

Catholic Church rejects transgender identity, calls gender change a 'trend' in statement

Joshua Bote, USA TODAY Published 2:18 p.m. ET June 10, 2019 | Updated 3:51 p.m. ET June 10, 2019

In its first statement on [gender identity](#), the Vatican on Monday rejected the idea that transgender people can change their gender identity in a document meant to instruct Catholic teachers and students on sexuality and gender.

The [document](#), titled "Male and Female He Created Them," suggests only men and women are sexually complementary, and that changing norms in gender identity contribute to the "destabilization of the family."

According to [Vatican News](#), the church's news platform, the document is intended as "an instrument to help guide Catholic contributions to the ongoing debate about human sexuality."

"Male and Female He Created Them" is [created](#) by the Congregation for Catholic Education, the educational arm of the Catholic Church. It brands changing understanding towards gender identity and sexuality as a cultural and historical trend in "gender theory" that is contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

LGBTQ Catholics [denounced the document](#), stating that it "will cause families to reject their children, and it will increase alienation of LGBT people from the Church."

"By ignoring new scientific understandings of gender identity, and by refusing to engage in dialogue with LGBT people about their lived experiences of self-understanding and faith, the Vatican remains in the dark ages, promoting a false teaching that relies on myth, rumor, and falsehoods." writes Francis DeBernardo, the executive director of New Ways Ministry, an advocacy group for LGBTQ Catholics.

This document comes in the midst of Pride Month, and one day after an LGBTQ-targeted attack in Detroit [killed three people](#) — two gay men and a trans woman.

Vatican office blasts gender theory, questions intentions of transgender people

Jun 10, 2019

by Joshua J. McElwee

Vatican

Vatican City — The Vatican office responsible for overseeing Catholic educational institutions around the world has blasted modern gender theory, claiming in a new document that it seeks to "annihilate the concept of 'nature.' "

In an instruction released June 10 as LGBT people globally are celebrating pride month, the Congregation for Catholic Education calls the idea of people's gender identities existing along a spectrum "nothing more than a confused concept of freedom in the realm of feelings and wants."

Labeling the biological differences between men and women "constitutive of human identity," the office also questions the intentions of those who identify as intersex and transgender.

"Efforts to go beyond the constitutive male-female sexual difference, such as the ideas of 'intersex' or 'transgender,' lead to a masculinity or femininity that is ambiguous," states the document.

"This oscillation between male and female becomes, at the end of the day, only a 'provocative' display against so-called 'traditional frameworks,' " it continues.

The document, which carries the title "Male and female he created them," was released by the Vatican June 10 without prior announcement. Described as an aid for Catholic schoolteachers and parents, it is signed by the educational congregation's leaders: Italian Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi and Archbishop Angelo Zani.

The educational aid does not carry Pope Francis' signature, and the text makes no reference of the pontiff reviewing the document.

Groups that minister to LGBT Catholics immediately criticized the document. New Ways Ministry, one such group, called it a "harmful tool that will be used to oppress and harm not only transgender people, but lesbian, gay, [and] bisexual people, too."

Francis, whose early pontificate was defined by his "Who am I to judge?" answer to a question about an alleged gay priest working at the Vatican, has made contradictory remarks about gender theory and transgender people throughout his six-year papacy.

In [a 2015 interview](#), for example, the pontiff compared gender theory to nuclear weapons, saying the concept "does not recognize the order of creation." But [in 2016](#), the pope revealed in a press conference that he had met at the Vatican with a Spanish transgender man who had been ostracized by his parish priest after having gender reassignment surgery.

"We must be attentive, not saying all are the same," Francis said about that experience, adding that "people must be accompanied, as Jesus accompanied."

The new document, which is 31 pages in length, does not speak of accompanying transgender people. It instead issues fierce warnings and criticisms of how children and young people are being educated today.

The text opens by saying that society is facing "an educational crisis, especially in the field of affectivity and sexuality."

It then claims that cultural "disorientation" has destabilized the family as an institution, "bringing with it a tendency to cancel out the differences between men and women, presenting them instead as merely the product of historical and cultural conditioning."

The heart of the document critiques modern society's detachment of an individual's concept of gender from their biological sex.

"Gender theory ... speaks of a gradual process of denaturalization, that is a move away from nature and towards an absolute option for the decision of the feelings of the human subject," it states.

"In this understanding of things, the view of both sexuality identity and the family become subject to the same 'liquidity' and 'fluidity' that characterize other aspects of post-modern culture, often founded on nothing more than a confused concept of freedom in the realm of feelings and wants, or momentary desires provoked by emotional impulses and the will of the individual," it continues.

The text claims that genetic studies have shown that male and female embryos differ "from the very moment of conception." In cases where a child is born with ambiguous genitalia, it says "it is medical professionals who can make a therapeutic intervention."

