

Issue Bulletin

Examining Critical Issues in Faithful Catholic Education

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Protecting the Human Person: Gender Issues in Catholic School and College Sports

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Everything in Catholic education must serve its mission: which entails the pursuit of truth, the integral formation of the human person, the sanctification of students, and service to the community. Athletics are particularly well-suited to achieving elements of this mission. Sports, correctly balanced, can be particularly effective in developing virtue, building community, and providing a powerful experience of the unity of body and soul. The Vatican has noted that,

...in the context of the modern world, sport is perhaps the most striking example of the unity of body and soul. ...neglecting the unity of body and soul results in an attitude that either entirely disregards the body or fosters a worldly materialism. Hence, all the dimensions have to be taken into account in order to understand what actually constitutes the human being.¹

Catholic educators have a positive responsibility to teach the truth about the human person. Among these fundamental truths are:

- everyone, by nature of their creation by God and eternal destiny, has inherent dignity and must be treated with love and respect;²
- God, through Jesus Christ, the perfect man, fully reveals man to himself;³

¹ Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life, *Giving the Best of Yourself: A Document on the Christian Perspective on Sport and the Human Person* (2018) at <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2018/06/01/180601b.html> (accessed on Oct. 6, 2020).

² *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997) 27.

³ Saint Paul VI, *Gaudium et spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (1965) 22, at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html (accessed on Oct. 6, 2020).

- the things of creation are to be received in awe, respect, and gratitude as gifts from God and not manipulated, dominated, and controlled in ways contrary to their natural ends;⁴
- the very existence of our bodies is one of the awesome creative gifts of God, and the body is “a temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:19) which we must treat with honor and respect according to God’s original purpose;
- we are incarnate creatures with a unified body and soul;⁵
- there is a natural “language of the body” which helps us understand and express our united physical and spiritual selves;⁶
- God made us male and female (Genesis 1:27);
- male and female are two distinct but equally dignified and complementary ways of being human;⁷
- the concepts of sex and gender can be distinguished but not disaggregated;⁸
- a biologically-based sexual identity is “a reality deeply inscribed in man and woman;”⁹ and
- a person “should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity.”¹⁰

These are not minor or inconsequential teachings but are at the heart of what it means to be human, and athletic programs should be structured to ensure a healthy Christian understanding of these truths. Catholic educators must also be prepared to counter elements in the current culture, such as “gender ideology,” which is often contrary to the Church’s understanding and teachings about Christian anthropology. Given the incompatibility between gender ideology (the idea that one’s gender can be detached from one’s biological sex) and a Catholic worldview, Catholic educators cannot simply look the other way or surrender their vision of man and reality to these erroneous and dangerous premises. Too much is at stake. Gender ideology undermines Church teachings on:

- truth,¹¹

⁴ *Catechism* 307.

⁵ *Catechism* 362.

⁶ Saint John Paul II, “Language of the Body, the Substratum and Content of the Sacramental Sign of Spousal Communion,” weekly address (January 5, 1983), in *The Redemption of the Body and Sacramentality of Marriage (Theology of the Body)* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005) 268-270.

⁷ *Catechism* 2334, 2383.

⁸ Pope Francis, *Amoris laetitia* (2016) 56.

⁹ Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, *Letter to Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and the World* (2004) 8.

¹⁰ *Catechism* 2393.

¹¹ Pope Benedict XVI, *Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI on the Occasion of Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia* (2012) at http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2012/december/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20121221_auguri-curia.html (accessed on Oct. 6, 2020).

