

# **Pornography is ‘a sexual Katrina’ tearing men down, says speaker**

NEW ORLEANS – The scourge of addiction to pornography, especially among men, has created “a sexual Katrina” that is destroying families, church and society, a prominent speaker on sexual integrity told a recent gathering of men in New Orleans.

Dan Spencer, an advisory board member of the “My House” anti-pornography initiative in the Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kan., told 200 men at the 13th annual Morning Men’s Spirituality event that pornographic addiction is so prevalent it qualifies as one of the major battles the Catholic Church must speak out about and fight.

“It is the single largest battle, in my opinion, in this room – the battle of pornography,” said Spencer, an advertising and marketing executive and consultant. “There are men here – and not just one or two – who are addicted to pornography and who struggle with sexual issues. This sexual Katrina is destroying homes, families, men, our society, our church. This is enormous.”

Spencer, who spoke Oct. 17 at St. Rita Church, said as many as 54 percent of men admit to viewing pornography in a one-month period, and 10 percent are addicted, including those who regularly attend church.

“There are men here who are hooked and who are wounded –and not just one or two,” Spencer said. “Fifty percent of men in this archdiocese are having this problem. It’s typical. We want to think it’s all young teenagers. I work with a number of groups, and the average age is 56. They range in age from 32 to 81.”

Spencer, founder and director of the St. Joseph Center and chairman of the Kansas City Catholic Men’s Fellowship, said the name “My House” is a short form of this verse from the Book of Joshua: “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

Spencer said when he was a child his father took him to the circus, where he saw

huge elephants doing tricks and wondered why they couldn't break the chains around their legs. Spencer's father explained that when the elephants were first born, the chains were placed on their legs.

"They learned the reality that those chains meant bondage," Spencer said. "That's why circus elephants are only good for this rather docile activity. In a way, their identity was taken from them."

In a similar way, a man's first encounter with pornography as a child can enslave him for life, Spencer said. He said the average age for exposure to sexually explicit material is 9 years old.

"And when does puberty hit?" Spencer said. "Talk about having your identity screwed up. Masturbation becomes the center of your life. You mask the pain of normal junior high times with that. Then you have dysfunctional families and deep father wounds. A lot of people have a tough time with their dads."

Spencer said while men make up 75 percent of those addicted to pornography women are the fastest-growing group.

"Women are in the (Internet) chat rooms because they are starved for love and affection," Spencer said. "Then it gets to the point, 'Why don't we meet?' This is millions of women. This should not be happening, not in Catholic America."

The easy and anonymous access to pornography through the Internet has made the problem even more difficult to combat, Spencer said.

"We are a totally sexualized culture," he said. "The Internet has changed everything. There are no more social barriers. You don't have to go out and buy books or go to a peep show. How many of you have PCs that are covered with protective software?"

Viewing pornography on workplace computers is also a major practice, Spencer said.

The Kansas City Archdiocese understood that the problem with pornography was so out of control that it created a small task force to review how best to respond, which led to the creation of "My House."

Among the most important strategies for fighting an addiction to pornography is to join a small faith group that meets either weekly or monthly so that men must be accountable for their actions, Spencer said.

“You cannot beat this alone, nor can you help someone if you don’t go to a small faith group,” he said. “You must get strength from other brothers. Iron sharpens iron. Primarily, you need deep adult conversion. You must ask the Son of God to come live in all of you. You must give your whole identity, your whole life to Christ, not just this Sunday morning stuff.”

Spencer recommended making a full sacramental confession – and going to confession regularly – “to get it out and get clean. If you don’t, you’ll always carry this junk around with you. But our Lord Jesus is there to forgive you.”

Finally, eucharistic adoration and worthily receiving Communion are great blessings available to Catholic men in winning the fight, he said.

Spencer can be reached by e-mail at [dspenceriii@kc.rr.com](mailto:dspenceriii@kc.rr.com).

“If you e-mail me or let me know, I will work with you,” Spencer said. “I will call you every week.”