



Executive Discrimination

In a mid-May letter the Federal Government gave schools throughout the nation forceful regulatory advice on the contentious issue of transgender students. It did not meet with universal acceptance. In a joint statement Archbishop George Lucas and Bishop Richard Malone, committee chairmen of the Conference of Catholic Bishops, took sharp issue with the unsolicited federal intervention.

“The guidance issued . . . by the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education that treats ‘a student’s gender identity as the student’s sex’ is deeply disturbing,” the bishops write. It “fails to address a number of important concerns and contradicts a basic understanding of human formation so well expressed by Pope Francis: . . . ‘the young need to be helped to accept their own body as it was created.’”

“Children, youth, and parents in these difficult situations deserve compassion, sensitivity, and respect. All of these can be expressed without infringing on legitimate concerns about privacy and security on the part of the other young students and parents. The federal regulatory guidance issued on May 13 does not even attempt to achieve this balance. It . . . does not respect the ongoing political discussion at the state and local levels and in Congress, or the broader cultural discussion, about how best to address these sensitive issues. Rather, the guidance short-circuits those discussions entirely.”

This observation reminds us that government-abetted short-circuiting of discussion is becoming a way of life in the United States. Ink was scarcely dry on the Supreme Court’s revolutionary re-definition of marriage last summer when the suddenly urgent cause of transgendered individuals swept all other issues aside. Once again a torrent of mass media and social media criticism demonized dissent from the latest secularist orthodoxy and choked off open discussion among free people. Once again, as the Justice Department’s intimidating “guidance” letter signals, the secularist march of intolerance hastens to nationalize and constitutionalize a hotly disputed issue before opponents can catch their breath.

“As Pope Francis has recently indicated,” Archbishop Lucas and Bishop Malone continue, “‘biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex [that is, gender] can be distinguished but not separated.’ We pray that the government make room for more just and compassionate approaches and policies in this sensitive area, in order to serve the good of all students and parents, as well as the common good.”

Keep the common good in mind the next time you pray the Prayer to St. Michael at Mass for the protection of our religious liberty.