- human anthropology,¹²
- the nature of the human person as male and female,¹³
- complementarity,¹⁴
- marriage,¹⁵
- family,¹⁶ and
- society.¹⁷

These are all challenged or compromised by accepting or enabling the underlying beliefs which inspire gender ideology. The Catholic school's responsibility to these truths is much more important than any individual student's desire to play on a team not in alignment with his or her sex. Those suffering from gender dysphoria deserve our care and kindness, but Catholic educators must also, while acting with compassion, follow Church guidance which states that "the Catholic educator must consciously inspire his or her activity with the Christian concept of the person, in communion with the Magisterium of the Church."¹⁸ While affirming the dignity of all persons and seeking to lead all to the saving love of Christ, Catholic educators and coaches must strive to speak and live the truth with love. To help guide athletic departments through these complex situations, Catholic institutions need position statements and policies that emphasize the Christian view of the human person to ensure that the powerful influence of athletics is not coopted to work against its mission.

Challenges of gender ideology

Pope Francis warns against gender ideology which,

...denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family. This ideology leads to educational programs and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference

¹² United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Images of God: Reflections on Christian Anthropology* (1983) at <https://www.usccb.org/committees/ecumenical-interreligious-affairs/images-god-reflections-christian-anthropology> (accessed on Oct. 6, 2020).

¹³ *Catechism* 2331-2335.

¹⁴ Pope Benedict XVI, *Address of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to Participants in the Plenary Meeting of the Pontifical Council "Cor Unum"* (2013) 4; *Catechism* 396-392.

¹⁵ *Catechism* 1601-1605.

¹⁶ *Catechism* 1655-1658

¹⁷ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching* (2005) at <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/seven-themes-of-catholic-social-teaching> (accessed Oct. 6, 2020).

¹⁸ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (1982) 18.

between male and female. Consequently, human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time.¹⁹

Following the Pope’s warning that gender ideology is a dangerous legislative and educational force, the Vatican further alerts Catholic educators that gender ideology has created,

...an *educational crisis*, especially in the field of affectivity and in many places, curricula are being planned and implemented which “allegedly convey a neutral conception of the person and of life, yet in fact reflect an anthropology opposed to faith and to right reason.” The disorientation regarding anthropology which is a widespread feature of our cultural landscape has undoubtedly helped to destabilize 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 conditioning²⁰ (emphasis in original).

The danger is serious, as gender ideology not only destroys the notion of male and female and the family but also “aims to annihilate the concept of ‘nature.’”²¹

Related to student formation, gender ideology is part of a “continuous bombardment of messages that are ambiguous and unclear, and which end up creating emotional disorientation as well as impeding psycho-relational maturity.”²² It is the responsibility of Catholic educators “to maintain the Church’s vision of human sexuality, in keeping with the right of families to freely base the education of their children upon *an integral anthropology*, capable of harmonizing the human person’s physical, psychic and spiritual identity”²³ (emphasis in the original).

Impact of athletics

Sporting activities are a significant part of the cultural and social fabric of our society. They provide entertainment, heroes, conversation, and community. Some have even noted the quasi-religious function sports now play in the common culture, given the degree to which they can generate significant commitment, sacrifice, passionate devotion, ritual, community and fellowship.²⁴ American fans spend on average about eight hours a week consuming sports,²⁵ and the sports industry is the 11th largest in the country (bigger, for example, than machinery,

¹⁹ Pope Francis (2016) 56.

²⁰ Congregation for Catholic Education, “*Male and Female He Created Them*”: Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education (2019) Introduction.

²¹ Congregation for Catholic Education (2019) 25.

²² Congregation for Catholic Education (2019) 42.

²³ Congregation for Catholic Education (2019) 55.

²⁴ Corine Gatti, “Have Sports Become a Religion?” (not dated) at <https://www.beliefnet.com/entertainment/sports/have-sports-become-a-religion.aspx> (accessed on Oct. 6, 2020).

²⁵ Statista. “Average Number of Hours Sports Fans Spend Per Week Consuming Sports (Hours per Week) From 2011 – 2014” (May 27, 2014) at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/288896/hours-spent-per-week-consuming-sports-in-the-united-states/> (accessed on Oct. 6, 2020).

insurance, food, trucking, legal, autos, farms, finance, and oil).²⁶ Half of all Americans participate in a sport regularly, and a much higher percentage occasionally.²⁷ Parents frequently encourage their children to play sports in hopes of promoting their physical and emotional health and social skills.²⁸ Athletics plays a significant role in the development of individuals and entire cultures.

