

May 9, 2017 Presentation

John: In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. All-powerful Father, Mighty God, in this Easter season we give you thanks and praise for the life that you have poured out upon Your Son in raising Him from the dead and we ask you to pour out that same life out upon Earth on us to fill us with His Holy Spirit so that we may continue to do the same things, that the same power may continue to work through us that worked through Your Son. Thank you for those who have gathered here to speak to us and those of us who are here to listen, ask questions, to fellowship. We ask Your blessing and the guidance of Your Spirit upon us. Thank You for the ministry that we, that You have given to us and those with whom we share it with. Bless all of our parishioners all those to whom we minister. All this we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen. In the name of the Father the Son the Holy Spirit. Amen. So again I just will introduce Fr. Joe Corel to introduce this first half of the day and then we'll have lunch right after this presentation and then we have a second presentation this afternoon.

Fr. Corel: Couple of house upkeeps or housekeeping items first. Well a couple of announcements. I also want to say thanks for coming together and being part of this today. I think you'll find it informational and I think you'll find it enlightening and very good. Also, I've got updates from James Finder here that he just visited with Father Pat Shortt who's doing well in recovery from his hip surgery so we want to keep him in prayer. I know that Bishop Gaydos will be joining us for lunch. So we keep him in prayer as well and also because I don't have it with me at the moment there are envelopes out on the table out on that counter. We ask you please pick them up and take them home. It is for the collection of the Catholic Campaign. I'll let you look at it. [Laughter] I also have one. There's packets up there for all the priests. [Please take one...people conversing and laughter] And, at this time, it is my pl- yes?

Man: Father Pat did not have hip surgery, he had an injection that created a hematoma and that's created the problem.

Fr. Corel: Thank you for that clarification. But it would feel like he's going through something... [laughter, someone says "moving right along Father"]].

Fr. Corel: It's an important distinction. He's got some issues that he needs prayers for. We know that so. At this time I want to introduce to you people that you already know but we are happy that you have come to present to us to today: John DeLaPorte, our Coordinator of Youth Ministry for the Diocese, Sister Elizabeth and Sister Julie, our Superintendent and Associate Superintendent through the Diocese and they'll be introducing more people later, but thank you and the floor is yours.

Sr. Julie: Thank you very much, Father Joe. We had a meeting yesterday and Father Don was also with us preparing for today and uh all of us admitted that we were maybe feeling a little uncomfortable or restless about this topic and presenting to you as a group. And this morning so we all said you know we're going to pray with this, we're going to come into this and we believe what we share is important for us to be discussing and so this morning as I was praying I found myself having a memory of when I was a novitiate and during that time of novitiate at some point our directors announced to us that we would be having a communications skills workshop on Saturday morning and I think it was because we had done something that they felt was inappropriate. It was an additional add-on. And I was not real excited about that workshop that morning quite frankly. It interrupted my racquetball plans that day and so as we came to the workshop, the Sister that was leading the workshop had on the front table or on the table in the room they were at a number of pictures. She said I'd like you to look at those pictures

and choose the image that best fits how you feel about coming to this workshop today. So I'm going around going this is great...well, there was a cartoon. One of the pictures was a cartoon. I picked it up and I read it. And the cartoon said I'd rather be playing scrabble. Quite frankly I hate scrabble. [Laughter] That was my card for the day. And so that image kind of came back to me today. I don't think I'd rather be playing scrabble today but I do have to acknowledge that this may be a topic that for some of us, for all of us may be a little bit more challenging or difficult to talk about. So what are we here to talk about today? We are here to talk about a pastoral process of accompaniment and dialogue addressing children and youth in relation to gender concerns and non-traditional families. It's a mouthful. And we're actually going to share, we're going to share with you a little later a process that we've developed. Sister Elizabeth and I being the elementary and school principals that we are we know that if we give it to you right now, you're going to be on page 17 before we are. So we'd like to walk through it a little bit and then at some point when it's appropriate we will be sharing that document with us but to talk about this, okay, this is a pastoral process. It's not a cut and dried response. And as we talked about this, as we met with Bishop about this, as we received guidance from the USCCB office of education, we were encouraged not to develop a specific policy because every pastoral situation you encounter will have different realities that you have to consider and assess and maybe at some point you're going to say yes this is how we're going to move forward and then at other times you're going to say this is not going to work at this parish at this time. And so it involves you as pastors to have the conversations. Secondly, we are not here to have a moral discussion. Obviously this is a topic these are topics non-traditional families and gender concerns primarily looking at our LGBTQ community and how we address those individuals as young people looking at our schools. They have moral issues. They have moral implications. You have more education about those moral concerns than I do. So if we were going to be having a moral discussion today I can assure you that this panel this group of people would probably not be the ones in front of you. [Lady says Definitely] Okay so obviously that's going to be a concern that you're going to need to maybe come back to at another time to have some further conversation as a group and we hope that this today is simply an introduction. And so what we're going to do today, what we hope to do is I'm at this point sharing a little bit about the context and why we're doing this and the process that we're developing. We are going to do a presentation of a flow chart, of how we see this possibly working out within a school and parish community. We're going to do a role play within that. And if you think I might be a little nervous. The people here who are part of our skit and Father Don might be even more concerned about that, but they've been very willing and very agreeable to be a part of this. And then we're gonna work through the document to look at the different scenarios that we've addressed. And then in the message that you received from Father Joe inviting you to this day he noted that there will be time for questions and further conversation after you have lunch after you have your second presentation. Actually at the end of the day. So if you want to stay around for further conversation and question that's fine. But as a said, this is a beginning of a conversation. So why are we even approaching this topic today? We'd like to share with you some context. And I put these all kind of having some similar flow in terms of why we're looking at these. Sister Elizabeth and I began our ministry in the school office in July of 2015. About a week before we began our ministry in the diocese, the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage and later in that first year we had a letter that came from U.S. departments of justice and education addressed to public schools Dear Colleagues looking at how we address transgender issues in our schools. And while those are specific to public schools, it has implications in all of our schools. So within the first week that we were being oriented to this ---, Father Joe and Sister Kathleen had arranged for Bernie and Lucie Huger to come talk with us, our diocesan legal

