

## Did you know?

- **Pornography is an epidemic.**

- In 2004, there were 372 million pornographic Web pages, 2.5 billion emails (8% of total emails), 100 thousand Web sites offering illegal child pornography, and 72 million annual worldwide visitors to pornographic websites.<sup>1</sup>

- **Pornography robs children of their innocence.**

- The most common ways people have accidentally reached pornographic content on the Web are pop-up windows (55%), misrepresented links (52%), misspelled URLs (48%) and auto links within emails (23%).<sup>2</sup>
- The average age of first Internet exposure to pornography is 11 years old.<sup>3</sup>



- **Pornography is a struggle for so many men and women.**

- 70% of 18 to 24 year old men visit pornographic sites in a typical month. 66% of men in their 20s and 30s also report being regular users of pornography.<sup>4</sup>
- One out of every six women grapples with addiction to pornography.<sup>5</sup>
- For every 10 men in church, 5 are struggling with pornography.<sup>6</sup>



- **Pornography is a multi-billion dollar industry.**

- Porn revenue is larger than all combined revenues of all professional football, baseball and basketball franchises. The pornography industry, according to conservative estimates, brings in \$57 billion per year.<sup>7</sup>

- **Pornography devastates families.**

- Pornography users increasingly see the institution of marriage as sexually confining and have diminished belief in the importance of marital faithfulness.<sup>8</sup>
- One study finds 56% of divorce cases involving “one party having an obsessive interest in pornographic websites.”<sup>9</sup>

## Did you know? There is healing and forgiveness.

The Sacraments of the Church are *transformative*. Come to the Church. Reconciliation offers forgiveness, provides an opportunity for self-knowledge, and brings us in communion with God and with the Church.

The beauty of the human body reflects its Creator. By understanding this truth, the human person is free to fully love. “*Only in truth does charity shine forth, only in truth can charity be authentically lived.*” *Caritas in Veritate*, n. 3.

*So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and favor and to find help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:16*

<sup>1</sup> Internet Filter Review, Internet Pornography Statistics (2004).

<sup>2</sup> Ceberian Inc. and SonicWALL, Fifty Percent of Workers Spend Nine days a Year on Personal Surfing at Work (20 July 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Internet Filter Review, *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> R. Albert Mohler, Jr., First-person: the culture of pornography. Baptist Press (28 December 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Vincent Cyrus Yoder, Thomas B. Virden, and Kiran Amin, Internet Pornography and Loneliness: An Association? Vol. 12.1 (2005).

<sup>6</sup> The Call to Biblical Manhood. Man in the Mirror (6 July, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Yoder, Virden III, and Amin, *supra*.

<sup>8</sup> Patrick F. Fagan, PhD, The Effects of Pornography on Individuals, Marriages, & Community (December 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Jill Manning, Senate Testimony, November 10, 2005, referencing: J. Dedmon, “Is the Internet bad for your marriage? Online affairs, pornographic sites playing greater role in divorces,” 2002, press release from American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, 14.

## **Joint Statement on Pornography**

**by Delegates of  
The Synagogue Council of America  
and The National Conference of Catholic Bishops**

**December 7, 1993**

As Jewish and Roman Catholic leaders in America, we recognize the importance of the constitutionally recognized right to freedom of speech. At the same time, however, we are greatly concerned about the alarming growth of pornography. Graphic public displays, books, videocassettes, advertising displays and even telecommunications frequently portray degrading and violent sexual behavior, which demeans the human character, debases the individual and is openly pornographic and morally offensive.

As Jews and Catholics, we teach that the creator fashioned each person in the Divine image. Any material that demeans the inherent dignity of women, men and children by removing sexuality from the context of meaningful interpersonal relationships denies the image of the Creator within all of us. In our view, pornography and the portrayal of sadistic violence debase sexuality, corrode human relationships, exploit individuals -- especially women and young people -- undermine marriage and family life, foster antisocial behavior and weaken the moral fiber of society itself.

As religious leaders, our first responsibility is to teach -- openly and consistently -- important moral truths, including truths about sexual morality. The so-called "ethic" of immediate sexual gratification is fundamentally opposed to integral human growth and fulfillment. We must educate about the values of family life and responsible life in society. We must teach that pornography degrades those used in its production, as well as those who are desensitized or whose values are perverted through its consumption. We denounce pornography because we believe that it reduces the Creator's gift of sexuality to a level that is devoid of personal dignity, commitment and spirituality.

We call upon our fellow citizens to help stem the proliferation of pornography in our community by refusing to purchase or to view such materials. We further call upon all members of our religious communities to foster a true respect for human sexuality among all those with whom they come in contact. We especially appeal to parents to give guidance to their children in this area. In addition, we believe it is incumbent upon teachers and religious leaders to openly address these issues.