

## **Satan's Tactic for Christian America: Transgenderism**

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My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

As Bishop of this Local Church, it is a good to be with you for this the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of Our Sorrowful Mother's Ministry. The theme of your conference this year is, "Satan's Tactic for Christian America." Actually, Satan has many tactics for attacking Christian America, so I will focus on his most recent deception for attacking Christian life here in the United States, namely, transgenderism.

There is a prophecy by Sister Lucia dos Santos, the principal visionary of Our Lady at Fatima, is reported to have said that "the final battle between the Lord and the reign of Satan will be about marriage and the family. Don't be afraid," she added, "because anyone who operates for the sanctity of marriage and the family will always be contended and opposed in every way, because this is the decisive issue." Then she concluded: "However, Our Lady has already crushed its head."<sup>1</sup>

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Jesus said that the Devil is “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44). The novelty that Satan is using to seduce people is to convince them that they can change their gender from the biological sex with which they were born. Sadly, many people have bought into this deception and are trying to force others to accept this false view of the human person along with its destructive implications for marriage and family life.

It would also be good at the outset to look at vocabulary and the definition of some key terms. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines “transgender” as referring to “a person whose gender identity differs from the sex the person was identified as having at birth.”<sup>2</sup> The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* also distinguishes the words “sex” and “gender,” saying, “Among those who study gender and sexuality, a clear delineation between *sex* and *gender* is typically prescribed, with *sex* as the preferred term for biological forms, and *gender* limited to its meanings involving behavioral, cultural, and psychological traits.”<sup>3</sup>

The word “transgenderism” refers to those who embrace the ideology of a transgender lifestyle, that is, a biological male who is living as a transgender woman or a biological female who is living as a transgender man. “Nonbinary” is a term that can be used by people who do not describe

themselves or their genders as fitting into the categories of man or woman. A range of terms are used to refer to these experiences; “nonbinary” and “genderqueer” are among the terms that are sometimes used. “Agender” is an adjective that can describe a person who does not identify as any gender. “Gender-expansive” is an adjective that can describe someone with a more flexible gender identity than might be associated with a typical gender binary.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast to transgenderism or a transgender lifestyle, the term “gender dysphoria” refers to an involuntary psychological condition that may not be desired and may never be acted upon,<sup>5</sup> while “transgenderism” is a voluntary embrace of a transgender lifestyle.<sup>6</sup> There is a vast difference between the moral and canonical implications for a person who is struggling to deal with gender dysphoria in a healthy way and someone who has embraced a transgender lifestyle and is unrepentant about having done so. The Catholic Church seeks to accompany the former on their path to spiritual wellness while calling the latter to conversion and repentance with the assistance of God’s grace.

Gender dysphoria is a psychological condition in which a biological male or female believes he or she is of the opposite gender or even some

other imaginary gender. Proponents of transgender theory argue that gender is fluid and cannot be confined to binary or biological categories of male and female.<sup>7</sup>

The biological fact is that the sex of a child at birth is clearly male or female, except in rare cases of birth defects. Morally appropriate medical and surgical care may be indicated in such situations. On the other hand, it is harmful and morally objectionable to introduce hormonal therapy in anticipation of sex-reassignment surgery in situations where a child may be suffering from gender dysphoria, that is, confusion about his or her gender identity.

Moreover, studies have shown that people who have transgender therapy and sex-reassignment surgery are not helped by such procedures, and in fact may become more depressed after such surgery when they discover that sex-reassignment surgery was not the panacea they had hoped for, nor did it bring them the happiness they wanted.<sup>8</sup> This was the conclusion reached by Dr. Paul R. McHugh, Distinguished Service Professor of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, who discontinued sex-reassignment surgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital when he was psychiatrist-in-chief there. Referring to those who had sexual

reassignment surgery, Dr. McHugh said that “their subsequent psychosocial adjustments were no better than those who didn’t have the surgery.”<sup>9</sup> He also reported on a study showing that the suicide rate among transgendered people who had reassignment surgery is 20 times higher than the suicide rate among non-transgender people. Dr. McHugh further noted studies from Vanderbilt University and London’s Portman Clinic reporting that, among children who had expressed transgender feelings, 70%-80% of them “spontaneously lost those feelings” over time.<sup>10</sup>

The Church teaches that our identities as male and female are part of God’s good design in Creation, that our bodies and sexual identities are gifts from God, and that we should accept and care for our bodies as they were created. A person cannot change his or her biological sex. The sex of an individual is identified in each cell of the body. A person should accept and seek to live in conformity with his or her sexual identity as determined at birth.