consultation, and they came and the topic that Bernie brought to the table was same-sex marriage and transgender issues. And I know for myself at that point I wasn't ready to enter fully into that conversation on day 3 of the job, but it was kind of he said you know this is going to be an issue you're going to need to address at some time. It's there. Okay? So then within our first year of ministry within the diocese we did have last January we had one of our principals call and say you know Sister we just got an inquiry from parents that would like to enroll their children in our school next year and I have some questions about this. The parents are a gay couple. And how do we deal with this? And so I had some conversation with that principal and basically at the end of the conversation said you know you and I together are not going to make a decision about this today. I said this is something that needs to have some further clarification and conversation and in fact we talked about it in our office, we talked to Father Joe and in turn we also visited with Bishop and through that process of conversation and dialogue got what Bishop's desires in this were and he was very supportive of us seeing if there was a way that we could welcome and support this child in our schools. As it turns out, that family moved from that community and never enrolled, but it was we did move it to a point where we were willing to work with that school and those parents. Second situation late last year. Another Principal called Sister Elizabeth this time and said we have a student in our school who is a junior high student and she is at this point wanting to identify as a male and she had been working with a counselor, she had been working with, well she had actually been hospitalized for some mental health issues suicidal issues and through that counseling came to say this is something I'm really grappling with and so we looked at it and said, how do we address this issue? How do we have the conversation do we open our school to this child? Well she was already in our school. So how do we accommodate? Can we accommodate? And so the conversation happened. And in the end that child chose and that family chose to enroll the child in a public school because it just seemed like a better fit for them. So the reality is we've had the situations presented already, so after the, especially after the Dear Colleagues letter last summer, we received guidance from the USCCB secretary of Catholic education, Sister John Mary Fleming who is a Dominican sister of Nashville. She talked about this concern. She said Catholic K-12 schools find themselves in a cultural and civil setting in which parents, teachers, and administrators are looking carefully and deeply at the question of human sexuality and the development of the human person in light of students who identify as transgender and students being raised by same-sex parents. This—and this is a six page document-- this resource is intended to be supportive of the local preview and discussion among diocesan leaders. One of the things within that document that really encouraged dioceses to do was to hold a summit to have a conversation at an upper level to talk about this issue and these concerns and so Father Joe sent an email to many of us and said you're invited to this summit. We need your service on this ad hoc committee and the people that were invited to that particular meeting-- I think everyone said yes to your invitation. Millie Aulbur who is the chair of our diocesan education council. She also is a lawyer here in town and has been a teacher as well, myself and Sister Elizabeth representing the Catholic school office, John DeLaPorte with Youth ministry, Father Josh Duncan was invited as he's an associate pastor here at Cathedral. He was invited because of his most recent theology training that addressed some of these issues and then also Nancy Hoey who is here up front with us and Nancy is a licensed practical counselor with Grace counseling and she serves as an advisor consultant for our Catholic schools and for the diocese in many ways. And Monsignor Macarawicz was also invited to be a part of this committee because of his specialization in moral theology. And so that was the group that came together. We had several meetings throughout this Fall looking at these issues.

Father Korte: Excuse me, Sister, there's not a single pastor of a parish school on that list. What happened? Not a single pastor of a parish school. Just question.

0:15:58

Sister Julie: That's a good point. I wasn't the one making the invitation.

Fr. Korte: Well, we're the ones that have to deal with this.

Sr. Julie: I know it is. I know you are, but the reality is that as we've looked at this topic, we also realized that this is going to touch every parish because it could also potentially impact religious education programs, youth programs. And I'm sorry I wasn't the one inviting—

Fr. Korte: I'm sorry, too.

Sr. Julie: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I think it was an oversight. It certainly wasn't inten---

Fr. Korte: A big one.

Fr. Corel: Both of those priests, two of those priests have served at parishes with schools.

Fr. Korte: Not a reigning pastor, Joe.

Sr. Julie: So as we did our had our conversations we, the three of us that work in the work for the diocese were invited to develop a draft. After we had talked about this process, we were invited to develop a draft, which we did and then brought it back to the committee for their review for their input for their guidance and direction. Within that draft we really focused some of our emphasis on quotes from Pope Francis from *Amoris Laetitia*. And I can I'll let you read that but primarily the second part of the quote from Paragraph 299 talks about, "such persons need to feel not as excommunicated members of the Church, but instead as living members, able to live and grow in the Church and experience it as a mother who welcomes them always who takes care of them with affection and encourages them along the path of life and the gospel. This integration is also needed in the care and Christian upbringing of their children who ought to be considered most important. And so as we do address this topic we really are focusing on accompanying children and their families but primarily looking at how do we help support ----- so at this point I'd invite Sister Elizabeth to come up and continue.

Sr. Elizabeth: We're not going to give you the whole document, but we are going to give you part of the document so you can follow along with this. This flowchart was designed to give you some sense of where to go with this process, what to happen with that. Our guidance is primarily for principals and school counselors but we also acknowledge that in our communities we have other lay leadership who will be dealing with issues. John was very helpful in dealing with us because his focus is youth ministry and probably children are dealing with these transgender issues and LGBT issues more as they get to that junior high/high school level than they are as young people, **but we've had young people** so just have to say that. So I'd like to spend some time with this flow chart. The introduction says ordinarily when a family indicates interest in enrolling a student in a Catholic school in the Diocese of Jefferson City an interview is conducted by the principal to determine if the school can provide an appropriate, productive educational setting. There are families that we do not enroll in our school because we don't have the ability to serve their needs. This is going to be similar to that. So I wanted to context, we wanted to context this in the fact that we are already doing interviews like this with families who want

to enroll their children. This is not setting apart people because they have a special need. Ordinarily we do this. When a family falls into one of these special categories, the categories of gender issues or non-traditional families, you can use this flowchart and this is our advice for a process. And so you start at the beginning so step 1 in the first box leadership team members--and as we were doing this process we started out with pastor and the principal and then we became more inclusive and we got pastor/principal/dre/parish catechist and we said okay team membership means and down in the box at the bottom of the asterisk this is who we are including in the team membership whoever is appropriate at your parish level to have this conversation should be included in that level. Okay? Parent leadership team members analyze the situation. You need to explore the possibilities of the situation and Father—I don't know your name.