The Church concerns herself with all that is authentically human, and athletics properly experienced serves a proper human end. Vatican II acknowledged both the communal good of athletics, in that “physical exercise and sport help to create harmony of feeling even on the level of the community as well as foster friendly relations between men of all classes, countries, and races,”²⁹ while also emphasizing that a person’s physical, moral, and intellectual endowments must be developed harmoniously with an eye toward freedom and virtue.³⁰

Because “the integral formation of the human person, which is the purpose of education, includes the development of all the human faculties of the students,”³¹ athletics can serve Catholic education and its goal to help students develop virtue and harmonize mind, body, and will. Pope Pius XII articulates this integrating element and its potential to help student athletes love and serve God:

Sport, rightly understood, is an occupation of the whole man, and while perfecting the body as an instrument of the mind, it also makes the mind itself a more refined instrument for the search and communication of truth and helps man to achieve that end to which all others must be subservient, the service and praise of his Creator.³²

Because athletics is such a powerful influence on both individuals and cultures, it can also pose a threat when it does not serve truth or does not serve to praise God. St. John Paul II cautions:

Sport runs the risk of degrading man if it is not based on and supported by the human virtues of loyalty, generosity and respect for the rules of the game as well as respect for the player. These are virtues that harmonize well with the Christian spirit because they demand a

²⁶ Justin Wolfers, “The Business of Sports: Where’s the Money?”, presentation to the Young President’s Organization, San Jose Sharks Stadium (Feb. 6, 2003) at <http://users.nber.org/~jwolfers/Papers/Comments/The%20Business%20of%20Sports.pdf> (accessed on Oct 6, 2020).

²⁷ Dennis Howard and Brad Humphreys, eds., *The Business of Sports: Volume 1, Perspectives on the Sports Industry* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2008).

²⁸ The Aspen Institute Project Play, “Survey: Kids Quit Most Sports by Age 11” (Aug. 1, 2019) at <https://www.aspenprojectplay.org/national-youth-sport-survey-1> (accessed on Oct. 6, 2020).

²⁹ Saint Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) 61.

³⁰ Saint Paul VI, *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965) Introduction.

³¹ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (1982) 17.

³² Pope Pius XII, *Sport at the Service of the Spirit* (1945).

capacity for self-control, self-denial, sacrifice and humility, and therefore an attitude of gratefulness to God, who is the giver of every good and therefore also the giver of the necessary physical and intellectual talents. Sport is not merely the exercise of muscles, but it is the school of moral values and of training in courage, in perseverance, and in overcoming laziness and carelessness. Besides, it is an antidote for weakness, discouragement and dejection in defeat. There is no doubt that these values are of greatest interest for the formation of a personality which consider sports not an end in itself but as a means to total and harmonious physical, moral, and social development.³³

St. John Paul II's emphasis that self-denial and respect for the body as God's gift are fundamental to a healthy athletic program, which ought always to be a means to "harmonious physical, moral, and social development," is particularly important given the new challenges gender ideology now brings to the scene.

Since athletics provides a striking example of body/soul union, Catholic educators cannot cede this arena to gender ideology. "The Church understands the human person as a unit of body, soul and spirit, and seeks to avoid any kind of reductionism in sport that debases human dignity."³⁴ Anything, in sports or any other activity, which detracts from the fullness, health and harmony of the body/soul unity which is at the foundation of the human person does not serve humanity well. St. John Paul II emphasizes that sports are never just "sport for sport's sake" but always at the service of the dignity, freedom, and integral development of man.³⁵ He also cautions athletes:

The educational and spiritual potential of sport must make believers and people of good will united and determined in challenging every distorted aspect that can intrude, recognizing it as a phenomenon opposed to the full development of the individual and to his enjoyment of life. Every care must be taken to protect the human body from any attack on its integrity, from any exploitation and from any idolatry.³⁶

Gender ideology is a distortion of the full development of a person and attacks the integrity of the body. It works against a Catholic understanding of athletics and the good of the person and so has no claim on Catholic programming.