In his Encyclical Letter on the environment, *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis wrote, “Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology,” noting that “valuing one’s own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am

going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment.”<sup>11</sup>

In January of 2020, I issued a Policy on Gender Identity for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, which included a Pastoral Guide to accompany the policy.<sup>12</sup> The Pastoral Guide starts out by noting that it is of paramount importance to handle such situations with gentle and compassionate pastoral skill and concern. All forms of discrimination and harsh treatment must be strongly resisted and corrected. It is also important to recognize the difficulties parents and families face when a child or family member is dealing with gender dysphoria. Family members likely wrestle with a sense of confusion, guilt, and uncertainty over how best to support their loved one; and they face pressure, either directly or indirectly, from the prevailing culture to celebrate and reinforce their loved one’s gender dysphoria and feel compelled to “solve” the problem by surgically and hormonally changing the biological sex of the affected person. Such treatments, especially for children, are invasive and disruptive physically, chemically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually.

For the parents of a child who is dealing with this condition, the first priority must be to assist the child in this difficult situation. Fueling the confusion that families face in these circumstances is not merciful. For the sake of the family and the loved one, it is imperative to be clear on the reality of human biology as a gift from God that we cannot change. In this regard, Pope Francis has questioned whether “the so-called gender theory is not an expression of frustration and resignation, which seeks to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it. Yes, we risk taking a step backwards. The removal of difference in fact creates a problem, not a solution.”<sup>13</sup>

The human person is a body-soul union, and the body – created male or female – is a constitutive aspect of the human person. The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, promulgated following the Second Vatican Council, teaches, “*Though made of body and soul, man is one.*”<sup>14</sup> This reality was recently addressed in the declaration *Dignitas Infinita* by the Dicastery of the Doctrine of the Faith. When addressing the dignity of the human person, the declaration states: “*In this perspective, dignity refers not only to the soul but also to the person as an inseparable unity of body and soul ... dignity is also inherent in each person’s body,*

*which participates in its own way in being in imago Dei . . . .*"<sup>15</sup> The body and soul relationship is likewise addressed in several International Theological Commission documents,<sup>16</sup> as well as in a recent doctrinal note from the USCCB Committee on Doctrine.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out."<sup>18</sup> "Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way."<sup>19</sup>

With this teaching in mind, the presentation of this truth must be made with love, compassion, and patience. As the policy of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois states, our schools, parishes and other institutions embrace with compassion those families and individuals with gender dysphoria and patiently supports them in their journey. In this regard, it must be remembered that all of the baptized are called to live a life of holiness, to abide by the will of God for their lives, and to join their sufferings

and hardships to the sacrifice of the Cross. In addition, the Catholic community, especially the Church's ministers, are called to welcome and listen to these brothers and sister, and obliged to lead them to further growth in Christ.

However, it must be clear that our schools and Church institutions will refer to such persons with the gender pronouns, along with bathroom and locker room use and sports activities, that acknowledge their God-given biology. Some people may not be willing to agree with this approach, and we need to respect their freedom; but they must likewise respect the Church's duty to adhere to revealed truth if they are to participate actively and fully in our faith community.

Given the gravity of concern regarding gender dysphoria and transgenderism, the Congregation for Catholic Education of the Holy See published a thorough and important study offering guidance on this matter, entitled "Male and Female He Created Them: Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education."<sup>20</sup>

In their *Doctrinal Note on the Moral Limits to Technological Manipulation of the Human Body*, the Committee on Doctrine of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops summed up the matter quite well, saying:

The search for solutions to problems of human suffering must continue, but it should be directed toward solutions that truly promote the flourishing of the human person in his or her bodily integrity. As new treatments are developed, they too should be evaluated according to sound moral principles grounded in the good of the human person as a subject with his or her own integrity. Catholic health care services are called to provide a model of promoting the authentic good of the human person. To fulfill this duty, all who collaborate in Catholic health care ministry must make every effort, using all appropriate means at their disposal, to provide the best medical care, as well as Christ's compassionate accompaniment, to all patients, no matter who they may be or from what condition they may be suffering. The mission of Catholic health care services is nothing less than to carry on the healing ministry of Jesus, to provide healing at every level, physical, mental, and spiritual.<sup>21</sup>

Having examined the underlying principles and Catholic teaching on gender theory, we will now look at their application to specific situations regarding the involvement in church life of persons who identify as transgender or openly live as a transgendered person.