Fr. Korte: Korte

Sister Elizabeth: Father Korte said no parish priest school pastors were included in this process but yesterday we asked Father Don to help us out and we had an outstanding session looking at how we are going to analyze this. They're going to do a little skit for you in a minute and it'll look really streamlined and easy. We spent two hours figuring out how to get to this level. It is not easy. It is not easy. You need to have an analysis of that situation. Analyze the situation with diocesan support. I can tell you that we have a policy manual that has about 250 policies in it and an appendix that's equally that big and we give it to our principals and our pastors and we say that these are the policies, you have to follow them. Well, guess what? The principals call and say, "I'm sorry to bother you," First of all you're not bothering me, it's what I do for a living. "I'm sorry to bother you but I know we have a policy and I can't find it. Could you help me?" We're happy to do that. Call us. Call us. We think this is probably going to be a pretty rare occasion, but we want you to know that we've had the conversation and we have the process and that we're ready to support you and help you. So if a school should call us, if it's a DRE/Parish minister issue, John can be support to you or we as well. So with parish support, with Diocesan support, we want you to know that we are here to help you with the analysis of that situation. Then the next thing it says, Discuss the possibility of enrolling the student. Up at the top in the introduction, in bold and italicized letters, Wherever possible enrollment is the goal. We hope that you will know that in conjunction with Pope Francis trying to have us be inclusive, with our bishop encouraging us to be inclusive, that whenever possible we like to enroll children that have this situation because we feel like it's a good way for evangelization, for including them in the Church. However, no is also an option. So consider the scenario and the communities who will be impacted. In a minute we will talk a little bit more about communities who will be impacted. When you enroll a student in your school, it's not just that student that's impacted. That student's family is impacted. All the students in the class that that student will be enrolled in are impacted, and the student's family is impacted and because our parishes support our schools as ministries, every member of your parish could possibly be impacted by this decision. So it's important for you to consider all of those folks. Then the determination would be is this parish school a welcoming environment at this time, where this child will be and feel safe and secure and know that they are loved and is it in the best interest of this child to enroll them at this time in your school? Our document, Sister Julie wasn't kidding, it's got about 17 pages on it. This is not an easy thing, we want to tell you we've looked at that and we've got some resources for you. It is quite possible that at this time in this parish, it is not a good idea to enroll this child. Based on the needs of this child and this child's parents. And as the pastor you have the resources to know your parish better than anybody. Now is this a conversation that you should have with your parish council? Absolutely,

and we recommend that you have that conversation sooner rather than later, even if this isn't a problem for you right now. We got the call that Sister Julie's talking about from the same-sex parents early in the year like in January, so that pastor would have had an opportunity to take this to his advisory groups and say to them, we've got this request. What is your advice here? What's the best idea that you have? Without the names, absolutely without the names. Really important. This is the scenario. We're giving you this document because we believe that this is a sign of our times and we are not exempt from dealing with this situation so this might be a real opportunity for you to evangelize and for you to do some education with your advisory groups and find out what they're thinking about.

Fr. Korte: Excuse me, Sister Julie?

Sr. Elizabeth: Yes?

Fr. Korte: You are overturning Christian morality for situation ethics and you are, you are taking way out of context accompaniment. That's from the section on divorce and remarriage. On number 56 Pope Francis the harshest critic of gender ideology says it's one thing to have compassion for human weakness in the complexities of life, it's another thing to accept gender ideology and you didn't just open the door a crack. It's wide open and you're accepting this. And like you said every person is impacted. That means you're scandalizing every child in that school and you're telling us we have to accept gender ideology. That's what's happening.

Sr. Elizabeth: I will never tell you you have to do anything.

Fr. Korte: You will not be there to support any of these men when they have a problem of conscience. I know it. You will not.

Sr. Elizabeth: Sister Julie said to you at the beginning, we are not here to deal about the morality.

Fr. Korte: It's a moral issue. She said that and then she said it is a moral issue. So what is it going to be? You're quoting, I'm saying you're quoting Pope Francis way out of context. He is the biggest critic of this kind of thing and you're letting it in.

Sr. Elizabeth: I would appreciate, I, I very much appreciate your conversation here but I would appreciate it if we could go through this process—

Fr. Korte: You go ahead.

0:27:44

Sr. Julie: And then you could address the process after we've talked about it. Okay? Thank you. I get that. I do.

Sr. Elizabeth: And in that situation absolutely no would be the answer. Absolutely. There might be another way so we've got twelve different scenarios of different things that could happen like same-sex marriage, but the child is presenting as gay. Two different situations it seems to me, but we want to talk about that.

Priest: Just out of curiosity in my church we've got an ongoing process with two autistic children. People up here know of this. One thing that's similar on these two--- and I'm not trying to be humorous but ...

fallout . It's never just a no... there's always a fallout here's some possible options when there's a fallout, when there's disagreement....

