

Russian Bishop Calls Biden's Transgender Statement Blasphemous

Propagating gender reassignment among children should be a criminal offence, Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev, the chairman of External Church Relations Department of the Moscow Patriarchate, [recently declared](#) on "Russia 24" TV network. His comment was made in response to Joe Biden's recent statement of support for the supposed right of children to choose their gender.

"The idea that an eight-year-old child or a 10-year-old child decides you know, I decided I want to be transgender. That's what I think I'd like to be," Biden [said with his customary eloquence](#) at a televised Town Hall event on October 16.

Bishop Hilarion is [a leading Russian theologian](#), [prolific author](#), [composer](#), and [promoter of Christian unity](#). Sex reassignment surgery is "nothing more than mutilation," he replied to Russia 24 presenter Yekaterina Gracheva. He believes it is a crime to subject children to such procedures, or even to propagate them:

I think that people who promote such ideas should be imprisoned. Maiming an eight-year-old child or even a 16-year-old girl. They should have the right to grow up in order to make such decisions.

The 54-year-old Orthodox bishop added that in his view a person cannot change sex at all, but only creates the appearance of change:

For example, excuse the details, if they want to turn a woman into a man, she first takes various kinds of hormones to look

more masculine. Then there is an operation to amputate the breasts. Then an artificially created semblance of a male genital organ is planted onto her. It does not function as a male genital organ, but creates the illusion that this woman has become a man.

Both sex change operations and gender reassignment propaganda [are blasphemies](#), according to the Russian prelate.

Until a few years ago his views would have been considered unremarkable by other Christian traditions. They held that there is a God-given link between a person's gender and biological sex which cannot be broken by that person's subjective self-definition.

Such clarity is no longer present in some Western theological circles. It is legitimate to see genders and sexualities as creative expressions of the self, [argues David Cloutier](#), a moral theology professor at The Catholic University in Washington, D.C., in *America: The Jesuit Review*. Commenting on the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education's [document on "gender theory"](#) last year, Cloutier declared that it is legitimate to see genders and sexualities as creative expressions of the self. The further we get from a relatively discrete trait like sexual attraction, Cloutier wrote, the more difficult it becomes to sustain "born that way" arguments. If *male* and *female* are social constructs, then it makes no sense to claim that a person is "really" one or the other. The more gender identities proliferate, the less plausible it is to claim a firm biological basis for them:

Thus, the congregation seems right to argue that the rise of transgenderism leads (at least logically) away from "born that way" arguments to the consistent position [long taken by the postmodern argument](#): that sexuality as a whole, rather than a fixed biological "given," is a self-expressive idiom with which one should be creative... Of course, the

congregation is maintaining a long-utilized distinction between respecting a person and affirming their actions. But here again, the congregation is speaking into a cultural moment where this distinction has disappeared.

It seems clear to the author that the majority of Americans equate respecting the dignity of gay and lesbian persons with affirmation, even applauding their relationships. According to Cloutier, the same notion of affirmation will be increasingly extended to those who choose gender transitions.

[Writing in the same magazine](#), James Martin, S.J., criticized the Congregation's document for failing to address "scientific understandings and discoveries about gender." Instead, Fr. Martin wrote, the authors rely "mainly on the belief that gender is determined solely by one's visible genitalia, which contemporary science has shown is an incorrect (and sometimes even harmful) way to categorize people... The Congregation's document relies heavily on categories of 'male' and 'female' that were shaped centuries ago, and not always with the most accurate scientific methods."

We do not know what exactly are "the most accurate scientific methods" in Fr. Martin's considered opinion. It seems obvious that they are at odds with categories of "male" and "female"—categories which were not "shaped centuries ago," but created by God as a composite unity of body and soul which form a living, single nature of each of us.

It would take a very long time to explain this fact to Joe Biden and an eternity for him to grasp it.

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