free if they can avoid God; they fail to see that they remain existentially orphaned, helpless, homeless. They cease being pilgrims and become drifters, flitting around themselves and never getting anywhere. To accompany them would be counterproductive if it became a sort of therapy supporting their self-absorption and ceased to be a pilgrimage with Christ to the Father.

171. Today more than ever we need men and women who, on the basis of their experience of accompanying others, are familiar with processes which call for prudence, understanding, patience and docility to the Spirit, so that they can protect the sheep from wolves who would scatter the flock. We need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing. Listening, in communication, is an openness of heart which makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur. Listening helps us to find the right gesture and word which shows that we are more than simply bystanders. Only through such respectful and compassionate listening can we enter on the paths of true growth and awaken a yearning for the Christian ideal: the desire to respond fully to God's love and to bring to fruition what he has sown in our lives. But this always demands the patience of one who knows full well what Saint Thomas Aquinas tells us: that anyone can have grace and charity, and yet falter in the exercise of the virtue because of persistent "contrary inclinations". In other words, the organic unity of the virtues always and necessarily exists in *habitu*, even though forms of conditioning can hinder the operations of those virtuous habits. Hence the need for "a pedagogy which will introduce people step by step to the full appropriation of the mystery". Reaching a level of maturity where individuals can make truly free and responsible decisions calls for much time and patience. As Blessed Peter Faber used to say: "Time is God's messenger".

172. One who accompanies others has to realize that each person's situation before God and their life in grace are mysteries which no one can fully know from without. The Gospel tells us to correct others and to help them to grow on the basis of a recognition

of the objective evil of their actions (cf. Mt 18:15), but without making judgments about their responsibility and culpability (cf. Mt 7:1; Lk 6:37). Someone good at such accompaniment does not give in to frustrations or fears. He or she invites others to let themselves be healed, to take up their mat, embrace the cross, leave all behind and go forth ever anew to proclaim the Gospel. Our personal experience of being accompanied and assisted, and of openness to those who accompany us, will teach us to be patient and compassionate with others, and to find the right way to gain their trust, their openness and their readiness to grow.

173. Genuine spiritual accompaniment always begins and flourishes in the context of service to the mission of evangelization. Paul's relationship with Timothy and Titus provides an example of this accompaniment and formation which takes place in the midst of apostolic activity. Entrusting them with the mission of remaining in each city to "put in order what remains to be done" (Tit 1:5; cf. 1 Tim 1:3-5), Paul also gives them rules for their personal lives and their pastoral activity. This is clearly distinct from every kind of intrusive accompaniment or isolated self-realization. Missionary disciples accompany missionary disciples.

## **II. The Meaning and Purpose of Human Sexuality**

The meaning of and purpose of human sexuality can be unveiled by asking a few questions.

How do you want to be loved? Temporarily or permanently?

How do you want to be loved? Unfaithfully or faithfully?

How do you want to be loved? Unfruitfully or fruitfully and in a life-giving way?

How do you want to be loved? Partially or totally?

How do you want to be loved? Conditionally or unconditionally?

Deep down, we all want to be loved permanently with a love that lasts forever. We want to be loved faithfully by someone who will never betray us. We want to be loved fruitfully in a way that gives us life. We want to be loved totally. We want to be loved with the other's whole heart. We want to be loved unconditionally, no matter what happens. This is how Jesus loves us. His love is everlasting. God is love, and he will never stop loving us. His love is faithful, he will never betray us. His love is total, he gave himself completely for us when he died on the cross. His love is unconditional. He died for us, even though we are sinners.

We are created in the image and likeness of God, and by his grace we are called to love as God loves. Human sexuality has this meaning and purpose. It is meant to express a love that is permanent, one's whole life long; a love that is faithful, a love that is open to the gift of life, a love that is total and unconditional, "for better or for worse."

The Sacrament of Matrimony, the marital covenant, is a permanent partnership of one man and one woman ordered to the procreation and education of children and the good of the spouses (c. 1055). Christian spouses are strengthened by the grace of this sacrament to love each other with the love of Jesus Christ. Only in the context of marriage between one man and one woman can sexual intercourse express a love that is permanent, because they have given their whole lives to each other by the promises that they made to each other on their wedding day. Outside of marriage, sexual activity cannot express permanent love.