"In such situations, parents cannot make an arbitrary choice on the issue, let alone society," it recommends. "Instead, medical science should act with purely therapeutic ends, and intervene in the least invasive fashion, on the basis of objective parameters and with a view to establishing the person's constitutive identity."

Retelling the Genesis story of God creating humans in his image as men and women, the document calls for a reaffirming of "the metaphysical roots of sexual difference."

In a short section detailing some "points of agreement" with gender theory, the text praises educational programs that "share a laudable desire to combat all expressions of unjust discrimination, a requirement that can be shared by all sides."

"Indeed, it cannot be denied that through the centuries forms of unjust discrimination have been a sad fact of history and have also had an influence within the Church," it states.

"This has brought a certain rigid status quo, delaying the necessary and progressive inculturation of the truth of Jesus' proclamation of the equal dignity of men and women, and has provoked accusations of a sort of masculinist mentality, veiled to a greater or lesser degree by religious motives," it continues.

The document also praises anthropological studies that focus on the "values of femininity," lauding how "women's 'capacity for the other' favors a more realistic and mature reading of evolving situations."

LGBTQ advocates said it would encourage "hatred, bigotry, and violence" towards trans people

By Rhuaridh Marr on June 10, 2019

The Vatican has branded transgender people a “confused concept” and said they “annihilate the concept of nature” in a new statement.

The statement, which has been heavily criticized by Catholic LGBTQ advocates, claims that people identify as transgender to be “provocative.”

Titled “Male and Female He Created Them,” the document was issued by the Vatican’s Congregation for Catholic Education on June 10 with little announcement.

The document urges Catholic schools to resist accepting transgender people and rejects pro-trans “gender theory.”

“In all such [gender] theories, from the most moderate to the most radical, there is agreement that one’s gender ends up being viewed as more important than being of male or female sex,” the document states. “The effect of this move is chiefly to create a cultural and ideological revolution driven by relativism, and secondarily a juridical revolution, since such beliefs claim specific rights for the individual and across society.”

The document, an “aid for Catholic schoolteachers and parents,” claims that accepting transgender people means negating “the male-female duality of human nature, from which the family is generated.”

“The denial of this duality not only erases the vision of human beings as the fruit of an act of creation but creates the idea of the human person as a sort of abstraction who ‘chooses for himself what his nature is to be,’” the Vatican claims.

The document slams those who identify as transgender and rejects people who are born intersex, saying they go “beyond the constitutive male-female sexual difference.”

Such efforts, “such as the ideas of ‘intersex’ or ‘transgender,’ lead to a masculinity or femininity that is ambiguous,” the document states. “This oscillation between male and female becomes, at the end of the day, only a ‘provocative’ display against so-called ‘traditional frameworks.’”

Amid its 30-page criticism of gender theory, the document claims that transgender identity is “nothing more than a confused concept of freedom in the realm of feelings and wants, or momentary desires provoked by emotional impulses and the will of the individual.”

The document has not been signed by Pope Francis, and the [National Catholic Reporter](#) reports that the pontiff had possibly not reviewed the document prior to its release.

However, Francis would likely not disagree with the document’s claims, given [in 2015](#) he compared transgender people to nuclear weapons, saying the concept of gender identity “does not recognize the order of creation.”

New Ways Ministry, which advocates for justice and equality for LGBTQ Catholics, slammed the document in a statement, saying it would be used to “oppress and harm not only transgender people, but lesbian, gay, bisexual people too.”

“The document associates sexual and gender minorities with libertine sexuality, a gross misrepresentation of the lives of LGBT people which perpetuates and encourages hatred, bigotry, and violence against them,” said Francis DeBernardo, executive director of New Ways. “[It] will confuse

those who sincerely struggle with questions of gender identity and sexual orientation. Such confusion leads to self-harm, addiction, and even suicide. The misinformation the document contains will cause families to reject their children, and it will increase alienation of LGBT people from the Church.”

DeBernardo added that the document shows “the Vatican remains ill-equipped to discuss gender and sexuality in the modern world.”

“By ignoring new scientific understandings of gender identity, and by refusing to engage in dialogue with LGBT people about their lived experiences of self-understanding and faith, the Vatican remains in the dark ages, promoting a false teaching that relies on myth, rumor, and falsehoods,” DeBernardo said.

Father James Martin, a prominent Jesuit minister, said that the document would be used as “a cudgel against transgender people, and an excuse to argue that they shouldn’t even exist.”

“The document is mainly a dialogue with philosophers and theologians, and with other church documents,” he said in a tweet, “but not with scientists and biologists, not with psychologists, and certainly not with LGBT people, whose experiences are given little if any weight.”