## The Sacraments of Initiation and Transgender Persons

Starting with the Sacrament of Baptism in relation to transgender persons, one would certainly hope that the biological sex of the infant would never be in question, except in those rare cases of hermaphroditism, intersex or DSD (Disorders of Sex Development or Differences of Sex Development), when medical and surgical intervention would be morally acceptable.

An adult who suffers from gender dysphoria but has never acted upon it by seeking to transition may be baptized since anomalous psychological conditions *per se* do not present an impediment to being baptized. This is an important distinction to keep in mind. On the other hand, in the case of an adult who identifies as a transgender person and is receiving on-going treatment to alter gender identity, canon 865 would be pertinent:

§1. For an adult to be baptized, the person must have manifested the intention to receive baptism, have been instructed sufficiently about the truths of the faith and Christian obligations, and have been tested in the Christian life through the catechumenate. The adult is also to be urged to have sorrow for personal sins.

§2. An adult in danger of death can be baptized if, having some knowledge of the principal truths of the faith, the person has manifested in any way at all the intention to receive baptism and

promises to observe the commandments of the Christian religion.

The requirements that an adult wishing to be baptized must “have been instructed sufficiently about the truths of the faith and Christian obligations . . . have been tested in the Christian life” and “be urged to have sorrow for personal sins” would indicate that a person who rejects the truths of the faith and Christian obligations and/or is unrepentant of past sins and persists in serious sin should not be baptized. For example, an abortion doctor who intends to continue performing abortions should not be baptized until he or she repents of the abortions previously performed and resolves not to perform any abortions in the future. Canonists and parish priests also know that a divorced and remarried person who has not received a declaration of nullity of their previous marriage cannot receive the Sacraments of Initiation unless and until such a declaration has been legitimately obtained from an ecclesiastical tribunal.

Similarly, a biological male who is living as a transgender woman or a biological female who is living as a transgender man should not receive the Sacraments of Initiation (i.e., Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist),

unless and until that person repents and renounces the transgender identity in the external forum and takes steps, if needed, to detransition in those cases when hormonal and/or surgical intervention had taken place.<sup>22</sup> At a minimum, this would mean to start acting publicly in a manner consistent with his or her biological sex. In a danger of death situation, there should be some expression of remorse, because a person who continues to profess his or her transgenderism is not repentant of that gravely immoral lifestyle. Pastoral concern is heightened when the transgender treatment was introduced to a minor, now seeking Baptism.

The same would be true for a person to serve as a sponsor for baptism or confirmation. According to canon 872, a sponsor “helps the baptized person to lead a Christian life in keeping with baptism and to fulfill faithfully the obligations inherent in it.” Canon 874 §1 states, “To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor a person must . . . 3°) be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on.” Per canon 893, the same requirements apply for a person to serve as a sponsor for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Since the role of a sponsor is to help the baptized person to lead a Christian life, the sponsor must be someone who leads a life consistent with the Catholic faith. Thus, persons persisting in a transgender lifestyle are not qualified to serve as a sponsor for baptism or confirmation. I would add that this standard for serving as a sponsor applies to other aspects of the moral life, not just a transgender lifestyle. Far too often, a person is asked to be a sponsor simply because he or she is a relative or friend even if that person has fallen away from the practice of the Catholic faith. Pastors of souls need to be more vigilant to see that sponsors for baptism and confirmation truly lead a life of faith and have the qualities to help the baptized person to lead a Christian life.

