

April 2016

MARRIAGE & FAMILY + PASTORAL CARE + PRO-LIFE + COUNSELING SERVICES

NOW MONTHLY!

Full of great content written by the Family Ministries team, the *Family Life Newsletter* is a source for information, resources and faith-based discussions about all manner of issues affecting families today.

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"Love is a relationship ... It is a reality that grows."

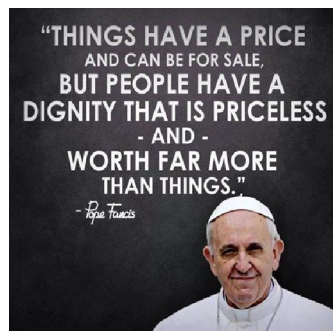


Pope Francis
February 14, 2014

Marriage & Family Enrichment

contact: Deacon Stephen Bowling, sbowling@archlou.org

Pornography and Marriage



Dr. Patrick Carnes calls the addiction to internet pornography "the crack cocaine of sexual addiction." Like crack, it doesn't take long for an internet porn user to become hooked, often in a matter of just a few weeks. And like crack, habitual viewing of online porn creates an intense cycle of addiction that is extremely difficult to break without expert assistance.

The above quotation is from the USCCB website article "Overcoming Obstacles: Pornography" by Gerald Korson which speaks of the dangers of pornography that are so often misunderstood or dismissed by modern American society.

Time after time, in discussions regarding pornography use, there are always those (generally male) who tend to say "What's wrong with it?" or "I'm not hurting anyone else." So often this is followed by either "Everyone does it" or "At least I'm not out running around on my spouse."

Spouses affected by porn use, however, almost always have something VERY DIFFERENT to say about the subject.

Pornography is a very real, very devastating form of adultery, which is all too easily accessible in today's media-saturated society. When a couple "promises to be true to each other" there are most assuredly no exceptions being made . . . in fact the marriage is considered not to have occurred at all should there be any such reservations.

According to Dr. Carnes, pornography carries with it the following devastating effects on a marriage:

- It destroys the trust and intimacy within the husband-wife relationship and often leads to the end of the marriage itself.
- It creates obstacles to real communication and personal interaction with one's spouse and with others.
- It stimulates within the porn addict a distorted view of sexuality that can lead to the desire for riskier, more perverse and even criminal sexual behaviors.
- It draws focus away from one's family life and relationship with God and sets a destructive example for one's children.

Fortunately . . . there is help available.

This newsletter delves deeper into this issue and presents many resources and statistics, all designed to help combat the prevailing wisdom of our society in an attempt to insert Christ's healing presence of forgiveness, mercy and healing into the discussion.

Pornography is a lie . . . and as with all lies, it must be challenged. Healthy marriages, free of the doubt and the infidelity it causes, demand no less.

Counseling Services

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Pornography, Our Families and our Children

Pornography has become an ever increasing problem in our society today, threatening adults, children, families and marriages. As our Catholic families, parishes, schools and programs try to teach the dignity and respect for the human body and all human life, the ever growing prevalence of pornography threatens those ideals, morals and values. Pornography is a touch-of-the-device away; accessible 24 hours a day by anyone with a smart phone or tablet. Society has become desensitized to the crude and ever present nature of this industry.

People convince themselves that by viewing pornography, they're "not hurting anyone," which couldn't be further from the truth. Pornography can damage marriages, harm relationships, and confuse children regarding their own emerging sexuality, their concept of the opposite sex, and their sense of self-image and worth. It often comes into direct conflict with an individual's moral and ethical compass causing a great deal of inner anxiety, angst and guilt. Pornography can make people see individuals on the screen as objects of their sexual needs and desires, not as human beings with inherent goodness, dignity, struggles and pain of their own. This is the danger of an industry that is bringing in billions of dollars a year; an industry that preys on our families and children relentlessly, hoping to "hook" them into a habit that is morally, spiritually and physically dangerous. Look at these staggering statistics:

- Every second 28,258 users are watching pornography on the internet
- 40 million people regularly visit pornography sites
- 35% of all downloads involve pornography
- Search engines get 116,000 queries for child pornography each day
- Approximately 200,000 Americans are addicted to pornography
- One third of pornography viewers are women



Viewing pornography can become a habit that can get out of control very quickly for adults, teens and children. It affects individuals on a subconscious level as well as a conscious one, and can begin to alter a person's concept of self and others. It has been associated closely with violent sexual crimes in both adults and youth. It affects the developing beliefs, morals and decisions of children; this is in direct conflict with what their families, churches and schools are teaching them so as to grow into healthy, responsible and loving adults who respect and value others. Most statistics on pornography estimate that a child, on average, views pornography for the first time by the ages of eight to ten. This is alarming but also not surprising with the average age of a child who owns a cell phone now being seven.



The barriers, filters and controls that families once had to protect, guide and teach their children in a wholesome way have become challenges that many parents are beginning to find overwhelming and disheartening. There is no better way to protect your children than to have frequent and honest conversations with them. Bring your Catholic faith, beliefs and values into these conversations stressing the value and dignity of all human beings. Caution against the dangers of viewing pornography and make yourself accessible to them by answering questions and listening to their concerns. Make sure to stress that the "object" on the screen has a face, a name, dignity and worth.

Parents must be vigilant at all times by checking devices, putting parental controls in place and most importantly, talking to their children on a regular basis. If it is the PARENT who has this problem, it WILL affect their children, marriages and families. Fortunately with support from family, friends and your parish and school communities, there is help available to combat this scourge on our society.

