In June the Congregation for Catholic Education published the paper »Male and female he created them«. Towards a path of dialogue on the question of gender theory in education.

The Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Tübingen comments on this document because we see our work touched on at least three aspects: Firstly, teachers, researchers and students of the faculty work naturally and profitably with gender theories and explicitly pursue »gender studies« in teaching and research. Secondly, the social construction of the sexes and their influence on the contents and objects of Christian theology are taken into account in teaching – explicitly stated in module manuals. And thirdly, through research and teaching, students at the faculty are prepared to take into account a gender-sensitive perspective in their professional activities, whether in pastoral work or in school, and to deal competently with the questions of justice arising from them.

1. The document refers to a »way of dialogue«, a way of listening, reasoning and proposing. In fact, however, important aspects of »gender theory« are assessed too undifferentiated and too generally negative. The desired dialogue and a serious examination of gender theories seems more prevented than made possible. Overall, the document does not provide a realistic picture of gender theories and the underlying concept of »gender« – and therefore does not show a balanced engagement with these theories and this concept.

2. As an alternative to »gender theory« the Congregation provides a »christian anthropology« of the gender-binary-standardized human being. The body references and ideas of sexuality claimed here correspond neither to what is known in human science about body references and experiences of people and their manifold sexuality, nor to the diverse and complex experiences of people who make them with and in their bodies and with and in their sexuality. For theological research and teaching, the normative anthropology of the document in this form does not offer any further basis, because it takes too little account of man's areas of experience.

3. This is particularly serious in No. 24, which calls for medical experts to establish a clear gender identity for people of ambiguous sex according to »objective parameters«. Due to the psychological consequences of such operations, more fundamentally due to the unjustified interference with the right to physical integrity, to the preservation of gender and sexual identity and to the right to an open future, surgical interventions for the purpose of gender classification are now largely rejected. Instead, a sensitive and experiential accompaniment on the way to a developing gender identity is recommended.
Against this background the Faculty Council for the Catholic Theological Faculty declares:

- The gender concept is an important and self-evident instrument of the theological research and teaching carried out at the faculty. In accordance with the doctrine of »gaudium et spes«, gender concepts contribute to an appropriate theological understanding of the »signs of the times« and to an understanding of the resulting requirements for believers and the church. Accordingly, gender theories are taken up and used by the faculty's teachers, researchers and students; some of them conduct »gender studies« and thus contribute to the development of gender theories in the field of theology. The faculty supports this kind of teaching and research, as well as the study.

- The Faculty is happy to engage in the dialogue intended by the Congregation for Catholic Education on the relevance of the social order of the sexes for the Christian faith as well as for education carried out in ecclesial contexts. In doing so, however, we engage in dialogue with the breadth and academic differentiation of gender-theoretical discourses.

- Through their studies at the faculty, students are to be enabled to consider the social construction of gender and its effects on the Christian faith, its contents and its institutional mediation in theology and in their future professional fields in church and school. They should be able to see the needs of life and faith of people caused by gender constructions as well as the resulting injustices and challenges and to work on them »in the light of the Gospel« (GS 4).

- The Faculty will apply to the »Katholisch-Theologischer Fakultätentag« and to the »Vereinigung der Arbeitsgemeinschaften für katholische Theologie« for a joint response from the Catholic Theological Faculties and Institutes in the Federal Republic of Germany as well as the Catholic Theology operated at the scientific institutions to the Vatican working aid.

Resolution of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the Eberhard Karls University Tübingen at its meeting on 26 July 2019.