We should note that His Eminence, Víctor Manuel Cardinal Fernández, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, on October 31, 2023, following an audience with Pope Francis that same day, authored a document bearing the title, "Answers to Several Questions from His Excellency, the Most Reverend José Negri, Bishop of Santo Amaro, Brazil, Regarding Participation in the Sacraments of Baptism and Matrimony by Transgender Persons and Homosexual Persons."<sup>23</sup> In answer to the question, can a transgender person be baptized?, Cardinal Fernandez wrote:

A transgender person—even after undergoing hormone treatment and sex-reassignment surgery—can receive Baptism under the same conditions as other believers, if there are no situations in which there is a risk of generating public scandal or disorientation among the faithful. In the case of children or adolescents with problems of a transgender nature, if they are well-prepared and have the right disposition, they also can receive Baptism.

In answer to the question, Can a transgender person serve as a godparent?, Cardinal Fernandez wrote:

Under certain conditions, an adult transgender person—even after undergoing hormone treatment and sex-reassignment surgery—may be admitted to the function of serving as a godparent. However, since this task does not constitute a right, pastoral prudence demands that it should not be permitted if there is a danger of scandal, undue legitimization, or disorientation in the educational sphere of the ecclesial community.

I do not think anything I have said is inconsistent with the answer given by Cardinal Fernandez since he says a transgender person “can receive Baptism under the same conditions as other believers” and “if there are no

situations in which there is a risk of generating public scandal or disorientation among the faithful.” I would argue that all such cases of persons openly living a transgender lifestyle present a danger of scandal.

Indeed, Cardinal Fernandez goes on to say:

At the same time, the following points should be considered, especially when there are doubts about the objective moral situation a person is in or about the person’s subjective disposition toward grace. In the case of Baptism, the Church teaches that when the Sacrament is received without repentance for grave sins, the individual does not receive sanctifying grace, even though he or she does receive the sacramental character.

The following account of the Rite of Election in the fourth century illustrates the longstanding requirement of conversion before being initiated into the Church. In the early 380s, a woman named Egeria left her home in what is known today as southern France or northern Spain – on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Writing home to her community, she describes this ancient rite as it was then celebrated in Jerusalem. She says:

Then the candidates are brought in one by one, the men with their “fathers”, the women with their “mothers”[that is, their godparents]. Then the bishop one by one asks their neighbors:

“Is he a good-living man? Does he respect his parents? Is he a drunkard or untrustworthy?” He asks them like this about every vice, at least the more serious ones. If the bishop finds that the candidate is free from all these faults about which he has questioned the witnesses, he writes down the candidate’s name with his own hand.<sup>24</sup>

All believers are called to repentance. Indeed, the first words of Jesus’ public ministry were, “Repent, and believe in the Good News” (*Mark* 1:15).

### **The Sacrament of Holy Eucharist and Transgender Persons**

According to canon 916, “A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to celebrate Mass or receive the body of the Lord without previous sacramental confession unless there is a grave reason and there is no opportunity to confess; in this case the person is to remember the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition which includes the resolution of confessing as soon as possible.”<sup>25</sup> The key question here is whether living a transgender lifestyle is a grave sin.

In this regard, Pope Francis said in March of 2023, “I have always distinguished between what is pastoral [ministry] to persons who have different sexual orientations and that which is the ideology of gender. These

are two different things. The ideology of gender is, at this time, one of the most dangerous ideological colonizations. It goes far beyond the sexual” because “it dilutes the differences. The richness that is of men and women, and of all humanity, is the tension of the differences. It is to grow by means of the tension of the differences. The matter of gender is diluting the differences and making the world the same, all dull, all equal. And that goes against the human vocation.”<sup>26</sup>

This year, on March 1, 2024, Pope Francis met with members of the French-based Research and Anthropology of Vocations Institute and said, “It is very important that there is this meeting, this meeting between men and women, because today the ugliest danger is gender ideology, which cancels out differences. Erasing differences is erasing humanity. Man and woman, however, are in a fruitful tension.”<sup>27</sup>

While the Holy Father does not speak in terms of sinfulness, his references to gender ideology as “the most dangerous ideological colonizations” and the “the ugliest danger” facing humanity are dire expressions that imply the moral gravity of gender ideology. Thus, the transgender lifestyle should be considered gravely sinful if a person publicly adheres to the ideology despite efforts to educate the individual in the

Church's teaching, namely, that the transgender lifestyle is contrary to the divine plan for humanity and poses serious dangers to the human race.