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— James Martin, SJ (@JamesMartinSJ) [June 10, 2019](#)

The release of the anti-trans document comes after an American Catholic bishop urged Catholic families not to attend Pride events, [claiming they would be “harmful for children.”](#)

Providence, R.I., Bishop Thomas Tobin tweeted that “Catholics should not support or attend LGBTQ ‘Pride Month’ events held in June.”

He continued: “They promote a culture and encourage activities that are contrary to Catholic faith and morals. They are especially harmful for children.”

Tobin was [slammed for his tweet on social media](#), with many highlighting the impact the Catholic Church’s child sexual abuse scandals have had on children across the globe.

Vatican rejects 'transgender' term in official guidance on gender identity

Updated yesterday at 5:34pm

The Vatican has issued an official document rejecting the idea that people can choose or change their genders, a statement which was immediately denounced by LGBT Catholics.

Key points:

- Advocacy groups said the document would further confuse individuals and contribute to bigotry and violence against gay and transgender people
- The Vatican called gender fluidity a symptom of the "confused concept of freedom" and "momentary desires"
- It is the first attempt to put the Vatican's position into a comprehensive, official text

The document, published during LGBT Pride Month, insists on the sexual "complementarity" of men and women to reproduce.

Advocacy groups said it would further confuse individuals questioning their gender identity or sexual orientation and at risk of self-harm, and as contributing to bigotry and violence against gay and transgender people.

The text, *Male and Female He Created Them*, was intended to help Catholic teachers, parents, students and clergy address what the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education called an "educational crisis" in the field of sex education.

It called for a "path of dialogue" and listening on the issue of "gender theory" in education.

It called gender fluidity a symptom of the "confused concept of freedom" and "momentary desires" that characterise post-modern culture. It also rejected terms such as "intersex" and "transgender".

But even priestly advocates for LGBT Catholics noted that the text appeared to have relied entirely on previous papal pronouncements, Vatican documents and philosophers and theologians.

"The real-life experiences of LGBT people seem entirely absent from this document," said Reverent James Martin, a Jesuit priest who wrote a book on improving Catholic Church outreach to the LGBT community, titled *Building a Bridge*.

"We should welcome the congregation's call to dialogue and listening on gender and I hope that conversation will now begin," he said.

He also tweeted, "the document is mainly a dialogue with philosophers and theologians, and with other church documents; but not with scientists and biologists, not with psychologists, and certainly not with LGBT people, whose experiences are given little if any weight."

Francis DeBernardo, head of New Ways Ministry, said such concepts were outdated, misinformed and ignore contemporary science on factors beyond visible genitalia that determine gender.

"Gender is also biologically determined by genetics, hormones and brain chemistry — things not visible at birth," Mr DeBernardo said in a statement.

"People do not choose their gender, as the Vatican claims, they discover it through their lived

experiences."

He said the Catholic Church should encourage this process of discovery, saying it's "a process by which individuals discover the wonderful way that God has created them."

Pope Francis has repeatedly argued the position that people cannot choose their genders.

But the document represents the first attempt to put the Vatican's position, first articulated fully by Pope Benedict XVI in a 2012 speech, into a comprehensive, official text.

The Vatican has instructed Catholic schools to oppose inclusive transgender, LGBTQ education programs

The Vatican has issued education guidelines which attack modern science's understanding of gender identity.

Jamie Seidel

News Corp Australia Network June 11, 2019 12:24pm

It's evolution versus creation. Is gender a widely varied genetic mechanism, or a God-bestowed miracle? The Vatican has chosen the latter.

It has issued a new dictum: *Male and Female — He Created Them*.

It's a 31-page teaching guide aimed at instructing Catholic school teachers to challenge the secular understandings which "deny the natural difference between a man and a woman".

Instead, it wants teachers to reaffirm "the metaphysical roots of sexual difference."

The document insists transgender communities exist only to be 'provocative' against 'traditional frameworks' and 'annihilate the concept of nature'.

The Catholic education ministry, itself facing intense scandal over decades of child sexual abuse cover-ups, says it wants to promote a new dialogue on the "question of gender in education".

"Efforts to go beyond the constitutive male-female sexual difference, such as the ideas of 'intersex' or 'transgender,' lead to a masculinity or femininity that is ambiguous," states the document. "This oscillation between male and female becomes, at the end of the day, only a 'provocative' display against so-called 'traditional frameworks'."

But the LGBTQ Catholic New Ways Ministry told the [National Catholic Reporter](#) that the move was a "harmful tool that will be used to oppress and harm not only transgender people, but lesbian, gay, [and] bisexual people, too."

DOCTRINE CRISIS

"It is becoming increasingly clear that we are now facing with what might accurately be called an educational crisis, especially in the field of affectivity and sexuality," the document signed by the educational congregation's leaders, Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi and Archbishop Angelo Zani, reads.

This may cause problems.

Catholic schools around the world accept money from secular democratic governments — which raises taxes from non Catholics — to provide children with an education. Not an indoctrination.