³³ Saint John Paul II, *Address to Italian Olympic Medal Winners: Sports Offers Opportunity for Spiritual Elevation in L'Osservatore Romano* N.50 (Dec. 10, 1984) 4.

³⁴ Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life (2018) 1.1.

³⁵ Saint John Paul II, "Jubilee Year of The Redeemer Homily Given at the Olympic Stadium in Rome April 12, 1984" in Kevin Lixey, Norbert Muller, and Cornelius Schafer (eds.), *Blessed John Paul II Speaks to Athletes: Homilies, Messages and Speeches on Sport* (London: John Paul II Foundation for Sport, 2012) p. 21 at <http://www.laici.va/content/dam/laici/documenti/sport/eng/magisterium/jpii-pastoral-messages.pdf> (accessed on Oct. 6, 2020).

³⁶ Saint John Paul II, *Jubilee of Sports People: Homily of John Paul II* (Oct. 29, 2000) 3 at http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/2000/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_20001029_jubilee-sport.html (accessed on Oct. 6, 2020).

Catholic sports programming must proceed thoughtfully and deliberately, precisely because athletics provides a powerful locus for a presentation of the full concept of the human person. Sports are human activities of the will and spirit, clearly grounded in physical and material reality where things are seen, measured, and judged. This way of approaching and seeking to measure, judge, and understand things is also present in the Catholic philosophical proposition that if the senses are in good condition and exercised thoughtfully under normal circumstances, and if the intellect is calm, focused, and unbiased, we can, with sufficient evidence, come to know and judge things that actually exist outside of ourselves.³⁷ Athletics intuitively celebrates this insight, but the validity of this proposition is not limited to sports. It is a way of countering the tsunami of relativism in which our culture is drowning, and which is, through gender ideology, now swamping athletics, especially for women. Catholic philosophical realism counters relativism and gender ideology by affirming our ability to know reality with our minds and senses.

Building on this proposition and aided by revelation, the Catholic anthropological position insists “that the material world (and everything that exists) is good as it is created by God and that the person is a unity of body, soul, and spirit.”³⁸ Because of this reality, athletics can and does serve the integral development of students. Students’ “embodied experiences of play and sport necessarily also involve and impact young people at the level of soul and spirit.”³⁹ It can affect their understanding of themselves and their relationship with God in profound ways.

Catholic education seeks to leverage this powerful tool to ensure students’ understanding that,

Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity. Through his very bodily condition he sums up in himself the elements of the material world. Through him they are thus brought to their highest perfection and can raise their voice in praise freely given to the Creator. For this reason man may not despise his bodily life. Rather he is obliged to regard his body as good and to hold it in honor since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day.⁴⁰

This body is a gift from God, created by Him as male or female, and will be resurrected by Him as male or female.⁴¹ This is part of His perfect plan for us, which we must acknowledge for our own good and happiness. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* insists that,

³⁷ Leslie Walker, “Truth,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 2012) at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm> (accessed on Oct. 6, 2020).

³⁸ Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life (2018) 3.1.

³⁹ Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life (2018) 5.2.

⁴⁰ *Catechism* 364.

⁴¹ Saint John Paul II, “The Resurrection and Theological Anthropology,” weekly address (Dec. 2, 1981), in *The Redemption of the Body and Sacramentality of Marriage (Theology of the Body)* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005) 169-172.