If a person who persists in living a transgender lifestyle and is unrepentant but does not refrain from seeking to receive Holy Communion, then canon 915 would pertain, which says that those who "obstinately persevere in manifest grave sin are not to be admitted to holy communion."

In the case of First Holy Communion for a child suffering from gender dysphoria, the psychological condition itself would not bar a child from receiving the Eucharist. However, if the child is acting out by living as if he or she belonged to the opposite sex, that could be grounds for delaying the reception of First Eucharist since the child and possibly the parents would seem to be rejecting a teaching of the Church and perhaps even embracing a sinful lifestyle. Again, pastoral sensitivity is necessary to properly discern the understanding of the parents and each child seeking transgender treatment. Canon 913, §1 requires "careful preparation so that they understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity and are able to receive the body of Christ with faith and devotion."

## **The Sacrament of Penance and Transgender Persons**

According to canon 987, “To receive the salvific remedy of the sacrament of penance, a member of the Christian faithful must be disposed in such a way that, rejecting sins committed and having a purpose of amendment, the person is turned back to God.” Thus, a person living a transgender lifestyle must repent his or her sinful way of life and have a firm purpose to amend his or her life in order to receive sacramental absolution. Again, this would mean, at a minimum, to start acting publicly in a manner consistent with his or her biological sex. In a danger of death situation, there should be some expression of remorse for his or her transgender lifestyle. The Second Vatican Council taught that “all Christ’s faithful, whatever be the conditions, duties and circumstances of their lives – and indeed through all these, will daily increase in holiness, if they receive all things with faith from the hand of their heavenly Father and if they cooperate with the divine will.”<sup>28</sup>

## **Matrimony and Transgender Persons**

Canon 1055, §1 defines the matrimonial covenant as the act “by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the

whole of life and which is ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring.” Canon 1057, §1 says that “the consent of the parties, legitimately manifested between persons qualified by law, makes marriage.” Canon 1057, §2 defines matrimonial consent as “an act of the will by which a man and a woman mutually give and accept each other through an irrevocable covenant in order to establish marriage.” The references in these canons to “a man and a woman” mean that two biological males or two biological females cannot validly enter marriage. In other words, a biological male who purports to be a transgender woman cannot validly marry another man, nor can a biological female who purports to be a transgender man marry another woman.

These canons are a prime example of the principle that law follows theology, since the Bible clearly teaches in the Book of Genesis, “God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and God said to them: Be fertile and multiply” (*Genesis* 1:27-28). Thus, such attempted marriages involving a transgender person with a person of the same biological sex would be invalid.

## The Sacrament of Holy Orders and Transgender Persons

The canonical stipulation regarding the Sacrament of Holy Orders and transgender persons would seem to be simple and straightforward. Canon 1024 says rather succinctly in eight words, “A baptized male alone receives sacred ordination validly.” The Latin is even more concise, using only seven words to say, “*Sacram ordinationem valide recipit solus vir baptizatus.*” While the canon says only a “baptized male” but does not say, “baptized biological male,” it would be disingenuous for anyone to claim that the absence of the adjective “biological” would open the door to the ordination of a “baptized transgender male.”

Canon 17 says, “Ecclesiastical laws must be understood in accord with the proper meaning of the words considered in their text and context. If the meaning remains doubtful and obscure, recourse must be made to parallel places, if there are such, to the purpose and circumstances of the law, and to the mind of the legislator.” Since sex reassignment surgery is contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church, as explained earlier, it would be specious for anyone to argue that the reference to a “baptized male” in canon 1024 means anything other than a “baptized biological male.” Since the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* was promulgated by Pope St. John Paul II, it would be

ludicrous for anyone to suggest that the mind of the legislator intended to include “transgender males” in the interpretation of canon 1024.

### **Consecrated Life and Transgender Persons**

The term “consecrated life” encompasses a number of different but related lived realities, including religious institutes, secular institutes, hermits, and consecrated virgins. The common feature of the various types of consecrated life, except that of consecrated virgins, is the profession of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience (c. 573).

