

Transgender Bathrooms?

By Msgr. Charles E. Pope

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Q. *What is the Church's official teaching about transgender bathrooms? There does not seem to be a clear answer about all of this.* —Robert, via e-mail

A. There is no such thing as being “transgendered” from any biblical or Catholic perspective. Thus there is no official teaching about something that doesn’t even exist, let alone about bathrooms. What we can do is apply Catholic principles to address the deep confusion that has arisen about something so clear and basic as one’s sex.

The human person has a sex (not a gender), and God assigns that sex. Scripture says, in creating us, “[God] created them; male and female he created them” (Gn1:27). Our bodies are therefore a revelation of who and what God created us to be. No amount of clothes, cosmetics or surgery can alter the fact that we are male or female right down to our DNA.

Transgenderism is one of the stranger manifestations of the sexual confusion of our times. It is a form of Gnostic dualism wherein a person can claim that he has an “identity” wholly separate from anything indicated by his body. This amounts to a reduction of the human person to his thought or feelings, and a stepping back from reality as clearly indicated by the body. It also denigrates the body and the witness it makes to us of who and what we are.

And yet the glory of the human person is to unite the two aspects of God’s creation, the spiritual and the material. So precious is the bodily dimension of the human person that Christ took to himself a full human nature: body and soul. He did not simply come among us as a ghost or mirage. He walked among us in our full nature, offered His body on the altar of the cross, and raised up His full humanity and glorified it. To reduce our bodies to a mere tool, or a sort of prison (where a man is “trapped” in a woman’s body), or to mutilate it surgically is a grave offense against what God has wrought. Since our body is a revelation from God of who and what we are, to ignore its voice or overrule what God says is a sign of the pride of our days.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches: “Man and woman have been *created*, which is to say, *willed* by God: on the one hand, in perfect equality as human persons; on the other, in their respective beings as man and woman. ‘Being man’ or ‘being woman’ is a reality which is good and willed by God...In their ‘being-man’ and ‘being-woman,’ they reflect the Creator’s wisdom and goodness” (No. 369, emphasis in original).

Those who struggle with their sexuality as given by God deserve our sympathy and care. But in no way can we participate in confirming them in a very great error and deep confusion. Only the truth, as God has declared it, will set us free. We therefore must resist and teach against the “gender ideology” of our times, which seeks to replace what God has wrought with vain imaginings that both confuse and demean the true glory of the human person.

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