

**STATEMENT OF
THE HIGH SCHOOLS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO
REGARDING THE TEACHINGS AND PRACTICE
OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

We, the Archdiocesan High Schools, affirm that we are educational institutions of the Catholic Church, and as such strive to present Catholic doctrine in its fullness, and that we hold, believe and practice all that the Holy Catholic Church teaches, believes and proclaims to be true, whether from the natural moral law or by way of revelation from God through Scripture and Tradition.

- **We, the Archdiocesan High Schools, Acknowledge** that some of our administrators, faculty or staff may not be Catholics and some may be Catholics who are struggling to achieve fidelity to some of the teachings of the Church, but we are all nevertheless called and required to stand as effective and visible professional participants and proponents of truly Catholic Education. As effective professionals in a Catholic School setting, we all – administrators, faculty and staff – are required and expected to avoid fostering confusion among the faithful and any dilution of the schools’ primary Catholic mission. Therefore, administrators, faculty and staff of any faith or of no faith, are expected to arrange and conduct their lives so as not to visibly contradict, undermine or deny these truths. To that end, further, we all must refrain from public support of any cause or issue that is explicitly or implicitly contrary to that which the Catholic Church holds to be true, both those truths known from revelation and those from the natural law. Those of us who consider themselves to be Catholics but who are not in a state of full assent to the teachings of the Church, moreover, must refrain from participation in organizations that call themselves “Catholic” but support or advocate issues or causes contrary to the teachings of the Church.

- **We, the Archdiocesan High Schools, Acknowledge** that all administrators, faculty and staff who are Catholics, and particularly those engaged as classroom teachers, have an even higher calling, according to which they must not only avoid public contradiction of their status as professional agents in the mission of Catholic Education, but are also called to conform their hearts, minds and consciences, as well as their public and private behavior, ever more closely to the truths taught by the Catholic Church. Recognizing as we do that no person can give perfect witness to these truths, Catholic educational professionals are nevertheless called to strive for ever greater assent and fidelity. Attesting that they believe these things and aware of their own sinfulness and shortcomings, they are called to strive in their beliefs as well as their manner of living to conform themselves to this statement of mission and beliefs.

In particular, in advancing our mission to proclaim these truths together with all of our administrators, faculty and staff, we, the Archdiocesan High Schools:

- **Affirm and believe** in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and we embrace the teachings about that Church as enunciated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (cf. CCC 748-962).
- **Affirm and believe** that the Church teaches with God-given authority, that this authority lies in the Magisterium of the Church and that “[t]he Roman Pontiff ... enjoys ... infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful ... he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals” (CCC 891).
- **Affirm and believe** all that the Church teaches about the Real Presence of Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist. Specifically, we believe that Jesus Christ is present Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity under each of the forms of bread and wine. We acknowledge that “[a]nyone who desires to receive Christ in Eucharistic communion must be in the state of grace. Anyone aware of having sinned mortally must not receive communion without having received absolution in the sacrament of penance” (CCC 1415). We further affirm that “[i]ndividual and integral confession and absolution constitute the only ordinary means by which a member of the faithful conscious of grave sin is reconciled with God and the Church” (Can. 960 CIC). We recognize that all Catholics have the obligation to participate in Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation (CCC 2180) and that those who deliberately fail to fulfill this obligation commit grave sin (CCC 2181), and they therefore must avail themselves of the sacrament of penance before presenting themselves to receive Holy Communion again.
- **Affirm and believe** that it is possible for a person to choose to remain separated from God for all eternity and that “[t]his state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called ‘hell’” (CCC 1033).
- **Affirm and believe** that those who die in God’s grace and friendship but are still imperfectly purified undergo additional purification so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joys of heaven, and that the Church’s name for this final purification is purgatory (CCC 1030-1032).
- **Affirm and believe** that in virtue of the sacramental character of the ordained Priesthood, the example of Christ himself, and the constant and universal Tradition of the Church, “the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church’s faithful” (Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, n. 4), and we also accept that this in no way diminishes “the presence and the role of women in the life and mission of the Church ... [as] absolutely necessary and irreplaceable” (ibid., n. 3).
- **Affirm and believe** the Church’s teaching about the inviolability of human life, and in accord with that teaching affirm that human life is sacred and must be protected and respected from the moment of conception until natural death; we reject direct,

intentional abortion and recognize that any well-formed conscience always rejects direct, intentional abortion; we are not “pro-choice” (cf. CCC 2270-2283).

- **Affirm and believe** what the Church teaches about chastity, and specifically, that chastity means “the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being” (CCC 2337); we affirm that chaste living necessarily requires abstinence from all sexual intimacy outside of marriage, even if by itself this is insufficient to achieve the virtue of chastity in all its fullness.
- **Affirm and believe** that every person is called to chastity in accord with their present state of life, and that it is only in marriage between man and woman that the intimacy of sexual union can become a sign and pledge of spiritual communion (CCC 2337-2365). We accept the Church’s teaching that all extra-marital sexual relationships are gravely evil and that these include adultery, masturbation, fornication, the viewing of pornography and homosexual relations.
- **Affirm and believe** the Church’s teaching about the sinfulness of contraception. We affirm, in accord with the teachings of the Church, that “every action which, whether in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible’ is intrinsically evil” (CCC 2370).
- **Affirm and believe** the teaching of the Church about homosexual acts being contrary to the natural law (CCC 2357). We also affirm and believe all that the Church says about the distinction between homosexual orientation and homosexual acts. We accept that homosexual persons do not choose their condition, and that “[t]hey must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity”; likewise, that “[e]very sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.” We affirm that homosexual persons “are called to fulfill God’s will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord’s Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition” (CCC 2358) and that “[b]y the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection” (CCC 2359).
- **Affirm and believe** all that the Church teaches about marriage, as an institution, as a covenant, and – between two baptized persons – as a sacrament. We believe marriage to be a partnership of the whole of life between a man and a woman of permanent and exclusive fidelity ordered to the procreation and education of offspring and the mutual good of the spouses (cf. CCC 1601; cann. 1055, 1056, 1057 § 1 CIC) .
- **Affirm and believe** that the fundamental demands of justice require that the civil law preserve the definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman. We believe this to be the case for the reasons, among others, taught by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in “Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal

Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons” (June 3, 2003), with particular regard for nn. 7, 8 and 11.

- **Affirm and believe** the grave evil of artificial reproductive technology. We accept that “[t]echniques that entail the dissociation of husband and wife, by the intrusion of a person other than the couple (donation of sperm or ovum, surrogate uterus), are gravely immoral,” that these techniques infringe on “the child’s right to be born of a father and mother known to him and bound to each other by marriage. They betray the spouses’ ‘right to become a father and a mother only through each other’” (CCC 2376; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum vitae*, n. II, 1).
- **Affirm and believe** the grave evil of human cloning, whether for purposes of research and therapy or reproduction. We accept that human cloning “seeks to *give rise to a new human being without a connection to the act of reciprocal self-giving between the spouses* and, more radically, *without any link to sexuality*. This leads to manipulation and abuses gravely injurious to human dignity” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dignitatis Personae*, n. 28). We therefore also firmly believe that embryonic stem cell research can never be justified, in that “the use of human embryos or fetuses as an object of experimentation constitutes a crime against their dignity as human beings who have a right to the same respect owed to a child once born, just as to every person,” and that “[t]hese forms of experimentation always constitute a grave moral disorder” (*Dignitatis Personae*, n. 34).