Opinion



by NCR Staff

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LGBTQ advocates say many Catholic secondary schools are working to support students. But they also believe there's a harmful trend: new diocesan-approved policies or guidelines on gender identity and sexual orientation. Following are NCR reader responses to this report that have been edited for length and clarity.

Katie Collins Scott's article about LGBTQ and transgender students at Catholic grade and high schools should be titled a "culture of horror" not a "culture of fear."

Does no one recognize that children are born with anomalous genetic and physical attributes? Not all kids get two arms, two legs and 10 fingers and toes. Do we then attack those who are different for their "disordered" physiques?



The Catholic Church looks truly ugly when it acts in direct contravention of the teaching and example of Jesus. This is a great case in point. Jesus welcomed those considered outcasts in their own culture. I could never put any child in any school with the policies that Collins Scott describes. Abuse of children is ugly. And children in such schools are, by definition, not getting a Catholic education.

BOB MATTHEWS

Cincinnati, Ohio

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This is a well-written article, though sad to read. It reinforces the image of a regimented church wanting its members to be in lockstep conformity with what it states are universal truths all while its' prelates are in open battle about what some of them are.

Life in Catholic schools shouldn't be expected to be different from that in the greater church —those who are chosen come to the forefront. One has to apply to and be accepted by the Catholic school and is expected to unquestioningly follow the rules laid down. Uniforms complete the outward appearance. Great expectations are held out to each student if they follow the rules of the sterile school environment. That is

until "worldly incidents" break through the false façade.

If the hierarchical church has learned anything in the past four decades it's that disaffected Catholics have lost their fear of litigating against them. Consequently, the bishops are gravely displeased to have lost hundreds of millions of dollars in earthly treasure. They completed the transition from pastor to CEO by hiring armies of accountants and lawyers to protect their treasuries and their vision of what it means to be church.

The sterile school documents the author writes of aren't what in the past were referred to as a student handbook. It is a legal document to be used against the student, the student's family, or anyone else who challenges their position. This is the latest in the series of steps the church has determined it needs to take to protect itself in this "material world."

MICHAEL J. MCDERMOTT

Tyler, Texas

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If the Catholic Church in the United States is to truly consider itself universal and not an exclusive body, it needs to see and respect all its members for who they are. Unfortunately, we see too often an attitude of some clergy which is based more on their self-righteousness as clerics who look condescendingly upon the faithful.

There is a tendency of many to double down on their opinions and attitudes when they are confronted by the perceived errors those tendencies illustrate. This is particularly egregious when their reticence to be open to acceptance of other individuals entails treating those minorities as somehow disordered. When some prelates and clergy of the Catholic Church are perceived to treat one or another minority, in this case the LGBTQ community, as second-class they give license to those who would further marginalize them.

The Catholic Church cannot make excuses by saying on one hand every child is made in the image of God and then marginalize that child due to their sexual attraction or dysphoria as if these were choices which that child made.

CHARLES A. LE GUERN

Granger, Indiana

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There is no love, no wisdom in these policies. No Jesus. They are pernicious and obscene and often fatal to many who are struggling with their very identity. Young and old abandoned and left outside the door in tears.

The good Samaritan needed no diocesan policy. Neither did Jesus on the cross when he told Dismas that that day he would be with him in paradise.

Shame on their policies. Shame.

PETER MANNING

Port Coquitlam, British Columbia

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I resonate with many of the stories of the youth fighting the internal battle of same-sex attraction and gender identity as I've spent the vast majority of my life unable to accept my same-sex attraction for fear I was "depraved" and "going to hell."

No policy or document developed by the Catholic Church will ever legislate same-sex attraction or gender identity out of the laity that identify this way. In fact, those documents and policies will only perpetuate the fear people like me live with.

I pray the clergy will see the harm this teaching causes those of us created by God that identify as homosexual or as a gender that does not conform to their birth gender.

STEPHEN SOICH

Littleton, Colorado

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