Key to understanding human sexuality is the fundamental body-soul unity of the human person. Our bodies are integral parts of us. What we do to the body we do to the person. If we experience a loving embrace, the person is embraced, not just the body. If, tragically, one experiences bodily violence, the person is wounded, not just the body.

Because our bodies are integral parts of us, so is our fertility. A man and woman, therefore, cannot give themselves to each other totally in love, unless they also give their fertility to each other. Thus, only sexual intercourse that is open to life can express a total and fruitful love. Only sexual relations between a man and a woman can conceive children. Though children are not conceived in every act of intercourse and a man and woman may have struggles with infertility, their sexual relations are still acts of the procreative kind. Children could come to be if all the conditions were right.

Sex between persons of the same sex can never reflect total and fruitful love because they cannot give and accept each other's fertility. Such acts can never conceive children. They are not acts of the procreative kind and cannot participate in the expression of God's total and fruitful love (CCC, 2357).

### **III. General Approaches to the Accompaniment of Persons with Same-Sex Attraction and Gender Dysphoria.**

Our fundamental approach to persons with same-sex attraction and persons with gender dysphoria is pastoral accompaniment: a loving, interpersonal encounter along the road to deeper faith in Jesus Christ. See the appendices below for a list of Church documents to inform our pastoral accompaniment. A list of other helpful resources is also found in the appendices.

Human persons are created in the image and likeness of God. We are beloved sons and daughters of the Father. Jesus Christ died for us, which shows the depths of our human dignity. Thus, we are to treat persons with same-sex attraction and gender dysphoria with dignity and respect and all unjust discrimination is to be avoided (CCC, 2358).

We are not defined or identified by our sexual attractions or conflicts about sexual identity. Our fundamental identity is as a beloved son or daughter of God. Thus, it is best to avoid identifying persons merely using labels such as "gay" or "transgender". It speaks more to our fundamental identity and dignity as persons to speak of persons with same-sex attraction or persons with gender dysphoria.

#### **A. Same-Sex Attraction**

It is for us to engage in pastoral accompaniment to help others live according to the true meaning of human sexuality while we also strive and seek help from others to do the same. If we are honest with ourselves, during our life we experience desires to live in a way that is contrary to the true meaning of human sexuality. This is due to original sin. Yet, living in accord with the truth leads us to happiness and the love that we truly desire. How important it is for us to encourage and strengthen each other on the way! All human persons are called to live chastely which means using our gift of sexuality according to its God-given meaning and purpose.

Experiencing feelings and desires that are not in accord with the true meaning and purpose of sexuality is not sinful. To commit a sin, we must know that something is wrong and freely choose to do it. We commit a sin if we freely and deliberately act on disordered desires, that is, desires that are not ordered

according to God's wisdom and our true good and happiness. In this light, we speak of homosexual desires as disordered (CCC, 2357) because they can lead us to sin if we act on them. Yet the desires are not sinful in themselves. Homosexual acts are sinful.

Because of original sin we all experience some disordered desires. It is important for us to be aware of the disordered desires that arise in our heart. For example, do we often lose our temper because of disordered anger? Do we struggle to eat moderately because of a disordered desire for food? Do we drink too much because we have a disordered desire for alcohol? Do we have a disordered desire for money or material things? Do we struggle with lust? It is for us followers of Jesus to accompany each other and help each other on the journey of faith so that we do not give in to our disordered desires. When we stumble and fall along the way, we are to help each other rise by the grace of God and start again. As we accompany persons with same-sex attraction, we acknowledge that we too need accompaniment. As Catholics, we see in our brother or sister with same-sex attraction not only someone whom we can help, but also a friend, someone who can help us with our struggles.

## **B. Gender Dysphoria**

Persons with gender dysphoria are also in need of our care and pastoral accompaniment. Because of the fundamental body-soul unity of the human person, the sex of the person and the sex of the body are the same. Every one of us is created as either male or female. Thus, to live according to the truth of our human nature, we are to embrace our bodily sex. It is a gift given to us. Those who experience incongruence between their bodily sex and what they perceive their sex to be deserve our love, compassion, and our care. A good analogy is how we would help persons who are suffering from anorexia nervosa. In this disorder there is an incongruence between how the persons perceive themselves and their bodily reality. They may perceive themselves as overweight when they are quite thin. Just as we would refer a person with anorexia to an expert to help him or her, let us also refer persons with gender dysphoria to a qualified counselor to help them while we show them the depth of our love and friendship.

