



Relationship with GOD

More than Just SUNDAY

Making Your Home a Safe Haven

Pornography is not a topic most adults are comfortable speaking about. This is especially the case when it comes to parents addressing it with their children. Regrettably though, it's the topic that's becoming more and more necessary to address in our digital age. Too many parents, grandparents, and guardians think their children have not been exposed to internet-based pornography. This is simply not true. Statistics tell us another story.

First exposure to Internet pornography is often during the elementary school years. This often occurs by accident. Picture this: your child typed in the wrong word on social media, your nephew clicked on the wrong YouTube video, or your godchild's friend showed him his first sexually explicit image on Instagram. When parents and guardians haven't created an environment where it's safe and open to dialogue about uncomfortable topics, children will often hide these experiences out of shame and embarrassment.

What does pornography do? Pornography perverts the intimate giving of spouses to each other because it takes what is made to be a sacred gift of self between husband and wife and turns it into a public performance designed to make a profit. Pornography objectifies persons and tempts people to infidelity, shattered families, darkness and isolation. (See Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 2354)

In 2016, the Bishops of the United States wrote: Create in Me a Clean Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography. This document reminds us that pornography causes damage to oneself, one's relationships, society, and the Body of Christ. That is why it can never be justified and is always wrong. In the pastoral letter, we read:

"Pornography use hurts the user by potentially diminishing his or her capacity for healthy human intimacy

and relationships. It presents a distorted view of human sexuality that is contrary to authentic love, and it harms a person's sense of self-worth... It can increase isolation between people because of the feelings of shame and self-reproach it generates. It breaks down trust between family members, and it damages the ability of parents and other adults to be virtuous role models for children." (pg 7)

Bishop Callahan and the pastors of the Diocese are committed to helping parents make their homes safe and equipping them to eliminate pornography. They recognize the immediate need to address pornography because of its widespread availability through devices that seamlessly connect to the Internet.

Pornography is instantly accessible, seemingly anonymous, and mostly free to any individual – child or adult – who has a smartphone, tablet or computer. In one or two clicks, anyone can be exposed to the porn industry which appears to be endlessly novel and exciting. In very little time, anyone can view porn and become instantly gratified in a virtual reality that degrades God's beautiful plan for human love and sexuality.

"The Internet's perceived anonymity can entice a person to view images or engage in activities that he or she would hesitate to do off-line, and the novelty of Internet pornography can itself be intoxicating, affecting brain chemistry and seducing viewers to keep clicking. In contrast to a magazine, the Internet has no final page." (Create in Me a Clean Heart. Pg 10)

All of us must uphold the truth about each person's God-given dignity by rejecting anything that would harm it. Thus, diocesan leadership is committed to guide and equip parents and other individuals for this task. The U.S. Bishops state clearly that; "The use of pornography by anyone in the home deprives the home of its role as a safe haven and has negative

effects throughout a family's life and across generations." (Create in Me a Clean Heart. Pg 15)

The parishes of the Diocese will celebrate its first annual Safe Haven Sunday on March 10th. Within the context of Mass, parishes in the diocese will provide age appropriate teaching and resources that will support and protect individuals, marriages, and families, making all homes a safe haven.

The theme of this year's Safe Haven Sunday is "Equipping the Family, Safeguarding Children." Each household will be offered Covenant Eyes' book, Equipped: Smart Catholic Parenting in a Sexualized Culture. This book includes a unique seven-day text-to-opt-in program. This challenge provides practical tips that can be taken to create safer digital environments within the home. Everyone is encouraged to take advantage of these resources.

Pornography doesn't need to be fought alone. The resources provided on Safe Haven Sunday will both encourage and teach individuals and families dealing with the effects of pornography that loving support is available. It's worth battling pornography in order to become whole and clean of heart.

Safe Haven Sunday is made possible through a partnership with CovenantEyes.com. Special thanks is extended to the La Crosse Diocesan Council of Catholic Women for their financial support. For more information about Safe Haven Sunday, visit: diolc.org/marriage/shs/

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