Sr. Elizabeth: Thank you and you know when someone approaches you about this, if you choose no, you're probably in trouble. And if you choose yes, you're probably in trouble. So we'd like to you know talk about some of that and thank you for that. We will address that. So if we go to yes, let's just look at if we go to yes. So if we get to no, notify the family of the student and you are done, sort-of. They're going to go out and say---One of the things that I would share with you is my experience in fourteen years in the Archdiocese of Denver in the Catholic school office. A one point we had a family whose children were enrolled in the preschool in our school in Boulder. As they cam into kindergarten they were transition into a different part of our school and it became apparent that the enrollment paper had crossed out the father and two mothers were signing up this kid. And so the principal called us and said, what do we do about this? And we said okay let's think about it what are we going to do about this? We told that family they could not enroll their child into our school, very much along the lines of what Father Korte's saying. Our bishop, archbishop Charles J. Chaput, said we will not enroll the child of these parents. Both of them were doctors in Boulder, Colorado. They were both very militant in the gay pride movement. They were both very open about their same-sex relationship and that was not what we needed in our Catholic school **at that point**. And so we said no, we're not going to do that. They were interviewed by the National Catholic Register. They were on Good Morning America. They were on the front page of several magazines. We were in trouble because the Church wasn't being sympathetic enough. At about that same time, Cardinal Sean Mahoney, Cardinal Sean--

Fr. Korte and others: O'Malley

Sr. Elizabeth: --Sean O'Malley was saying to his superintendent, of course we'll enroll the child of that same-sex couple. Why would we punish the child? Of course we'll enroll that child. They're both Capuchin Franciscans. They both are quite good at what they do in representing parts of the Church. Okay. I supported my bishop. We had..at the same time in a suburb of Denver, Colorado, we had a parent, a group of parents who said our son has been enrolled in your school for two years and we are a same-sex couple. He's adopted and we hope that you're not going to kick him out because we value the education he's getting there. They were under the radar. They didn't have to come to us. And did we, we did not approve that no, we also said we're not going to kick that kid out of our school. We supported the pastor for that. The bishop supported the pastor for both of those situations. So I think there's a possibility if you get to know... it could get to yes. People around you are likely to say how could you condone this. It is morally irresponsible. Okay. But if you decide that at this time, in this parish, we could absorb this child then what do you do? So, now I'm at yes, so, you're going to invite the parents to have a dialogue. So, yes or no, so the next thing, so the next thing in yes is invite the parents to have a dialogue with the leadership team so in a minute we're going to dramatize that for you in a little bit. What you need to do, leadership team, before you have that visit is review the covenant of trust which we've also included in our document and which is what the Bishop gave to us with a little bit of revision when we had the situation in January in one of our schools. Then review the topics for conversation and the possible scenarios for this edition. We've give you a number of bullet points under different scenarios in giving you some ideas about what to think about. Then raise some of the questions that you want to ask this family about your concerns. And then identify the accommodations that you're willing to provide. We have a program in our schools. We're not going to change this program to accommodate somebody that has special needs. That's how we deal with kids that have

autism. That's how we deal with kids that have greater educational needs than we can accommodate. That's how we deal with kids that have behavior problems that we can't accommodate. We say to them this is the program we have. If we can accommodate you, we will. If we cannot accommodate you, we will not enroll you. We do not have the resources that the public school has. Then you're going to have that conversation so we'd like to do that conversation with you as a dramatization so the leadership team meets with the parents. Here's an example. A same-sex couple has contacted Immaculate Conception School in Jefferson City about the possibility of enrolling their child in the school. So the first thing the pastor and the principal need to do is analyze the situation. So could I introduce to you Father Don Antweiler, would you come and Heather Schrimpf who is the principal at St. Joe's. [Talking, Laughter] I'm so—excuse me, Monsignor.

HS: He wishes he had me. [Talking, laughing, someone said, "If they sit, we will not be able to see them."]

Sr.: We could bring in a stage, but—

HS: So in this first scenario I have already received the phone call with the inquiry from our couple and I called Father Don to meet with him to kind of go through the first step so.

[conversations]

HS: Father Don, I've been approached by a couple who are involved in a same-sex marriage who want to enroll their child in our school.

0:37:08

FD: There are a lot of things to consider about this, of course. The first thing is it goes against our Catholic morals and the doctrine of the Church. And secondly how will our school families react? I have some serious reservations about both of these things.

HS: I know. I know I've spoken with our school advisory board and the faculty about this very thing over this issue and I'm not sure that our school community would support this family in their efforts. In fact I see a lot of backlash. I'm also not certain that our faculty would know how to deal with sensitive situations if they would arise. I really do not see how this is going to be a good fit for our school **and my biggest concern is what is best for this child.** I would hate to allow this to happen knowing what she may face from her peers. Do you agree that we shouldn't allow this student in our school?

FD: Yes. I agree.

Sr. Elizabeth: Okay. So they got to know—they analyzed the situation. Now we're going to give you another scenario where they get a different response.

HS: Again I'd already gotten the phone call. Father Don, I've been approached by a couple who are involved in a same-sex marriage and they would like to enroll their child in our school.

FD: Well, I certainly have a concern, a lot of concerns about this.

HS: They want their child to be in a Christian-based school and they are concerned about the public school system here.

FD: Well, if we meet with them I'd like to affirm them for their concern about their child. My concern-- and I'm going to be very upfront with them--is that this is a Catholic Christian school. And so what their lifestyle that they are living is against our Catholic morals and doctrine of the Church. There can be a lot of conflict and confusion in the child between the home situation and what's being taught in the school for instance. So secondly how will our school families react? Well, I have some reservations about that, too. I don't know. I think some things can be addressed with great confidence but perhaps there's others that are not so much.

HS: You know we've spoken with our school advisory board and faculty about this and I think our community could support this family in their efforts. And I know that our faculty has met to discuss how to handle things in sensitive situations like this. **My biggest concern still is what's best for this child.** Before we allow this enrollment to happen, I think we need to meet with these parents.

FD: I agree. I think we have a Covenant of Trust that will help address our concerns and maybe theirs as well. So let's have them in and of course they will need to agree to all these things that are in that Covenant.

Ring Ring Ring.

Sr.: So now we have a same-sex couple, married, in a committed relationship who would like to enroll their child. Millie Aulbers, husband deacon [conversation from crowd, laughter] Mark wanted to know if he could come and see this presentation and she said no [laughter] and Nancy Hoey.

HS: Good morning and thank you for agreeing to meet with us. This is Father Don Antweiler.

Three people say, "Good Morning."

HS: Could you tell us a little bit why you're considering to enroll your child in our school?

M: Well, we have both had very positive experiences with Catholic education. We are both products of Catholic education...we learn so much about the love of Jesus, the love of God and a good learning environment. And we just feel Pope Francis has opened the doors to understanding people like us.