## **IV. Guidance for Select Pastoral Circumstances**

In the various pastoral situations discussed below, if a decision is made to delay the celebration of a sacrament, withhold Holy Communion or the other sacraments, or determine that a person is not disposed to exercise a liturgical ministry or position of leadership (e.g., reader, extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, catechist, parish finance or pastoral council member, etc.), the following words of Pope Francis provide a helpful guide:

“Naturally, if someone flaunts an objective sin as if it were part of the Christian ideal, or wants to impose something other than what the Church teaches, he or she can in no way presume to teach or preach to others; this is a case of something which separates from the community (cf. Mt 18:17). Such a person needs to listen once more to the Gospel message and its call to conversion. Yet even for that person there can be some way of taking part in the life of community, whether in social service, prayer meetings or another way that his or her own initiative, together with the discernment of the parish priest, may suggest.” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 297)

In such circumstances, pastoral accompaniment might entail inviting the person to attend a meeting of a prayer group or a Bible study in a non-leadership capacity, or assist in the parish's outreach to the poor,

etc. They are encouraged to participate in Mass while making a spiritual communion and refraining from the reception of Holy Communion.

It is also important to weigh the potential of scandal in making decisions whether to delay the celebration of a sacrament, withhold Holy Communion or the other sacraments, or determine that a person is not disposed to exercise a liturgical ministry or position of leadership. “Scandal is an attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil” (CCC, 2284). If a person is publicly manifesting behaviors that are objectively gravely sinful, allowing him or her to receive the sacraments or exercise leadership may cause scandal.

#### **A. Sacraments of Initiation**

1) Children under the care of a couple in a same-sex union or with a Catholic parent who is in a same-sex union may be baptized, provided that there is a well-founded hope that the children will be raised and educated in the Catholic faith (c. 868; cf. CDF, *Pastoralis actio*, 30) — including the Church’s teaching on marriage and family. Unlike a man and woman who are cohabitating or in an invalid marriage, the status of same-sex couples can never be regularized, which presents a particular pastoral concern. To avoid scandal, the baptism should be celebrated privately, and care should be taken to avoid the impression of accepting the redefinition of marriage and parenthood.

2) A baptized child under the care of a couple in a same-sex union or who has a Catholic parent in a same-sex union may be admitted to the sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist if the child is properly prepared and disposed.

3) A person who is publicly living in a same-sex sexual relationship (or in any sexual relationship outside of an ecclesiastically recognized marriage between one man and one woman) may not serve as a sponsor or a Christian witness for the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

Similarly, a person who publicly identifies as a different gender than his or her biological sex or has attempted “gender transitioning” may not serve as a sponsor or a Christian witness for Baptism and Confirmation, unless the person has repented. Repentance does not require reversing the physical changes to the body that the person has undergone. The experience of incongruence in one’s sexual identity is not sinful if it does not arise from the person’s free will, nor would it stand in the way of the person serving as a sponsor or a Christian witness. However, deliberate, freely chosen, and manifest behaviors to redefine one’s sex do constitute such an obstacle.

4) A person who is publicly living in a same-sex sexual relationship (or in any sexual relationship outside of a marriage between one man and one woman) may not be Baptized, Confirmed, or received into full communion in the Church, unless the person has repented and withdrawn from the relationship. In danger of death, if there is evidence of repentance, these rites may be celebrated without withdrawal from the relationship if formal separation is not possible or is gravely inconvenient.

Similarly, a person who publicly identifies as a different gender than his or her biological sex or has attempted “gender transitioning” may not be Baptized, Confirmed, or received into full communion in the Church, unless the person has repented. Repentance does not require

reversing the physical changes to the body that the person has undergone. The experience of incongruence in one's sexual identity is not sinful if it does not arise from the person's free will, nor would it stand in the way of Christian Initiation. However, deliberate, freely chosen and manifest behaviors to redefine one's sex do constitute such an obstacle.

## **B. Reception of Holy Communion and the Anointing of the Sick**

Persons who are living in a same-sex sexual relationship (or in any sexual relationship outside of an ecclesiastically recognized marriage between one man and one woman) should not present themselves for Holy Communion (c. 916). Pastors should address such situations privately with the persons and advise them that they should not present themselves for Holy Communion unless they have withdrawn from the relationship and have received the Sacrament of Penance. If the relationship is public and if they obstinately persist in it, they are not to be admitted to Holy Communion (c. 915). Such persons may be given Holy Communion in danger of death if they express repentance (c. 921). The benefit of the doubt falls to administering the Sacrament.

