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by NCR Staff

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Responding to comments made by Pope Francis in a March 10 interview with the Argentine newspaper La Nacion, [NCR contributing writer Rebecca Bratten Weiss wrote](#) that the Catholic Church's binary gender ideology doesn't match what we currently know about how nature works. "The categories of male and female, as they exist in nature, are not an either/or, nor an absolute binary. Rather, they reside on a spectrum," she said. NCR readers respond to her commentary with letters that have been edited for length and clarity.

With great interest and agreement I have read Rebecca Bratten Weiss's article. I have given many lessons, especially to young religious, to help people become more open and accepting to LGBTQ fellow human beings. It would help to get some suggestions for literature about what she refers to in the article when she says, "across different species and kingdoms in the natural world ... Maleness and femaleness manifest in different ways."

JOHAN MUIJTJENS

Maastricht, Netherlands



I'm suspicious of the way that the Western academy, primarily consisting of white (or white-minded) folks, who seem to mostly hail from the Anglosphere, has come to dominate the global conversation on issues of gender and sex. Transgenderism, for example, is not primarily a Western phenomenon, yet that is decidedly not the impression one gets when the issue is discussed. I'm increasingly more interested in hearing how people from, say, Thailand and Brazil culturally define gender and understand sex than I am in how white academics do the same.

JEFFREY JONES
Hamburg, NY

For Irenaeus, Bonaventure and other early theologians, nature stood alongside the Bible as a source of God's self-revelation. Centuries later, perhaps when modern science seemed to contradict creation accounts in Genesis, that view of nature as a companion to biblical revelation was lost or rejected. In a post-Dei Verbum church, where scripture is not expected to be a science textbook, and where evolution and cosmology can offer insights into Genesis 1, isn't it again time to accept both as sources of revelation? [John 1:3](#) offers a way to bring them together. If science reveals something fundamental about the complexity of humanity, perhaps that suggests that it came to be through God. As we grow in our understanding of how human creatures present themselves, shouldn't our understanding of how God can work be allowed to expand? Both science and theology are called to humility; both see incompletely. A new insight in one can give new insights into the other.

JULIANA BOERIO-GOATES

Salt Lake City, Utah

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Other than a couple of generic references to Jesus, Bratten Weiss poses no theological reasoning for her position. Pope Francis has stated church teaching that has stood for 2,000 years. Follow Jesus and the church and find peace, love and freedom in your life.

HUGH DENNING

Denver, Colorado

This is an excellent opinion piece. We are all educated and socialized in a cultural environment. This environment is influenced by many factors, one of which is religion. People aren't going to learn the truth in a biased culture influenced by a so-called Christian religion. Bratten Weiss gives credit to Pope Francis who attempts to bridge the divide between God's all-inclusive spectrum of life and humankind's desire to categorize, compartmentalize, and strategize what they perceive of God's creation into the nice, neat package of natural law. However, the natural law defined by the Catholic Church many centuries ago is no longer true today. It's no longer true because the natural sciences have progressed to the point that certain conditions thought to be immutable laws have been upended.

MICHAEL J. MCDERMOTT

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