Undergirding the canonical norms on consecrated life is the understanding that a life lived according to the public profession of the evangelical counsels is done in and for the Church. Individuals receive a vocation from God not merely to achieve personal holiness but as an aid to the building up of the holiness of the Church in which the vocation will be lived out. Accordingly, action by the Church is crucial both during the discernment of a vocation and in a public act in the Church that receives and celebrates it. As a *public ecclesial* vocation, moreover, it is always discerned with the mind of the Church.

In the act of consecration, both the person's mind and body are dedicated to God in the Church. As a result, the act must reflect the anthropological understanding of the human person received from God and taught by the Church.

By way of illustration, suppose a biological male with gender dysphoria is living as a woman and seeks to become a diocesan hermit. Through years of discernment and accompaniment, the diocesan bishop believes "she" is ready to make a public profession. There is a public Mass and profession. After the fact, the diocesan hermit makes it known that he is "transgender" and did not present himself as the sex he was from birth, namely a biological male, because he felt the diocesan bishop and the faithful would not accept him if they knew. While the vocation of a hermit is open to both men and women, the gender presented does not correspond to the physical body, which presents an issue of constitutiveness (as described above). In addition, there may be an error concerning the substance (either the male or female body that is being *dedicated* as part of the public vow), which could invalidate the act (c. 125 CIC). Moreover, through concealment, whether overtly or covertly, the person has concealed an objective truth (the

biological reality of the person) regarding an essential part to obtain an action (cc. 125 §2 and 1191 §3 CIC).

Transgender ideology clearly exalts subjective personal freedom over objective truth and moral norms, with increasingly obvious injustices, even violence, with respect to the distorted use of such freedom. Freedom is discovered and strengthened in obedience, as obedience is strengthened in freedom.<sup>29</sup> Obedience is one of the marks of consecrated life, not just obedience to a religious superior, but obedience to Sacred Scripture, to the teaching of the Church, including Christian anthropology, and obedience to the truth, understood objectively, not just subjectively. Thus, it cannot be concluded that a transgender sense of identity is something compatible with consecrated life.<sup>30</sup>

### **Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites and Transgender Persons**

Canon 1184, §1 states, “Unless they gave some signs of repentance before death, the following must be deprived of ecclesiastical funerals: . . . 3° - other manifest sinners who cannot be granted ecclesiastical funerals without public scandal of the faithful.” A person who suffers from gender dysphoria but has not taken any action to change his or her sex hormonally

or surgically is suffering from a psychological condition but is not a manifest sinner, thus there is no reason to deprive such a person of an ecclesiastical funeral. On the other hand, a transgender person who has had sexual reassignment surgery and openly lives a lifestyle contrary to his or her biological sex and persists in such a lifestyle without some sign of repentance before death must be deprived of an ecclesiastical funeral since such a lifestyle is manifestly sinful and would give scandal to the faithful. In case of doubt canon 1184, §2 says that “the local ordinary is to be consulted, and his judgment must be followed.”

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this analysis of the canonical implications regarding sacramental issues and transgender persons is necessarily complex, since we are dealing with novel situations which heretofore have not been matters of routine consideration. It is my hope that I have helped to provide some clarity and guidance in navigating these previously uncharted waters, mindful that, in the end, the salvation of souls in the supreme law.

May God give us this grace. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Steve Skojec, "Sister Lucia: 'Final Confrontation between the Lord and Satan will be over Family and Marriage,'" *One Peter Five*, December 8, 2016; accessed online October 25, 2024, at <https://onepeterfive.com/sister-lucia-final-confrontation-between-the-lord-and-satan-will-be-over-family-and-marriage/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transgender>; accessed October 3, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gender>; accessed October 3, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Laurel Wamsley, "A Guide To Gender Identity Terms," *NPR*, June 2, 2021, accessed online October 25, 2024, at <https://www.npr.org/2021/06/02/996319297/gender-identity-pronouns-expression-guide-lgbtq>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/gender-dysphoria/what-is-gender-dysphoria#>; accessed October 3, 2024.

<sup>6</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/transgenderism>; accessed October 3, 2024.

