

CREATED MALE AND FEMALE

An Open Letter from Religious Leaders

December 15, 2017

Dear Friends:

As leaders of various communities of faith throughout the United States, many of us came together in the past to affirm our commitment to marriage as the union of one man and one woman and as the foundation of society. We reiterate that natural marriage continues to be invaluable to American society.

We come together to join our voices on a more fundamental precept of our shared existence, namely, that human beings are male or female and that the socio-cultural reality of gender cannot be separated from one's sex as male or female.

We acknowledge and affirm that all human beings are created by God and thereby have an inherent dignity. We also believe that God created each person male or female; therefore, sexual difference is not an accident or a flaw—it is a gift from God that helps draw us closer to each other and to God. What God has created is good. “God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27).

A person's discomfort with his or her sex, or the desire to be identified as the other sex, is a complicated reality that needs to be addressed with sensitivity and truth. Each person deserves to be heard and treated with respect; it is our responsibility to respond to their concerns with compassion, mercy and honesty. As religious leaders, we express our commitment to urge the members of our communities to also respond to those wrestling with this challenge with patience and love.

Children especially are harmed when they are told that they can “change” their sex or, further, given hormones that will affect their development and possibly render them infertile as adults. Parents deserve better guidance on these important decisions, and we urge our medical institutions to honor the basic medical principle of “first, do no harm.” Gender ideology harms individuals and societies by sowing confusion and self-doubt. The state itself has a compelling interest, therefore, in maintaining policies that uphold the scientific fact of human biology and supporting the social institutions and norms that surround it.

The movement today to enforce the false idea—that a man can be or become a woman or vice versa—is deeply troubling. It compels people to either go against reason—that is, to agree with something that is not true—or face ridicule, marginalization, and other forms of retaliation.

We desire the health and happiness of all men, women, and children. Therefore, we call for policies that uphold the truth of a person's sexual identity as male or female, and the privacy and safety of all. We hope for renewed appreciation of the beauty of sexual difference in our culture and for authentic support of those who experience conflict with their God-given sexual identity.