Fr. Korte: Wow.

FD: Well I appreciate you uhCould you tell us a little more about your family?

NH: Well we've been together, Millie and I have been together for 10 years and we have a little girl. Her name is Elizabeth and we recently moved here. Millie has a very important job and I stay at home with Elizabeth and take care of her every need and um so we just really want our daughter to be in a place where it's safe. We're very much afraid of enrolling her in a public school where you know it's not safe.

M: We want her to learn about God.

FD: Well I appreciate that. First of all for the safety of your child which is a natural thing for any parent and also I appreciate the regard that you that have for faith in your lives and in your upbringing and you've brought that to the table. **I also want the best for your child...** what is in the best interest of your child but I will be we have concerns and I'll be very upfront with you uh this is a Catholic Christian school and it's a safe school but also there's a lot of other things involved in this as I'm sure you're aware your current lifestyle is not in compliance with the teachings of the Catholic Church and its moral doctrines

and I would be especially wanting the best interest of your child would be concerned about confusion and conflict and dissonance between your little girl between what they're being taught at school and what they're being taught at home and uh--

HS: As Father Don stated in situations like this we ask families to commit to a covenant of trust and I'm going to hand that to you at this time. It's a document that was developed um to help us address situations like this. Um our first concern is the safety and well-being of Elizabeth that by wishing to enroll her in a Catholic school you have to agree to all the expectations that are within this Covenant of Trust. And you have to agree in order for this partnership to work so as we go through this the first part kind of talks about the Church identifying three authors of education: the parents, the community and the Church. you are the first teachers of this child but we also have responsibilities to know what is providing in a Catholic school setting and that we are in a partnership with families in proclaiming and witnessing to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

NH: Thank you so much. It's so beautiful. You are so good at what you do. {laughter}

HS: She can already tell that. We're going to skip down to this part here um about the specifics.

FD: Parents at Immaculate Conception School you need to be aware are emphasized about the dignity of their calling as parents, a very holy and sacred call with a reverent awe for that responsibility that is theirs. They need to commit themselves to be in word and example the first and best teacher in their children in the faith in practice practically this means they will understand that the authentic teachings of Jesus as taught by the Catholic Church will be part of their child's education and formation, to the best of their ability respect the teachings of the Church and help their children respect the Church and its teachings, to regularly participate as much as possible in the Sunday Eucharist including also prayer in their daily life and to form their children in the Faith, commit to speaking frequently with their children about God and to include prayer in their daily home life, to participate in and cooperate with the Immaculate Conception School in programs that enable them as parents to take an active role in the religious education of their children including sacramental preparation for Catholic children and finally support the moral and social doctrine of the Catholic Church to ensure consistency between home and school. And as it said above the Catholic Church regards the role of parents as primary and the school and any religious education programs aid that, to aid parents in their responsibility and this Catholic teaching my concern is that there might be this dissonance that the child, confusion, conflict. However, that's all in the context of the basic Catholic teaching of respect for the dignity and the sacredness of the individual. In terms of the community I think the concerns can be addressed, we can't control everything but I think concerns can be addressed.

HS: I think it's important for you to know that your situation will remain confidential in our school but I do have concerns when it comes to Elizabeth coming home asking you questions as Father stated about what we're teaching your child at school and what is being seen at home. How will you address those situations?

M: Well, I'm sure you have parents in your school who are not in valid marriages or maybe living together and we're not going to judge those people but I think we can explain to Elizabeth that there are various shades of being Catholic and we're just a shade of that.

Fr. Korte: Hmm... Really?

HS: So when Elizabeth is wanting to have a sleepover are you going to inform the parents of your situation? Do you feel comfortable doing that?

NH: Well, why would we need to do that?

HS: Well if we are teaching a certain thing in our school and this is a completely different lifestyle than what our social teachings promote in our school these children may be confused as well and as a parent myself I would want to know these things so I can prepare my child.

NH: I guess I never thought about that.

M: I guess I hadn't thought about that either but again I'd be surprised if these children all of them come from really Catholic situations where you know divorce, living together, birth control I just I know that we are not now living in accordance with the Catholic teachings but everyone that's in your parish isn't either and so yes it will be difficult, it would be difficult I would be worried about parents that brought their children to our home to stay the night unaware of this. I would be concerned about how that might impact Elizabeth—not us—but Elizabeth.

NH: Is there any bullying in the Catholic schools?

0:50:16

Man's voice: never

[laughter]

HS: As you know bullying is a secretive thing many times and I cannot guarantee that that will not happen. Are you prepared to tell Elizabeth that your lifestyle is wrong in the eyes of the Church?

M: Oh goodness. We are models of what [inaudible][laughter]

HS: It appears that we probably need some additional time to consider all the things that are being asked. I would like for you to take this document home with you. Fr. Don, I think you and I also need to meet and discuss this as well because we have a lot of concerns that we want you to think about and we will also need to be in conversation with our Superintendents in the Diocese to see what's the best thing for Elizabeth so we probably will need to meet again to discuss this...

M: Just as an ... Our home is one of love.

NH: We do love each other.

[More conversation, laughing, clapping]

Sr. Elizabeth: Thank you so much. Thank you so much.