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.⁴²

Pope Francis, in addressing the notion of sexual identity, affirms that “biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated.”⁴³

The Catholic position is clear: humans are a body-soul unity and part of a divine plan. These are fundamental truths of the Catholic faith. The mission of the Church is to preach the good news about God and Man and our redemption in Christ. She establishes schools as part of her great commission.

As noted at the outset, everything in Catholic education must serve its mission of the sanctification of its students and service to society. Given the incompatibility of gender ideology and a Catholic worldview, Catholic educators cannot simply look the other way or surrender their vision of man and reality. Too much is at stake.

Safety, fair play and justice

When opposing gender ideology, educators must not lose sight of the most important reasons it must be rejected. But there are also lesser but compelling reasons to reject the influence of gender ideology in sports programs. These include the responsibility to ensure athlete safety, promote fair play, and ensure justice, especially for biologically female athletes.

Player safety is the first consideration of all athletic experiences. Biological males have androgenized bodies with higher testosterone levels and other physiological characteristics that provide an inherent physiological advantage over biological females. “Science demonstrates that high adult levels of testosterone, as well as permanent testosterone effects on male physiology during in-utero and early development, provides a performance advantage in sport and that much of this male physiology is not mitigated by the transition to a transwoman.”⁴⁴ Males are naturally physiologically bigger, stronger, and faster than females.⁴⁵ This is clearly evident in high school,

⁴² *Catechism* 2333.

⁴³ Pope Francis (2016) 56.

⁴⁴ “Division of elite athletes by gender ‘outdated’: researchers,” *Otago Daily Times* (July 17, 2019) at <https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/campus/university-of-otago/division-elite-athletes-gender-outdated-researchers> (accessed on Oct. 6, 2020).

⁴⁵ Taryn Knox, Lynley Anderson, and Alison Heather, “Transwomen in Elite Sport: Scientific and Ethical Considerations,” *Journal of Medical Ethics* (2019) 395-403 at <https://jme.bmj.com/content/45/6/395> (accessed on Oct. 6, 2020).

college, and Olympic speed and strength records, and it is delineated in greater complexity and nuance by scientific research.

In close competition, teams typically do not remove stronger and faster players to protect the slower or weaker; they remove a slower or weaker athlete if the disparity in strength and speed may cause harm. A male on a female team may therefore eliminate some female athletes from play. A female on a male team may be unsafe and unlikely to play. Ensuring the safety of all athletes is of paramount importance.

Although ensuring safety is the first concern, sports is also inherently about fair play. A biological male should not usurp the right of a biological female to fair competition with her physical peers, and a biological female should not surrender her right to compete against other biological females because she is gender dysphoric. Students have a right to play on teams of the same sex without having to compete against the opposite sex for coveted spots.

No athlete should have an unfair advantage over another, and placing athletes on teams should be objectively decided on with enforced categories such as age and biological sex. The Vatican has recently noted that,

...if sport is actually a competition regulated by particular rules of the game, then the *equality of opportunities* has to be warranted. It simply would not make sense to have two or more competitors, be they individuals or teams, whose starting conditions are largely unequal. That's the reason why in sport competitions usually a distinction is made between the sexes, performance levels, age classes, weight classes, degrees of disabilities and so forth.⁴⁶

This same document draws attention to the fact that fair play is especially valued in today's culture and that "Athletes honor fair play when they not only obey the formal rules but also observe justice with respect to their opponents so that all competitors can freely engage in the game."⁴⁷ It is arguable that a biological male is not respecting female athletes in asserting his right to compete against them at his own discretion. His male body typically gives him an illicit advantage over his female competitors.

Permitting biological males to compete against biological females violates the notion that athletics must be "an occasion to practice human and Christian virtues of solidarity, loyalty, good behavior and respect for others, who must be seen as competitors and not as mere opponents or rivals." A male seeking to play on a female team is not respecting females or showing appropriate solidarity with them. St. John Paul II emphasized that athletics requires basic human qualities such as "awareness of one's personal limits, fair competition, acceptance of precise

⁴⁶ Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life 5.2.