<sup>7</sup> According to the American Psychiatric Association, "The term 'transgender' refers to a person whose sex assigned at birth (i.e. the sex assigned at birth, usually based on external genitalia) does not align with their gender identity (i.e., one's psychological sense of their gender). Some people who are transgender will experience 'gender dysphoria,' which refers to psychological distress that results from an incongruence between one's sex assigned at birth and one's gender identity. Though gender dysphoria often begins in childhood, some people may not experience it until after puberty or much later." <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/gender-dysphoria/what-is-gender-dysphoria>.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example:

- "The Dutch Studies and The Myth of Reliable Research in Pediatric Gender Medicine," Society for Evidence-Based Gender Medicine, January 11, 2023; <https://segm.org/Dutch-studies-critically-flawed>
- Levine, S.B., Abbruzzese, E., "Current Concerns About Gender-Affirming Therapy in Adolescents," *Current Sexual Health Reports* 15, 113-123 (2023). <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11930-023-00358-x>
- Nimitpanya P, Wainipitapong S, Wiwattarangkul T, Suwan A, Phanuphak N, Panyakhamlerd K "Evaluation of mental health and satisfaction following transfeminine gender-affirming surgery in Thailand," *Transgender Health* 7:1, 61-67 (2022) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9829121/>
- John J Straub, Krishna K Paul, Lauren G Bothwell, Sterling J Deshazo, Georgiy Golovko, Michael S Miller, and Dietrich V Jehle, "Risk of Suicide and Self-Harm Following Gender-Affirmation Surgery," published online April 2, 2024; <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC11063965/>
- Cecilia Dhejne, Paul Lichtenstein, Marcus Boman, Anna L. V. Johansson, Niklas Långström, and Mikael Landén; James Scott, Editor, "Long-Term Follow-Up of Transsexual Persons Undergoing Sex Reassignment Surgery: Cohort Study in Sweden," published online February 22, 2011; <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3043071/>

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<sup>9</sup> Paul McHugh, M.D., “Transgender Surgery Isn’t the Solution: A drastic physical change doesn’t address underlying psycho-social troubles,” *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*, originally published on June 12, 2014; updated May 13, 2016, accessed online August 27, 2024, at [http://www.wsj.com/articles/paul-mchugh-transgender-surgery-isnt-the-solution-1402615120?reflink=desktopwebshare\\_permalink](http://www.wsj.com/articles/paul-mchugh-transgender-surgery-isnt-the-solution-1402615120?reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink).

<sup>10</sup> Lawrence S. Mayer and Paul R. McHugh, *Sexuality and Gender: Findings from the Biological, Psychological, and Social Sciences—Executive Summary*, *New Atlantis* 50 (Fall 2016): 7-9, <http://www.thenewatlantis.com/>.

<sup>11</sup> Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter on Care of Our Common Home, *Laudato si’*, May 24, 2015, n. 155, accessed online August 27, 2024, at [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html).

<sup>12</sup> <https://dio.org/wp-content/uploads/1667/43/Pastoral-Guide-and-650-Gender-Identity-Policy.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Pope Francis, General Audience, Saint Peter’s Square, Vatican City, April 15, 2015, accessed online August 27, 2024, at [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150415\\_udienza-generale.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150415_udienza-generale.html).

<sup>14</sup> *Gaudium et Spes* 14.

<sup>15</sup> Dicastery of the Doctrine of the Faith, “*Declaration ‘Dignitas Infinita’ on Human Dignity.*” [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_dof\\_doc\\_20240402\\_dignitas-infinita\\_en.html#\\_ftn30](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_dof_doc_20240402_dignitas-infinita_en.html#_ftn30). (accessed June 27, 2024), 18.

<sup>16</sup> International Theological Commission, “Some Current Questions in Eschatology.” [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_1990\\_problemi-attuali-escatologia\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1990_problemi-attuali-escatologia_en.html). (accessed June 27, 2024), Part 5. “Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God.” [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20040723\\_communion-stewardship\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20040723_communion-stewardship_en.html) (accessed June 27, 2024); Chapter 2. “‘In Search of a Universal Ethic: A New Look at the Natural Law’” [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20090520\\_legge-naturale\\_en.html#](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20090520_legge-naturale_en.html#). (accessed June 27, 2024), Chapter 3.

