

If you meet Susan, please do not be alarmed



Why do I write this? I have lived from first moments of consciousness feeling that something was wrong in my life. I was aware of this as a discomfort even from the age of four years. I fought against this sense of identity with all my willpower and I tried to suppress it for many years. At times that would succeed but then it would erupt as if from nowhere with even greater demands. On two occasions I nearly had breakdowns, and there are times when suicide has had to be denied. I did seek medical advice and each time I only avoided these because I changed my approach. In the end I had to accept what this was saying about my need to be me, and to find ways to welcome the contribution this brings. I am transgender: more precisely I describe myself as a male to female transsexual. However, contrary to what many people think this does not mean that I want to be a woman or to do feminine things. It is simply the most natural way for me to live my life. Nothing else needs to change apart from the frame of reference in which my life is lived. Therefore, if you do meet Susan do not be alarmed: come and talk to me, for you will find the same person inside.

What this simply means that when I interact with society as a woman I can be myself. Like many transgender people I find there is a battle between the love, relationships and commitments in the life that I have built, and this need to be me, which drives me deep inside. Sometimes it can feel overpowering. Having to deal with this is not something that I would wish on anyone including myself. Gender and sexuality go their different ways, so despite any transformations, my love and commitment to my wife and family remain just as strong. I want to pay special tribute to the enormous support that my wife and family have given me, and also my gratitude for the ways in which they always have and still continue to manage the great challenges this brings. I am not seeking to transition: however to keep to that path I must never presume that the need to do so would never occur. I have also found that I must never deny the expression of my identity since that would destroy my control. Instead of this I seek to keep a truce between my loyalty to the love, commitment and relationships in the life I have built and the sense of identity I feel deep inside. This means that a key requirement for me is to recognise that repressing my sense of identity does not work and I must find ways to express and to welcome what it brings. For these reasons I have been, and I still continue to work with churches, politicians, medical institutions and other groups in society to promote the wellbeing of transgender people and LGBTI people more generally. You can find out more about this work by going to my website www.tgdr.co.uk. So: If you do meet Susan, please do not be alarmed, please do come and talk to me. Do not be afraid to ask me any questions. After any initial surprise you may find that that there is a lot between us that we may share and say.

At St Martin-in-the-Fields and in the Corrymeela Community I engage openly as Susan in LGBTI matters, but here and also in other areas I work on a need-to-know basis, I treat this as knowledge which I keep private, but which I do not have to hide. This document does not herald any change in my approach. Please therefore do not share this information with others without my express consent.