⁴⁷ Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life 5.2.

rules, respect for one's opponent and a sense of solidarity and unselfishness. Without these qualities, sport would be reduced to mere effort and to a questionable, soulless demonstration of physical strength.”⁴⁸ The transgendered athlete violates these athletic values and saps sport of its integrity. The solidarity, loyalty, and bonding that sports provide for groups of men and women are different in gendered and mixed-gendered environments. There is a benefit to having opportunities for males and females to group and bond by gender.

A Catholic institution which willingly enrolls and includes transgendered athletes on its sports teams harms the Christian virtues of solidarity and respect for others that athletics is uniquely able to inculcate. To be clear, a male athlete identifying as female would still have a right to play sports. He would simply be held to the same rules as other males and play against his biological peers, which is fair and respects both teammates and opponents. Because all institutions are obligated to protect all athletes from any and all unjust discrimination or bullying, this long-standing practice of segregating by sex respects all athletes and ensures fair play.

Closely related to fair play is the concept of social justice, which must always be a central concern of Catholic educators. Biological males, given their natural physical advantages, will unfairly reap the rewards athletics has to offer and unjustly deprive biological females of their hard-won records, awards, and rewards.

To the extent that certain activities like sports are ways of publicly valuing human excellence, biological males will get more validation in head-to-head competition against biological females. To the extent that athletics at the high school level and beyond often rewards excellence with money through scholarships, contracts and endorsements, biological males will get more money in head-to-head competition. Biological females will be disadvantaged and treated unjustly, as they are faced with less access to fair and healthy competition, public valuing, and money. Catholic educators cannot be a party to such injustice.

Practical Steps

- Catholic educational institutions should publicly and explicitly affirm and seek to implement their faith-based mission and develop and consistently abide by policies in all programs that support this mission. They should assert religious freedom to uphold Catholic teaching and claim exemption from laws, regulations, athletic association rules, etc. that demand conformity to gender ideology.

⁴⁸ John Paul II, “Address to the Organizers and Participants in the 83rd Giro d’Italia Cycle Race” (May 12, 2000) in Kevin Lixey, Norbert Muller, and Cornelius Schafer (eds.), *Blessed John Paul II Speaks to Athletes: Homilies, Messages and Speeches on Sport* (London: John Paul II Foundation for Sport, 2012) p. 52 at <http://www.laici.va/content/dam/laici/documenti/sport/eng/magisterium/jpii-pastoral-messages.pdf> (accessed on Oct. 6, 2020).

- Athletic programs should include in their goals the use of athletics as a means of inculcating virtue, especially justice and fair play, promoting the unity of body and soul, and protecting the human body not only from physical injury, but also from any attack on its integrity, exploitation, and idolatry.
- Athletic policies should require that students participate on sport teams consistent with their biological sex.
- Athletic personnel should be formed in a spirituality of athletics as part of their ongoing professional development. Such formation may include presentations by theologians on Christian anthropology, the role of sport and play in human well-being, and sports as a tool of evangelization and virtue development.

Conclusion

Catholic education is devoted to the sanctification of its students and integral formation by witnessing to Christ and all that is true and good. To lead the children in their care to God requires that they encounter the fullness of His truth and that they not foster situations in which students might be led astray in matters of basic human nature and morality. Respect for students also requires that educators never lie to them or deceive them. Authentic love for students requires that educators seek their good and assist them to dwell in truth.

It is contrary to the truth to assist a gender-dysphoric student athlete in his or her disconnect with reality, however sincerely experienced, or to participate in any effort to change natural gender expression. Catholic educators can best respond to such situations by facilitating pastoral and professional counseling to help clarify and define issues of self (and sexual) identity in accord with Catholic teaching and God's natural plan. This holistic and reality-based response to the challenge facing gender dysphoric athletes provides for maximum care, competition, and fair play in accord with Catholic education's faith-based mission.

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