Similarly, persons who identify as a different gender than their biological sex or have attempted "gender transitioning" should not present themselves for Holy Communion (c. 916). Pastors should address such situations privately with the persons and advise them that they should not present themselves for Holy Communion unless they have repented and received the Sacrament of Penance. Repentance does not require reversing the physical changes to the body that the person has undergone. The experience of incongruence in one's sexual identity is not sinful if it does not arise from the person's free will, nor would it stand in the way of the reception of Holy Communion. However, deliberate, freely chosen and manifest behaviors to redefine one's sex do constitute such an obstacle. If the behaviors are public and if the persons obstinately persist in such behaviors, they are not to be admitted to Holy Communion (c. 915).

The above also applies to the reception of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick (c. 1007). If there is danger of death and the person is unresponsive, evidence that he or she at least wished to die as a Catholic is sufficient to administer the sacrament. In a case of doubt, the sacrament is to be administered.

## **C. Marriage**

Marriage is a permanent partnership of one man and one woman ordered to the procreation and education of children and the good of the spouses. Persons of the same sex invalidly attempt marriage. So-called "gender transitioning" does not alter one's sex.

Catholic ministers may not bless or otherwise solemnize a same-sex union (CDF, *Responsum ad dubium*, 22 February 2022). Church facilities may not be used to bless or otherwise solemnize a same-sex union, nor be used for a reception after such a blessing or solemnization.

## **D. Liturgical Ministries and Leadership Roles**

A person who is publicly living in a same-sex sexual relationship (or in any sexual relationship outside of an ecclesiastically recognized marriage between one man and one woman) may not exercise a liturgical ministry or position of leadership including but not limited to reader,



extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, catechist, member of the parish finance or pastoral council, etc., unless the person has repented and withdrawn from the relationship.

Similarly, a person who publicly identifies as a different gender than his or her biological sex or has attempted “gender transitioning” may not exercise a liturgical ministry or position of leadership including but not limited to reader, extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, catechist, member of the parish finance or pastoral council, etc., unless the person has repented. Repentance does not require reversing the physical changes to the body that the person has undergone. The experience of incongruence in one’s sexual identity is not sinful if it does not arise from the person’s free will, nor would it stand in the way of exercising a liturgical ministry or position of leadership. However, deliberate, freely chosen and manifest behaviors to redefine one’s sex do constitute such an obstacle.

### **E. Sacramental Records**

Contact the Chancellor of the Diocese of Marquette for direction regarding sacramental records related to these matters.

### **F. Catholic Schools and Religious Education**

The parents and those taking the place of parents and the students are to abide by the Covenant for Catholic Schools and Parish Faith Formation Programs, which is included as an appendix to this instruction for your convenience.

#### 1) Students under the care of persons living in a same-sex sexual relationship

Students under the care of persons living in a same-sex sexual relationship are not to be denied admission to Catholic Schools and catechetical programs on that basis. Parents and those taking the place of parents are to be informed that the children will be instructed according to the Church’s teaching on marriage and sexuality in an age-appropriate manner.

To avoid scandal, a same-sex relationship is not to be presented in a way that gives semblance to marriage. Great care is to be taken so that the other students are not led into error regarding the nature of marriage and parenthood.

#### 2) Students experiencing same-sex attraction

a) Students experiencing same-sex attraction are to be treated with compassion and respect. All unjust discrimination is to be avoided. Bullying of students must not be tolerated. Pastoral accompaniment is to be exercised to lead the student into a deeper union with the Blessed Trinity and to help them embrace and live according to the Church’s teaching on sexuality.

b) All students are to live chastely.

### 3) Students experiencing gender dysphoria

- a) Students experiencing gender dysphoria are to be treated with compassion and respect. All unjust discrimination is to be avoided. Bullying of students must not be tolerated. Pastoral accompaniment is to be exercised to lead the student into a deeper union with the Blessed Trinity and to help them embrace and live according to the Church's teaching on sexuality.
- b) Students are to avoid behaviors associated with the attempt to redefine one's sex.
- c) Persons are to be addressed in accord with their legal name and pronouns corresponding to their biological sex.
- d) Bathrooms and locker rooms corresponding to one's biological sex are to be used. Consideration can be given to allowing persons to use a unisex bathroom.
- e) Students are to participate in sports according to their biological sex.

