



Written by [James Murphy](#) on May 22, 2024

Catholic Monk Comes Out as Transgender

Claiming that the church has to “deal with us,” a Catholic diocesan hermit in Kentucky [has officially announced](#) to the world that he is transgender. Christian Matson, a monk from Lexington, Kentucky, defied Church teachings with the permission of Bishop John Stowe of Lexington.

Matson is believed to be the first openly transgendered individual to hold the position of hermit in the Catholic Church. In Catholic tradition, hermits live a solitary existence, praising God with a life committed to prayer and a strict separation from the world. Matson believed he was called to join the world in this case.



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Stowe explained his support for Matson: “Hermits are a rarely used form of religious life ... but they can be either male or female. Because there’s no pursuit of priesthood or engagement in sacramental ministry, and because the hermit is a relatively quiet and secluded type of vocation, I didn’t see any harm in letting him live this vocation.”

“This Sunday, Pentecost 2024, I’m planning to come out publicly as transgender,” Matson told Religion News Service.

“I am currently based in the Appalachian mountains of eastern Kentucky,” he wrote in a email to friends and supporters. “I live in a hermitage at the top of a wooded hill, which I share with my German Shepherd rescue, Odie, and with the Blessed Sacrament, which was installed in my oratory shortly before Christmas.”

The Lexington Diocese [offered its full support](#) of Matson:

On Pentecost Sunday, Brother Christian Matson, a professed hermit in the Diocese of Lexington, has made it public that he is a transgender person. Brother Christian has long sought to consecrate his life to Christ in the Church by living the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. He has consistently been accompanied by a competent spiritual director and has undergone formation in the Benedictine tradition. He does not seek ordination, but has professed a rule of life that allows him to support himself financially by continuing his work in the arts and to live a life of contemplation in a private hermitage.

Both Matson and the Diocese are at odds with Church [teaching](#) on the subject. The recent Declaration “Dignitas Infinita” from April of this year explains.

The dignity of the body cannot be considered inferior to that of the person as such. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* expressly invites us to recognize that “the human body shares in the dignity of ‘the image of God.’” Such a truth deserves to be remembered,



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especially when it comes to sex change, for humans are inseparably composed of both body and soul. In this, the body serves as the living context in which the interiority of the soul unfolds and manifests itself, as it does also through the network of human relationships. Constituting the person's being, the soul and the body both participate in the dignity that characterizes every human.... It follows that any sex-change intervention, as a rule, risks threatening the unique dignity the person has received from the moment of conception.

But in Matson's mind, that teaching is ignorant and anti-science:

I can't stand by and let this false and, at times, culpably ignorant understanding of what it means to be transgender continue to hurt people. If I don't say anything and allow the church to continue to make decisions based on incorrect information, then I'm not serving the church.... Vatican-level documents that have come out on the subject have not engaged with the science at all.

Matson's proclamation stands in stark contrast to Catholic NFL kicker Harrison Butker's recent commencement [address](#) at Benedictine College in Kansas. Butker referred to the LGBT movement, of which transgenderism is a part, as a "deadly sin sort of pride that has an entire month dedicated to it."

But according to Matson, "You've got to deal with us, because God has called us into this church. It's not your church to kick us out of — this is God's church, and God has called us and engrafted us into it."



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