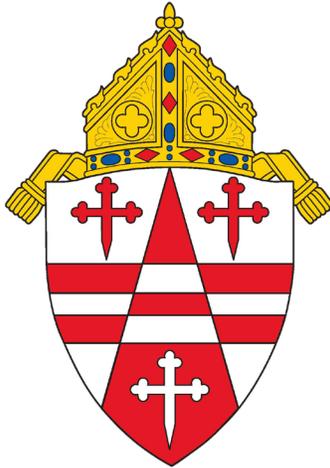


The Archdiocesan Task Force on the Ministerial Covenant

Phase One Work Product

February 2021



Summary Statement of Official Church Teaching

After reading and reflecting on official Church teaching concerning Catholic schools, human sexuality, and marriage, we offer the following statements as brief but accurate expressions of our understanding of Church teaching. While such short statements can never express the fullness of the faith, we have studied seriously and prayed deeply to be guided by the Holy Spirit. We structure our summary statement with several headings, reflecting the topics we have read about, discussed, and prayed over.

We affirm and embrace the fundamental Catholic teaching that all persons are made in the image and likeness of God and should be treated with respect and compassion.

Role of Catholic Schools

Catholic schools are established by the Church and are called to offer an academically excellent education, but this education goes beyond academics. Catholic schools aim to form the whole person - body, mind, and spirit. They dedicate themselves to the successful development of a personal faith in Jesus Christ, a moral conscience, social responsibility, and the proper living of personal freedom. Catholic schools prepare students to be advocates for the common good and to be Christ-like examples to all they encounter.

Role of Parents

Parents are, by God's design, the first and primary educators of their children. It is the responsibility of parents to select the most appropriate education for their children and to raise them within the Catholic faith. The Church provides Catholic schools as a support to parents and invites them to cooperate and collaborate closely with teachers to offer students a unique and rewarding educational experience.

Role of the Pastor

Pastors have a duty expressed in Church law to provide, as best as possible, a Catholic education for the families of the faithful. This duty is rooted in the Church's divine mission to assist the faithful so they can arrive at the fullness of the Christian life and aid them in finding their way to Christ.

Role of Teachers

The ultimate success of any Catholic school depends on its teachers. Teachers form the soul of the school and are called to provide excellent instruction, personal witness to the faith, and sound theology to the students they serve. Their example must be inspirational and worthy of following.

Role of Bishop

It is the responsibility of the local bishop to designate a school as Catholic. The bishop must also ensure those employed as religion teachers are faithful in their correct doctrine, good examples of Christian living, and skillful as teachers. These are responsibilities expressed in Church law.

Sexuality

Sexuality is the physical expression of the love of husband and wife in imitation of God's own life-giving love. As expressions of God's love, sexual acts are meant to be a free, total, and faithful gift to one's spouse which are open to the possibility of new life. The Church has consistently taught that marriage is the only proper context for this life-giving gift and that any sexual acts that do not conform to these qualities fall outside the natural order God has created. Consequently, all people are called to a life of chastity and fidelity to God's moral law with the support of the church's love and mercy.

Marriage

Women and men reflect God's love and participate in creation in a special way through God's gift of marriage. Marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman, a total and mutual self-gift, creating a lifelong, exclusive, and faithful union. The purpose of marriage is for mutual salvation, including the good of the spouses, having and raising children, and lighting the path to holiness for all family members and indeed for all of society. For baptized Christians, marriage is a sacrament, a sign of Christ's love for the Church.

Persons with Same-Sex Attraction

Created in the image and likeness of God, our gay brothers and sisters are inherently valued and accepted by God and the Church. Because of their sharing in and reflecting this God-given dignity, they should be treated with respect and compassion and never be subjected to unjust discrimination. While always respecting and honoring the dignity of all people, the Church continues to challenge gay Catholics to reflect on the meaning and purpose of human sexuality. In living out this challenge they are called to a life of chastity and fidelity to God's moral law with the support of the church's love and mercy.

Pastoral Care

God created and loves all people. All the faithful deserve love and support in their quest for holiness. We are called to know and love all our brothers and sisters and to live with them in friendship and community. No one should be subject to unjust discrimination, harassment, or violence. Efforts at pastoral care, such as parish, school, or archdiocesan programs, should strive to respect all people, meet them where they are, and show special sensitivity to the suffering, outcast, and marginalized, following the demands of the Gospel.