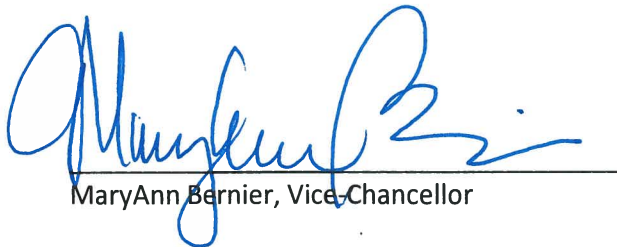
#### IV. Conclusion

For several years, I served as a Courage chaplain. Courage is a Catholic apostolate to persons with same-sex attraction. It was a privilege to accompany the Courage members on our journey of faith to a deeper union with the Blessed Trinity. I remain inspired by their faith and desire to live chastely. It was one of the most joyful and meaningful ministries that I had as a priest, and a true exercise of spiritual fatherhood. May you who accompany persons with same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria be inspired by them, as was I, to follow Jesus Christ more faithfully and with deeper love.

Given at the Curia of the Diocese of Marquette, July 29, 2021, the Memorial of St. Martha.



Most Reverend John F. Doerfler, STD, JCL  
Bishop of Marquette



MaryAnn Bernier, Vice-Chancellor

## **Appendix 1: Church Documents**

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. “*Responsum* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to a *dubium* regarding the blessing of the unions of persons of the same sex,” February 22, 2021. [Responsum of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to a dubium regarding the blessing of the unions of persons of the same sex \(22 February 2021\) \(vatican.va\)](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20210222_dubium_blessing_unions_same_sex_22_february_2021_en.html)

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. “Considerations Regarding Proposal to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons,” March 28, 2003. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20030731\\_homosexual-unions\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20030731_homosexual-unions_en.html)

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. “Some Considerations Concerning the Response to Legislative Proposals On the Non-Discrimination of Homosexual Persons,” July 23, 1992. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19920724\\_homosexual-persons\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19920724_homosexual-persons_en.html)

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. “Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons,” October 1, 1986. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19861001\\_homosexual-persons\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19861001_homosexual-persons_en.html)

Congregation for Catholic Education. “‘Male and Female He Created Them’ Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory In Education,” February 2, 2019. [rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_20190202\\_maschio-e-femmina\\_en.pdf \(vatican.va\)](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20190202_maschio-e-femmina_en.pdf)

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care*, 2006. <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/homosexuality/upload/ministry-persons-homosexual-inclination-2006.pdf>

## **Appendix 2: Pastoral Resources**

Below you will find select resources to assist you in the art of pastoral accompaniment.

Marriage Unique for a Reason: <https://marriageuniqueforareason.org>

Courage: <https://couragerc.org>

Person and Identity: <https://personandidentity.com>

The Marriage Reality Movement: <http://takebackmarriage.org>

Sexuality and Gender: Findings from the Biological, Psychological and Social Sciences

*The New Atlantis: A Journal of Technology and Society*

Lawrence Mayer, M.B., M.S., Ph.D. and Paul R. McHugh, M.D.

Number 50 – Fall 2016

<https://www.thenewatlantis.com/issues/no-50-fall-2016>

### Appendix 3: Covenant for Schools and Parish Faith Formation

## **DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS & PARISH FAITH FORMATION PROGRAMS**

### **Introduction:**

Throughout Scripture, we read about covenant relationships between God and God's people. Understanding what a covenant relationship is, is pivotal to understanding what our relationship of love with God should look like. Understanding what makes up a covenant relationship can also help us understand the relationship that members of our parish and school communities should have with one another.

Moses came down from the mountain and recited for the people the Ten Commandments. They responded, "*We will do everything that the Lord has told us.*" The Commandments were more than a mere contract. A contract protects both parties from one another with obligations, rights, and liabilities. A covenant, on the other hand, opens both parties to a very important promise and sacred bond.