It's a complicated legal issue that has flared in the past, particularly with the clash between Creationists who believe the world is 5000 years old and created by God's hand as outlined by a literal interpretation of their Bible, and secular science which has accumulated empirical evidence indicating the planet has evolved gradually over the past three billion years.

Pope Francis, under immense pressure from extreme right-wing parishioners, has not made his position clear on the new ruling.

According to the *Catholic Reporter*, he has previously stated gender theory "does not recognise the

order of creation”. But he has also stated: “We must be attentive, not saying all are the same,” adding that “people must be accompanied, as Jesus accompanied.”

The document itself reads in a much less accommodating manner: “Gender theory ... speaks of a gradual process of denaturalisation, that is a move away from nature and towards an absolute option for the decision of the feelings of the human subject.”

The Pope has issued no statement as yet on the new Vatican education guidelines.

The Roman Church’s education ministry insists sciences improving understanding of the mechanics of gender can “annihilate the concept of nature” and damage the concept of family institution.

It states teachers must identify the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman while warning of a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family”.

It accepts there is discrimination against women: “Indeed, it cannot be denied that through the centuries forms of unjust discrimination have been a sad fact of history and have also had an influence within the Church,” it reads.

But it does on to laud what it calls the “values of femininity,” highlighting how “women’s ‘capacity for the other’ favours a more realistic and mature reading of evolving situations.”

Much like the Creationist argument, the new dictum states it desires to challenge the promotion of a single secular “school of thought”.

It also seeks to promote the value of traditional mother and father gender roles as “the Christian vision of anthropology ... (with) sexuality as a fundamental component of one’s personhood.”

Vatican: Gender Can't Be Chosen, Refers to Intersex and Trans People as a 'Provocative Display'

Audrey McNamara

Reporter

Published 06.10.19 1:13PM ET

The Vatican's new instructions for Catholic schoolteachers and parents question gender theory and the intentions of those who identify as [intersex](#) or [transgender](#). The guidelines, released Monday as LGBT people around the world celebrate pride month, call the idea that gender exists on a spectrum "nothing more than a confused concept of freedom in the realm of feelings and wants." "Efforts to go beyond the constitutive male-female sexual difference, such as the ideas of 'intersex' or 'transgender,' lead to a masculinity or femininity that is ambiguous," the document reads, adding that "this oscillation between male and female becomes, at the end of the day, only a 'provocative' display against so-called 'traditional frameworks.'"

The document, titled "[Male and Female He Created Them](#)," does not carry Pope Francis' signature, and does not indicate that the pontiff reviewed the new guidelines. Francis has made contradictory remarks about gender theory and transgender people throughout his six-year papacy. LGBT Catholic groups immediately criticized the document. [New Ways Ministry](#) called it a "harmful tool that will be used to oppress and harm not only transgender people, but lesbian, gay, (and) bisexual people, too."

The following is a statement from Francis DeBernardo, Executive Director, New Ways Ministry:

The Vatican's new document on gender identity, "[Male and Female He Created Them](#)," is a harmful tool that will be used to oppress and harm not only transgender people, but lesbian, gay, bisexual people, too. The document associates sexual and gender minorities with libertine sexuality, a gross misrepresentation of the lives of LGBT people which perpetuates and encourages hatred, bigotry, and violence against them.

The document, from the Congregation for Catholic Education, will confuse those who sincerely struggle with questions of gender identity and sexual orientation. Such confusion leads to self-harm, addiction, and even suicide. The misinformation the document contains will cause families to reject their children, and it will increase alienation of LGBT people from the Church.

The only truth that the document reveals is that the Vatican remains ill-equipped to discuss gender and sexuality in the modern world. By ignoring new scientific understandings of gender identity, and by refusing to engage in dialogue with LGBT people about their lived experiences of self-understanding and faith, the Vatican remains in the dark ages, promoting a false teaching that relies on myth, rumor, and falsehoods. Because they have not consulted science or people's experiences, the Vatican's theology on gender is deficient and flawed. It relies on categories of male and female that were shaped centuries ago in oppressive and repressive cultures.

The Vatican maintains the idea that gender is determined solely by visible genitalia, which contemporary science has shown is an incorrect and harmful way to categorize people. Gender is also biologically determined by genetics, hormones, and brain chemistry—things not visible at birth. People do not choose their gender, as the Vatican claims: they discover it through their lived experiences. The

Church should respect and encourage this process of discovery, because it is a process by which individuals discover the wonderful way that God has created them.

Although the Vatican calls the Church to dialogue and listen to people, dialogue and listening are thwarted and useless if church leaders have already determined that the people they are listening to are influenced by ideology. Dialogue requires mutual respect, which this document does not exhibit or promote.

–Francis DeBernardo, New Ways Ministry, June 10, 2019