<sup>17</sup> USCCB, Committee on Doctrine, “Doctrinal Note: On the Moral Limits to Technological Manipulation of the Human Body,” 2023. [www.usccb.org/resources/Doctrinal%20Note%202023-03-20.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/resources/Doctrinal%20Note%202023-03-20.pdf). (accessed June 27, 2024), 2-3.

<sup>18</sup> See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (“CCC”), §2333.

<sup>19</sup> See, CCC §2335.

<sup>20</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, “Male and Female He Created Them: Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education,” Vatican City, 2019, accessed online August 27, 2024, at [http://www.educatio.va/content/dam/cec/Documenti/19\\_0997\\_INGLESE.pdf](http://www.educatio.va/content/dam/cec/Documenti/19_0997_INGLESE.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> USCCB, Committee on Doctrine, “Doctrinal Note: On the Moral Limits to Technological Manipulation of the Human Body,” 2023. [www.usccb.org/resources/Doctrinal%20Note%202023-03-20.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/resources/Doctrinal%20Note%202023-03-20.pdf).

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(accessed June 27, 2024), 22.

<sup>22</sup> For personal testimonies of persons who have detransitioned and reverted to their original gender, see: Mary Margaret Olohan, *Detrans: True Stories of Escaping the Gender Identity Cult* (Regnery Publishing, 2024). The author provides a summary of the book in her article, "Detrans: Stories of Healing and Hope," *Our Sunday Visitor*, June 2-8, 2024, pp. 9-12, available online under the title, "One woman's harrowing story of surviving the gender ideology cult," May 31, 2024, at <https://www.oursundayvisitor.com/one-womans-harrowing-story-of-surviving-the-gender-ideology-cult/>.

<sup>23</sup> Víctor Manuel Cardinal Fernández, Prefect, Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Answers to Several Questions from His Excellency, the Most Reverend José Negri, Bishop of Santo Amaro, Brazil, Regarding Participation in the Sacraments of Baptism and Matrimony by Transgender Persons and Homosexual Persons" (November 3, 2023); accessed online October 9, 2024, at [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_dof\\_20231031-documento-mons-negri\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_dof_20231031-documento-mons-negri_en.html).

<sup>24</sup> Egeria, *Peregrinatio*, 45. In Edward Yarnold, S.J., *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: The Origins of the R.C.I.A.* (Collegetown, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 8-9.

<sup>25</sup> See 1 Cor 11:27-30) regarding St. Paul's warnings about the dangers to a person who receives the eucharist in a state of grave sin.

<sup>26</sup> Gerard O'Connell, "Pope Francis says 'ideology of gender' is 'dangerous' . . .," *America*, March 10, 2023, accessed online August 29, 2024 at <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2023/03/10/pope-francis-ideology-gender-theory-synod-244888>.

<sup>27</sup> Matthew Santucci, "Pope Francis: 'Today the ugliest danger is gender ideology'," *Catholic News Agency*, March 1, 2024, accessed online August 29, 2024, at <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/256963/pope-francis-today-the-ugliest-danger-is-gender-ideology>.

<sup>28</sup> *Lumen Gentium* 41.

<sup>29</sup> "He came to do the will of the Father who sent him, and he did it steadily, learning obedience through suffering, and becoming a cause of salvation for all who obey." Letter of His Holiness John Paul II to the Bishops of the United States, *Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life*, April 3, 1983, no. 15; accessed online October 3, 2024, at [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccsrlife/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccsrlife\\_doc\\_31051\\_983\\_magisterium-on-religious-life\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccsrlife/documents/rc_con_ccsrlife_doc_31051_983_magisterium-on-religious-life_en.html).

<sup>30</sup> Following are links to two articles on canonical aspects of consecrated life that may be relevant to the current concern with the relationship of transgenderism and consecrated life, in particular the eremitical life.

María Areitio: Asociaciones de fieles y vida consagrada: distintas relaciones y sus perspectivas canónicas; <https://dadun.unav.edu/handle/10171/36313>

Amy Hereford, *See I Am Making Something New: New Institutes, Diocesan Hermits and Consecrated Virgins and New Forms of Consecrated Life* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2018); <https://www.amazon.co.uk/See-Making-Something-New-Consecrated/dp/1717148026>