0:51:26

Sr. Elizabeth: So this family might come to know themselves, they might say oh, we never thought of all of that. or we should consider that. It might be an opportunity to further evangelize with these folks and help them see the error of their ways. [inaudible conversation, laughter] Also, Father Don and Heather might come to know even after talking to the family, they might say you know these folks have no clue what they're doing or they might be able to say we think we can absorb this. If you get to yes, just in

case that would happen, what do you do next? And because this isn't the only scenario that we have, we also are talking about scenarios where the child is the one with the issue and so if you're trying, if you're interested in enrolling a child who is presenting as gay, what does that mean and how does that work? And maybe you want to enroll that child so in that case we're going to go to the third column on the flowchart. If you decide to enroll the student, we recommend that you do that provisionally and that they sign and what that means sign the Covenant of Trust and the Covenant of Trust is included in the document that we're going to give you so you have the opportunity to look at what they were referencing. And that provisional enrollment is not unusual if we have a child that's coming to us with some serious issues and they just want a fresh start we might say okay we're going to give you a chance we'll enroll you for the first quarter and at the end of the quarter we'll make a final decision on this and so enroll them provisionally and have a date where both parties will evaluate is this working for us. If you enroll that child then the next steps will be to identify appropriate communities that have a need to know or a right to know about this agreement. Who needs to know this child is gay? Who needs to know that this is a transgender student? And we're going to talk about how that works. We're going to talk about what are those communities. And as you heard Fr. Don and Heather mention, **again this can be an opportunity for education for your community**, even when the church says that same-sex attraction is a disordered state, it still says we need to respect those people as children of God and this might be an opportunity to evangelize them, it also might be an educational opportunity for your community. So we would expect that you identify who are the appropriate communities that you would develop a communication plan and implement that plan as needed so we covered the flowchart. Father Mark?

Man: I'm just wondering, since it does affect the parish, are you perhaps proposing a way of inviting the parish to be a welcoming community because I mean we have gay/lesbian people in our parishes. They're there, whether we know them or not. They're everywhere. So the question is would you be looking at a process to do that?

Sr. Eliz.: No. I'm not going to do that. I'm in charge of what do you do if you have somebody who wants to enroll your kids in a school that's what Sr. Julie and I were asked to deal with. No but you're right and that could be something that you and your advisory committees could talk about, but certainly the parents and the child should have some say in how far that goes, that's very appropriate, thank you, yes.

Man's voice with accent: Now is there some point within this process that one could be thinking about conversion therapy?

Fr. Corel: ...talk to them about MSHSAA [Missouri State High School Activities Association] and why we're not going to have a problem with MSHSAA ...

Sr. Eliz.: One of the things we will be dealing with that at the high school level with transgender kids is that the Missouri high school activities association, thank you, always nice to have a partner in this because sometimes you need you know coaching, Father Stephen is in the back of the room and can help me, they have said that a student who presents as transgender and wants to play sports on a different team he or she may do that a year after they have done medical therapy to change that gender. One of the things that our Church says in the Catechism of the Catholic Church is the Church is never in favor of mutilation and so that is part of the issue that we have. So we've got some issue there...

Fr. Corel: ...we're not going to have to deal with that...

Man: Father, are you talking about conversion therapy?

0:57:16

Man with accent: ...conversion therapy. Some Christian churches do, some counselors do conversion therapy where they will look at a transgender kid and say you have some deformity. We need to try to make you normal. That's what I'm talking about. Is there a point in time where you can you know suggest that?

Sr. Eliz.: That's above my paygrade.

Fr. Corel: As a pastor, if that's the direction you want to go in, we're not going to stop you from going in that direction so I think you have the ability to bring that up when you find it appropriate to bring it up and as you're pacing these conversations I'm not sure that in the immediate conversation of to enroll the child or not enroll the child, that's when we want to be having the conversation. But if it's an issue that you want to bring up with them... with this couple, they're going to be in our community one way or the other so however you want to minister to them, you are free to do that. I was talking and I misunderstood the question about MSHSAA, however. MSHSAA we are not going to have an issue with as long as MSHSAA continues to be in the current position they are in which is we are not going to allow hormone therapy or it's going to go against their covenant of trust because they're starting to do things to change things and that goes against the Covenant of Trust. As far as Mark Father Mark Miller's question, we are not ready to take that question on yet. It's not what today's topic is about and I don't want to broaden the field to that conversation either.

Sr. And I would also say that we have in this document that we are about to hand to you, three pages of resources, church documents and documents about this topic, that we have found very helpful in designing the rest of this document that you might also find helpful. So we'd like to talk about what are the situations and we'd like to give you a copy of the document.

59:35

John: So the Sisters are going to hand out the document in full now to you and I'll have the privilege of walking us through the rest of the document. This will likely take us closer near our lunchtime which you'll be able to sit with your colleagues and talk more about our presentation today and go through this document a little more thoroughly. We have covered already much of the first part of the document. You'll see on page 3 I believe is the flowchart there which we gave you in advance. I'm picking up on page 4 and I'll kind of walk through the rest of this section just kind of bit by bit to carry us the rest of the way. The last part and Sister Elizabeth sort of left off with it is that communication plan let's say through the course of a lot of discernment, a lot of prayer, a lot of dialogue, a lot of consultation our pastoral leadership and our families in question get to the point of enrollment on a provisional basis. Now comes the time in the process, and I think it's one of the most difficult times in the process where we have to start rolling this out to discerning appropriate communities to inform. We're now inviting a family and a child into a community of faith where they're going to be in relationship and interacting with other families of faith, other constituencies in our parish communities and so we need to start to discern what issues might come up and how we are going to communicate, inform, and educate others as needed. So I'm picking up on page 4 here identifying appropriate

communities and this page is really just how to be a kind of a guide of sorts as you develop a communication plan. This section we're really trying to ask who will be affected and to what degree will they be affected. Some may be affected much more significantly than others; others may be affected maybe not at all. And how can they best inform and educate these different populations. We start to ask at this point and discern who has a right to know of this situation, this family, these parents, this child and who has a need to know and who in our community doesn't have a right or need to know anything at all. When I say a right to know somebody like a young person's teacher definitely has both a right and a need to know of the situation because of the high degree of proximity in relationship they're going to be having with that child and their family. Somebody like the school's secretary might not necessarily have a right to know per se but she may need to know some basic details of the situation in order to you know perform her clerical functions, or his clerical functions, as opposed to maybe like the Home and School Association. They might not have a need or a right to know any of the details of the situation. So at this point we are discerning who has the rights and needs to know and to what extent. As was talked about/demonstrated in our skit here we

