



# Christian Citizenship

**“You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world” (Mt. 5:13-16). One way to be salty and let our light shine is by being good citizens on earth. Our vocation as citizens of both the secular kingdom and God’s kingdom gives us the responsibility to proclaim God’s Word and care for our neighbors. We are called to engage the “public square” with our message of Christ’s mercy for all. Please pray for God’s will to be done... in Jesus’ name.**

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## **Prayer on Christian Liberty Day**

Across the country, January 16 was celebrated as Christian Liberty Day. Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, Executive Director of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, offered this prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father... What a privilege it is to live in liberty with the freedom that we have from Your creative-providential hand. We have been given a charge to proclaim Your Gospel, yes, the very good news of forgiveness, life, and salvation in and through Your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Today, we recognize that we live in a land that honors the freedom and liberty to proclaim such a wonderful message without fear. Today, we prayerfully celebrate the fact that we have religious liberty to be about the task of loving others as we have been loved by You.

But, sadly on this day, we also realize that many of these constitutional liberties are under attack. So too are the truths of the Scripture, namely Your ordering of the world, Your moral structure in the world, and even Your saving Gospel for the world. We pray then, for the power of Your Holy Spirit to give us courage and strength needed to live “Christ-like” lives in Your Name, not for our sakes, but for the sake of others, even for those with whom we disagree. Give us vigilance to learn and to put to use the very temporal liberties that we have, always in service to the eternal liberty that we have by faith in Jesus Christ alone.

We therefore ask You to guide us toward a persevering faithfulness to honor the blessings You have given us in this culture... religious liberty for all, the sanctity of life for all, traditional marriage

as a foundation for a civil society, and educational freedom that empowers people to be what You have created and redeemed them to be. We ask you boldly to give us strength and courage to defend these liberties and gifts so graciously given. But, even more so, we pray today that You give us strength and courage to be the people You have called us to be, honoring Your Name in all things so that all might hear of Your wonderful works and be saved by faith in your Son. Let us truly be a people who live out the temporal blessing of being “one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all,” even as we strive to be Your Church in going about the task of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ for all.

With courage, not fear; with boldness even in the face of intimidation... we ask this through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

## **Gender Identity Policies**

[Note: The following is excerpted from *When Harry Became Sally* by Ryan T. Anderson.] Gender identity policies are not just about allowing citizens who identify as transgender to live as they choose, but about coercing the rest of us to go along with a radical ideology. Schools are a major front in this campaign. The aim of protecting students who identify as transgender from bullying and respecting their dignity is reasonable in itself, but that’s not what these policies are about. They’re about a larger program of indoctrination in gender ideology.

Gender identity policies can quickly generate politically correct speech codes in schools and workplaces. “Antibullying” programs can turn into anti-disagreement programs. Dissent is equated with bigotry and hate, so no dissent will be tolerated. All students must accept gender ideology, and their parents will have no say in the matter.

A public charter school in Minnesota, Nova Classical Academy, became roiled with controversy

in late 2015 after administrators informed parents that an incoming kindergartner was “gender non-conforming” and that the school would be supporting the child’s gender identity. As part of the program, all K-5 students would read *My Princess Boy*, a book about “a boy who expresses his true self by dressing up and enjoying traditional girl things.” School officials claimed that they were obligated by law to meet the demands of the transgender child’s parents but pushed aside the concerns and objections of other children’s parents. Nova’s board of directors approved a new “gender inclusion” policy, allowing students to choose their own gender at will.

Emily Zinos, a mother who pulled her child out of Nova wrote, “First, schools will teach children to accept an ideology that is predicated on the lie that biological sex plays second fiddle to a self-proclaimed, subjective gender identity, and that the sex of one’s body is mutable or even irrelevant. This isn’t just an idea that you can tuck away in a unit study or an anti-bullying presentation. It will inevitably find its way into every aspect of a school and make a deep impression on the developing minds of children. For example, girls, under the regressive mandates of anti-bullying and gender inclusion policies, would have to agree to call boys in their locker room “girls,” effectively losing their rights to free speech and to privacy from males. And science—particularly biology—would die a quick death at the hands of a concept that necessarily eradicates observable facts about human sexuality. Gender ideology in the curriculum is a lie enshrined as truth.” (*When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Movement*; 178, 180.)

**What can we do?** We can be like Emily Zinos who posed these questions to other parents: 1) Will we allow our young and vulnerable children to be fed a false anthropology rather than teaching them to speak the truth boldly? 2) Will we consent to our children’s sterilization rather than patiently guiding them toward an appreciation of their bodies? 3) Will we treat our children’s mental health issues with double mastectomies rather than demand that doctors provide a true remedy? (p. 181)

**Please pray** that parents and Church will resist the deception of the world... in Jesus’ name.

## Hispanics Taking a Stand for Life

Hispanic families traditionally have deep-rooted cultural or religious pro-life values. But at school, Planned Parenthood (PP) taught Patricia Sandoval how to have “safe sex.” At 19 “safe sex” failed Patricia, and she had her first abortion. Before the procedure, she remembers a nurse telling her, “It’s not a baby...it’s a sac of tissue.” Patricia believed her and after two more abortions, began working as a Spanish-speaking back-office nurse at PP in Sacramento where she grew accustomed to a waiting room filled with Hispanic, teenage girls.

At PP, supervisors instructed Patricia to keep girls from seeing ultrasound screens and to call the babies “it.” In time, Patricia assisted during abortion procedures and saw dismembered arms and legs, bodies with genitalia, and heads with hair and mouths still open. She witnessed biohazard freezers full of bagged body parts. Patricia didn’t believe in God at that time, but she knew that “I had killed my three children.” Facing this truth led her into three years of drug addiction, homelessness, and anorexia.” Patricia attended a post-abortion healing retreat where she experienced Christ’s forgiveness. Today, Patricia speaks and writes for life.

Hispanics are the “sleeping giant” of the pro-life movement... and the “giant” is waking up. In 2006, Astrid Bennett Gutierrez opened the pro-life clinic called Los Angeles Pregnancy Services. Two years ago she launched the Vida Initiative outreach that targets second-or third-generation Hispanic millennials with pro-life messages, mentoring, and workshops. The greatest challenge, says Gutierrez, is “undoing the indoctrination that happens in schools and in mainstream media.” (Source: *WORLD Magazine*, January 19, 2019.)

**What can we do?** Talk with your children and grandchildren about the gift of life that comes through the loving act of marriage. Learn about the work and ministry of your local caring pregnancy center. Visit the websites of Lutherans For Life, Right to Life, Latinos4Life, Black Americans for Life, and Students for Life.

**Please pray** for the unborn, their mothers, fathers, and grandparents... in Jesus’ name.