Moses sealed the Old Covenant by sprinkling the people with the blood of the sacrifice. At the Last Supper, Jesus made a new and eternal covenant with us through His blood. By our reception of the body and blood of Jesus at communion, we ratify or agree to be faithful to God. Our reception of communion is not a suggestion, but a commandment. Jesus clearly said, "*Do this in memory of me.*"

How is it that we enter a covenant? By an oath, like swearing to our testimony in court. An oath pledges our fidelity until death that we uphold something that we believe in. The Latin word for oath is *sacramentum*, or sacrament. We, therefore, enter a covenant relationship with our God through the first sacrament, baptism, and renew it each time we approach the other six sacraments. Just as the Old Covenant between God and Israel was sealed through blood sprinkled on the altar and the people so the New Covenant between Christ and His Church is sealed with the body and blood we receive in the Eucharist.

It is important to know that a covenant relationship is one that is made in love. It is a voluntary and mutual pledge to grow together in relationship. A covenant, since it represents a loving relationship, allows members room to grow in generosity and mutual support.

The relationship between God and us, and between you and your parish school community or parish faith formation program, is a covenant agreement to be members of God's family in a growing relationship of love with God and with each other.

## CATHOLIC SCHOOL COVENANT

### \_\_\_\_\_ Parish(es) School Family Covenant

We invite each of our school families to enter a covenant relationship with our parish(es) school community. It is our hope that this relationship will be characterized by mutual care and generosity for the growth of all.

### \_\_\_\_\_ Parish(es) School Pledge:

- To provide opportunities for both children and their families to grow in faith and friendship with Jesus Christ and to learn to share the joy of this relationship with others.
- To offer an excellent educational program that provides the necessary fundamentals for student academic success and virtue formation.
- To provide a Catholic Christian school environment where children are safe and enjoy growing into young adulthood.
- These parishes \_\_\_\_\_ offer a parish subsidy to assist families to provide their children with a Catholic school education.
- To commit to work in partnership with families to live out our covenant relationship in mutual care and generosity.

### As parents of children in (school name) Parish(es) School, our family pledges:

- To understand and support the teachings of Jesus as taught by the Catholic Church, which will be part of my child's education and formation.
- To support the moral and social doctrine of the Catholic Church as taught to our children in our Catholic School to ensure consistency between home and school.
- To take an active part in the religious education of our children both at home and church.
- To commit to work in partnership with school staff and teachers to live out our covenant relationship in mutual care and generosity.
- To financially support the mission and ministry of  (name of school)  through tuition, volunteer and fundraising support.
- (For Catholics) To do my best to live as a member of the Body of Christ in our parish and our school community.
- (For Non-Catholics of other faiths) To do my best to live as a member of the Body of Christ in my church and our school community.

We enter this covenant freely and with a firm determination to fulfill our responsibilities.

Signed:

Parents \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Parish \_\_\_\_\_

## PARISH FAITH FORMATION COVENANT

### \_\_\_\_\_ Parish Faith Formation Family Covenant

We invite each of our faith formation families to enter a covenant relationship with our parish community by modeling the faith through providing opportunities in our home for our children to experience:

- family prayer.
- celebrations of religious and family traditions.
- works of care and service.

### \_\_\_\_\_ Parish Faith Formation Pledge:

- To provide opportunities for both children and their families to grow in faith and friendship with Jesus Christ.
- To ensure catechists model the faith we seek to share with the children in our programs.
- To offer a faith formation program that provides the necessary fundamentals for the youth entrusted to our care.
- To provide a Catholic Christian environment where children are safe, treated with dignity and respect.
- To provide an adequate budget and facilities to ensure a quality program of catechesis for all children of the parish.
- To commit to work in partnership with families to live out our covenant relationship in mutual care and generosity.

**As parents of children in  (parish)  faith formation program, our family pledges:**

- To understand and support the teachings of Jesus as taught by the Catholic Church, which will be part of my child's education and formation.
- To support the moral and social doctrine of the Catholic Church to ensure consistency between home and parish faith formation program.
- To take an active part in the religious education of our children both at home and church.
- To commit to work in partnership with parish staff and catechists to live out our covenant relationship in mutual care and generosity.
- To support the mission and ministry of  (parish)  through participation in faith formation activities and meetings, volunteer support, and parish financial support.
- To do my best to live as a member of the Body of Christ in our parish.

We enter this covenant freely and with a firm determination to fulfill our responsibilities.

Signed:

Parents \_\_\_\_\_

Parish \_\_\_\_\_