1:02:55

really want to consider the privacy of the family and the individual as we start to inform people/reach out to different communities being mindful of confidentiality, and to what extent can we share certain information to groups of people. In fact during the course of the initial conversations that were dramatized here there might come a point where you as the pastor are sensing I need to talk to this family a little bit more significantly and seriously about a particular moral topic and it's not appropriate for the principal or any other pastoral leader in your Church to be present. That's part of the discretion that you're exercising at this stage. And then finally you're going to really want to be mindful and strategic about which groups in your parish might be supportive, indifferent, okay this is no big deal or I'm glad that we're welcoming this child and this family versus the groups that may be more adversarial if this choice starts to come to light. If you know that this child's teacher, if you made the decision to enroll them provisionally, we know that this teacher might be highly adversarial to this how are we going to bring them on board and share our point of view and why we made the decision that we have. I think this was certainly a point that's already been raised today. One of the primary criticisms that arises if a decision is made to enroll will be this idea that by enrolling, you are endorsing. By enrolling this child of a same-sex family or of a family that is cohabiting or whatever the situation might be, that is seen as a blanket endorsement of that situation. I'd encourage you to in here or in meetings or over the course of lunch today to really talk about when we make a decision to enroll a child from a family who may not be living in full compliance with our Catholic social teaching or our Catholic moral teachings is that is that also encouraging or seen as an endorsement of that particular moral situation. A good point to discuss there. So we're identifying these appropriate communities. When identifying appropriate communities, and I'm picking up in the middle of paragraph there, it's helpful to think of a child's relationships in terms of concentric circles or hearts as you will. We started with circles and put the child in the middle and it bore a striking resemblance to a hunting target and so we changed it to hearts to be more pastoral. We can imagine a child's relationship and if the people who touch their lives and kind of measure the degree of proximity to the child and the level of involvement in that child's life. And so the degree to which a community is informed of this decision and the amount of involvement they're going to have is commensurate to their proximity and relationship with that child and their family. Some communities in your parish and in your school are going to have a high degree because the child is at the

center there. This is going to be people like the pastor, the pastoral administrators, the principal, the youth minister whoever's working most directly with that child they're obviously going to have a higher degree of involvement and knowledge and awareness of what's going on, but we need that. As we kind of start to move out in these concentric circles we can identify people like faculty, teachers or other people or personnel that they'll be interacting with that might also have a higher degree of involvement. But as we move further away, peers of the individual--and these are just examples. We are just trying to kind of demonstrate the levels of community are working here in relationship to the child, the parents of peers. You heard that of course raised in our skit earlier. What are we going to do? How are we going to handle it when the parents of your child's friends start to ask questions. In the broader parish community and this is probably more relevant for our high schools our high schools in the diocese you know.... the different groups that are connected to your school community or your parish community what might happen if you need to address that with them. And so we start to identify these communities. Page 4 is really just meant to be a helpful resource and guide as you think through a communication plan and think through the process there. And I see a hand from Father Finder. Yes?

Fr. Finder: My experience of the human race in the parishes--I don't think we have to worry too much who the appropriate communities are. This stuff spreads like wildfire.

Fr. Korte: Exactly. Everybody will know.

Fr. Finder:this will be out in no time. I respect all this, but I don't think it's going to be that controlled.

John: It's not. It's not and I think the bigger and more important piece of this aspect of the process is to really start to be specific in the knowledge, how are we going to be responsive to these various communities as well. Yes, Father?

Priest: But we do want to try to control as much as we can what's being said. I mean if it'll spread like wildfire, there could be lots of rumors that we want to try to correct.

John: Yeah. And so you might talk about how can you lay the groundwork for this. Father?

Fr. Corel: You may want to tie it under levels of communities under parentheses put communication plan with, who is the communication plan with, so that you are having a better control of the message. That's part of the dialogue that you'll have with them.

John: ...can certainly also apply to the [dual scenarios?]. How are we going to inform the different communities when the no question gets out because that was very much the case in Boston. It was an initial no that was said and some of these vested stakeholders in the broader parish community sort of rose up in a sense of rebellion and spoke out against that decision and it caused the pastoral leadership to go back and reconsider how are we communicating with them, where did we go wrong. So but nonetheless

1:08:51

that communication piece is key especially in our smaller, rural communities where we know really truly how things spread in reality. Um so the next part of the document really focuses on the practical application. I'm not going to walk through all of these bullet points. I'm just going to give a general overview. Possible scenarios you might actually encounter, right? How do we start to move from the

flowchart to the practical reality of the situations that we might be faced with. I'm imagining that phone call you get much like we saw up here. It 's going to come to you in the form of a phone call. Father, we've got to talk, I've been approached by a family or Father did you know about this family or Father, my wife my partner and I are interested in enrolling in your Faith formation program. Okay? So what might be some practical scenarios here? This section really offers suggestions, guidelines for how to navigate each of these different scenarios and these are just a sampling of course there are going to be many variations of these here. The idea here is that as you face this particular scenario, we've got a lesbian couple, second grade daughter, both Catholic, wanting to enroll in the school. The idea here is that you might be able to reference this section, find a scenario that best most closely resembles what you're being faced with and be able to find some contacts and some suggestions and questions for dialogue here. All of these scenarios kind of fall under two umbrella categories. Many of them fall under what we call non-traditional family situations. Okay? It might be the same-sex couple who is not Catholic as was the case that Sister Julie referenced requesting enrollment to one of our Catholic schools. This was very much one that we had to deal with already. It might be the fact that they are a same-sex couple but they are Catholic. Different nuance there, different set of questions, different set of concerns because now they are coming from within the boundaries of our Catholic faith. It might be a situation where they're a same-sex couple and they are Catholic but they are highly distanced or somewhat distanced from the parish and church community. How seriously are they going to really take that covenant of trust that they have not demonstrated a commitment to the faith in the past, what pastoral concerns might that raise. It might be a cohabiting couple wishing to enroll their children in a religious education program too and you know this is becoming increasingly common and certainly falls under the heading of non-traditional family situations. Similar process, pastoral process can apply for families in this situation or it might be a divorced or a remarried family without canonical annulment there are questions there and suggestions for that process. Yes, Father?

Priest: But in all these situations is it implied that everyone is going to have to sign a covenant of trust, is that--

John: That is the expectation of every family that enrolls. Correct, Sister?

