

MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM: GENDER THEORY CHALLENGED

Admittedly, it is a picky grammatical point of order; nevertheless, it is the “gift” that keeps on giving. Being interviewed prior to donating blood is one of my most frustrating experiences, even while acknowledging the need to insure a healthy supply of blood. Potential donors must state their name on multiple occasions, and answer very personal questions about sex, drugs, tattoos, etc., a few of which seem over the top. But what really annoyed me was being asked: “I see that you marked male for gender...is that correct?” Ouch—do I appear otherwise? Now I was highly conflicted. No, I am not confused about my identity, merely precise. If I answer yes, I would be guilty of stating a technical falsehood, while if I answer “No,” I will raise a few eyebrows. Asking an individual to select M or F under gender is incorrect. Remember when you studied a foreign language in high school? You learned all about the genders of nouns— masculine, feminine or neuter. Male or female refers to sex, not gender, period! Whew—now I feel better.

Picky point, you say? But sitting in close quarters in a bloodmobile less than a foot away from someone whom I have never met, who seeks verbal confirmation that I am in fact male—can you get the visual? She somewhat apologetically added that she is merely doing what she has been instructed to do. It was as surreal as it was ridiculous. This past week, the Vatican’s **Congregation for Catholic Education** released a document on gender theory that I believe is both timely and spot on. “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 is an attempt to engage the world with the Church’s perennial teaching. This is not new teaching, but a re-affirmation of traditional Catholic anthropology and an appeal to Natural Law. It presents a sorely needed voice in the current debate.

Entitled *Male and Female he Created Them: Towards a path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education*, the document’s purpose is to “guide and support those who work in the education of young people, so as to help them address in a methodical way (and in the light of the universal vocation to love of the human person) the most debated questions around human sexuality,” and is being sent to Catholic educational institutions around the world. It opens though with a call to dialogue, stating that Catholics must be equipped with a solid understanding of human anthropology as we engage a rapidly changing society. It is not a “defensive” document, but one that accurately outlines Catholic teaching and can serve as an excellent resource in our confused society. Paragraph 11 rightly states: In this *cultural context*, it is clear that *sex* and *gender* are no longer synonyms or interchangeable concepts since they are used to describe two different realities.” The problem is not in the distinction between two terms, but rather in “*the separation of sex from gender.*”

The Book of Genesis outlines a comprehensive human anthropology that forms the basis for our understanding of ourselves as the crown jewel of God’s creation. The concept of gender theory that is challenged in this document sees gender as fluid, and ultimately dependent upon an individual’s subjective mindset and not corresponding to biological sex. If this is true, then why is it not also true that race is subjective? What would prevent a Caucasian from identifying as African? In short, nothing logical ought to prevent that. When the Supreme Court effectively legalized same-sex marriage across the nation (26 June 2015) a logical corollary to this decision would be to inquire what prevents the courts from legalizing polygamy? It seems to me the only logically coherent answer is that society is simply not yet ready for it. Once marriage has been “undefined” it is a stretch to justify forbidding a plurality of new types of unions.

“God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27) When Gender is recast as a subjective judgment, realize that what this means is an **end of Natural Law**. It effectively dismisses the concept as outdated, ascribing to the individual subject the ability to determine one’s gender. This is repackaged, modern-day dualism, a view that **separates** the body from the human will. Ancient anthropological Dualism viewed the body and soul as having different origins, with the ultimate resolution being the destruction of matter. The spiritual and intellectual takes precedence. Here, dualism means that “male” or “female” is seen as a social construct no longer tenable, being replaced by the human will’s ability to determine one’s identity. Sexual difference is not a social construct to be vanquished

but rather is the very pre-condition for understanding our place in God's creation. This document is well worth reading. Click [here](#) or visit our website for the text.

- A house divided? In what can only be described as a bitter and protracted legal *battle royale*, the remains of **Venerable Fulton J. Sheen** will be transferred from New York's St. Patrick Cathedral (where they have been since his death in 1979) to his home diocese of Peoria, Illinois. I had quietly floated an ancient solution, only to draw looks of horror. Early Christians often **divided the remains** of saints, interring them in multiple locations. Untoward? Perhaps, but **five court rulings** pitting two dioceses against each other is simply inexcusable. At least now the process can move forward.
- "Lock me up." Or so in effect says **Bishop Michael Barber** of Oakland, CA. The courageous Jesuit bishop said that he would go to prison before obeying proposed legislation that would require priests to reveal details of child sexual abuse, if such knowledge was learned in confession. The Church can **never** abide by such a law, when and if passed. Make no mistake about it— religious freedom is under attack in our nation.
- Former Minnesota Twins (1997-2002) and Boston Red Sox slugger, **David Ortiz** was shot in the Dominican Republic. Video footage shows no altercation, only someone opening fire from behind to an unsuspecting Ortiz sitting at a restaurant bar. He was airlifted to undergo emergency surgery in Boston. When he first awoke, he immediately asked about his family. The genial 10-time All-Star slugger belted 541 homeruns in his long MLB career.
- Geek alert— there is a five-minute weekly podcast review of Vatican news available **in spoken Latin!** "Hebdomada Papae, notitiae vaticanae latine redditae" made its debut on June 8. I must say it was fun to listen to spoken Latin, though I suspect the program may have a limited audience appeal!
- As June 30 draws ever close, we want to invite all parish volunteers to attend a picnic in your honor following the 10:00 a.m. Mass on June 30. See the notice elsewhere in the bulletin.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. John L. Ubel
Rector