Sr.: Yes. We have encouraged every single family who enrolls in a Catholic school to sign that Covenant of Trust. You know before they had to sign that they read and would agree to follow the handbook. Okay they signed the paper to check off the box and handed it to you. We wanted to get to a different place and so we included in the Covenant of Trust that language including what parents say when they baptize kids and in a support of our pastoral plan for the diocese that the school can help educate parents, we wanted to have every parent have the opportunity to say oh cause I'm sure they remember vividly what the promises they made were when their child was baptized--or not. So we wanted to do that for our parents and to give the school an opportunity to do some education around that. So what we asked of principals is that you give this to every family that you use this with every new family not just new families that have a special situation. That every family has an opportunity to read and look at this and that you do that. It's a pastoral opportunity for you to do some education. Thank you for the question. Follow up.

Man: That would also apply to all the PSR families as well.

John: It would certainly, yes. I would imagine different PSR programs have different ways of communicating and involving their family and a number of them may very well include certain

commitments from the family. Right? And if you have a family that you know kind of falls under one of these categories as you're going through that Covenant of Trust it gives you a pastoral foot in the door to say you know we talked about your situation, what are you going to do, how can we help you navigate these waters. There was, was there another hand up over here? Did we answer that question? Go ahead or Father Korte has....

Fr. Korte: Why are we having people sign a covenant of trust when we're breaking it by ignoring the situation of these children? You know, Cardinal O'Malley had to close an adoption agency because the Church would not put children in those homes. It's psychologically and emotionally abusive and then we have a transgendered child. We are sitting back while children are being abused. We had a bishop taken out because he didn't suspect child abuse; we're standing back planning how to watch it all happen. Why bother with a Covenant of Trust? This is bizarre. I'm sorry. This is unbelievably illogical and irrational. From the beginning because you already accepted situation ethics. It gets more insane from here. You talk about a beginning of conversation and you've got all these papers and you're going to the principals on May 11th. This is unbelievable and Pope Francis said children have a right to a father and mother and there's a reason for that and the reason why we have so many cohabiting couples is if one thing that that scenario didn't play out is no one ever said you have to separate in order to be in accordance with the Church's teaching. You can't have ceremony and faith over here separated and Pope Francis points it out strongly in this document and we're just contradicting ourselves right and left. This is a bizarre conversation. I'm sorry. I appreciate your articulation of things. But it doesn't, John, it doesn't make sense to me. We're going to grow the homeschooling movement is what we're going to do. You're going to destroy Catholic schools. You're going to let in a child but I tell you there's plenty of people with common sense that have to live with this stuff day-in and day-out and they're not going to accept it at all.

John: It's a serious and valid concern. Absolutely.

Fr. Korte: The only reason gay marriage got accepted was because of judiciary dictatorship. And you look at the States, they voted against it, by 60 and 80%. A majority of people are offended by this. I mean outraged. God bless you but I don't think this is rational at all. I have strong objections to this whole process. Thank you.

John: And this is as Julie says, Sister Julie said, this is really the beginning of a very difficult conversation and a very difficult process that we are being challenged to have as we try to respond to the signs of our times. So I appreciate that but I also want to be mindful of the food that's arriving and the distraction has now presented itself and our time here absolutely and again we're not tabling these criticisms, to be blunt, to be able to dialogue about these. This is going to be the student that comes out as LGBTQ there are a series of questions there to inquire and help them discern what that is and how to move forward. There is the situation of a currently enrolled transgender student. What do you do about that? These two groups of students right here exhibit some of the greatest pastoral needs of any group of kids in any school. Statistics will show that they have some of the highest risk of suicide attempts, depression, drug and alcohol and substance abuse. Regardless of what we think about the morality of these subjects there is a serious pastoral need that that we're called to respond to in some way. The document offers some questions for navigating those waters and then finally you might encounter the family of an openly transgender student requesting enrollment and the difference here is that this might be a child who's already come out as transgender and they are actively transitioning now with family support—

more and more common. Some suggestions there as well. The last part of the document and then we'll close this out goes into additional resources. One thing that we found well hopefully very helpful is the glossary of terms. As we're seeing already these are very difficult conversations to have. They are not conversations that we are accustomed to having every day. For many folks it raises the level of emotional, psychological and spiritual, and cultural baggage if you will. These terms are heavily elated and oftentimes when you have to navigate these kinds of conversations it is helpful to have a common vernacular and so we just shared some basic terminology. This is really difficult to do defining these terms many of which are undergoing radical redefinition in our culture today. Take the concept of gender. Gender alone you can find a diversity of different ways of talking about that. What we tried to do is identify some common terms and draw out definitions from Church documents as well as from the American Psychological Association to provide some common vernacular here and ways of talking about these terms and addressing them. In areas where how APA might define something different from how the Catholic Church defines something that nuance and difference has been brought out so hopefully that will be helpful. We also included a pretty extensive bibliography to go back to those Church documents not just on the teachings on human sexuality and on the nature of marriage and family and all of that but also on the pastoral approach of accompaniment and responding to families from non-traditional situations. There are a number of books and articles on the practical pastoral application that you might find helpful. We've included several suggested reports, there are samples of other diocesan LGBTQ ministries that we reference there because sometimes it's helpful to see what other dioceses are doing and how they're responding to this particular sign of the times and then there are--and this might go back to Father's point here-- there are a couple of examples of Catholic support groups for individuals who are experiencing same-sex attraction or their family members. Courage is one of them. The Church does not necessarily condone conversion therapy per se but there are resources, psychological resources and counseling and support group resources sanctioned by the Church that you can refer people to to seek assistance with that issue. So those are shared there as well as the Covenant of Trust which you may be familiar with if you worked in a school but we included it here. We're approaching lunchtime. We finished here. We raised a lot of questions. I saw many people taking lots of notes. I am going to give it back over to Father for instructions on the rest of the day here. Thank you very much for your time.

Fr. Corel: Thank you, Sisters. Thank you, John. Thank you to our volunteers... Feel free to obviously...