Our Catholic faith teaches us so many beautiful things about human dignity, love, marriage and raising our children in a safe environment guided by love and concern for them and their future. Let's also never forget the power of prayer as we navigate this world that is ever-changing.

1 Corinthians 3:16 *You are holy, for you are God's temple and God dwells in you*

Pastoral Care

contact: Michelle Herberger, mherberger@archlou.org

"Create in Me a Clean Heart"

Most people if asked, would say that they would readily choose good over evil. Most, too, would think the choice an obvious one. However, evil often appears as that which brings pleasure, solves a problem, or makes life better. In other words, it promises what it cannot provide. That delusion/lie is in part, the reason many today find themselves addicted to pornography.

The following are some resources that could be helpful for one addicted to pornography or anyone simply wanting to know more about the problem of pornography. All are available and reasonably priced on both Amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com.



Peter C. Kleponis, Ph.D, in his book [Integrity Restored, Helping Catholic Families Win the Battle Against Pornography](#), writes about the "Five A's" that play a key role in the addiction. Pornography is "Affordable, Accessible, Anonymous, Accepted and Aggressive." His comprehensive work looks at the pornography epidemic giving insight and hope to dealing with what has been kept quiet for too long.

Msr. J. Brian Bransfield, in his book [Overcoming Pornography Addiction, A Spiritual Solution](#), offers clear and practical direction for those individuals who have come to realize the destructive effects of pornography. He constantly points to the "One" who is the source of hope and healing. Monsignor Bransfield looks honestly and clearly at the devastation caused by this addiction in the hope that the truth of the love of Jesus can set one free. And he shows how men and women can rebuild their lives based on the truth, goodness, and beauty of God's vision for marital unity based on St. John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*.

Brian Brandenburg, in his book [Power Over Pornography, The Breakthrough Formula for Overcoming Pornography Addiction](#), tells the story of one man's addiction and journey toward healing. Using fictitious characters, Brandenburg takes a real look at the devastation caused by pornography and offers a solution-based approach that is both thorough and practical. He seeks to help restore freedom of choice to those caught in the web of addiction. The book is not only for those addicted to pornography, but offers insight for those seeking to understand the addiction.

Pro-Life

contact: Ed Harpring, eharpring@archlou.org

Is "Theology of the Body" a Solution for Pornography?

The scourge of pornography is growing at an alarming rate. The facts are shocking:

- 12% of websites online are pornographic
- 70% of men aged 18-24 regularly look at porn
- The average age children are first exposed to porn is between 8 and 10 years old
- 56 % of divorces involve one party having an obsessive interest in pornographic websites.

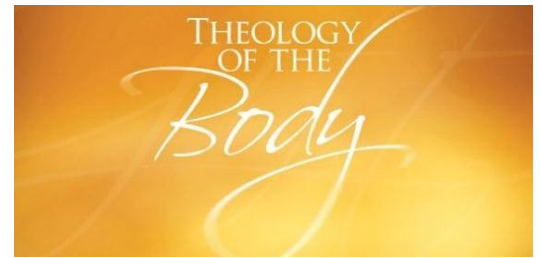
With unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet combined with a culture that has endorsed any kind of physical union, it is not surprising that we find an ever-escalating rate of pornography addiction. Thankfully, we have St. John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* as an antidote to pornography epidemic.

St. John Paul II, early in his pontificate, began to lecture and write about the need for Christians to experience God's plan for human life. From the years 1979 to 1984, St. John Paul II gave a series of lessons based on scripture about the paradox of the human experience and our longing for eternal union. Because the lectures focused on theology which is the "study of the nature of God," and the relationship of the body and soul, the works were called "Theology of the Body."

Pro Life cont.

Where today's society views using another person's body as an object of manipulation for pleasure, *Theology of the Body* emphasizes the theme of love as self-gift. We see in the book of Genesis, that "God created mankind in God's own image and likeness." Body and soul were originally designed to function harmoniously as one incarnate person. God said that it was not good for man to be alone: from this God created the perfect nuptial union as male and female.

Theology of the Body, through God's grace and redemption proposes that men and women, even in the fallen state of the world, can realize the foretaste of a heavenly union that is grace-given through the sacrament of marriage. Therefore, God's plan for sexuality, in its perfection, is to mirror God's perfect love for all men and women in the world. As St. John Paul II reminds us, *Theology of the Body* is not only for married couples, but for all men and women, all vocations, since it identifies our purpose and the true meaning of what it means to be fully human and alive as God intended. Perhaps, the best description of this teaching was given by St. John Paul II himself when he said, "The body, and it alone is capable of making visible what is invisible, the spiritual and divine...the invisible mystery hidden in God."



Theology of the Body emphasizes God's loving unity - body and spirit, man and woman, God and humanity, whereas, pornography emphasizes selfishness and alienation and division. Pornography splits apart body from spirit, man from woman, and sadly, humanity from God. Dr. Donald T. DeMarco, professor and senior fellow of Human Life International, identifies one of the keys to understanding pornography addiction: "The porn world is not without rules. One cardinal rule is that its performers remain alienated from the other. Because pornography is primarily centered on the despiritualized, depersonalized body, alienation is essential to it." Pornography destroys human dignity and enslaves its victims who are left to endure the endless cycle of lust, darkness, and loneliness.

As Christopher West discusses in his book *At the Heart of the Gospel*, "Society doesn't overvalue sex. It undervalues and cheapens it. Pornography is the counterfeit to the real truth about sexuality." *Theology of the Body*, on the other hand, leads to the realization that true love is to the gift of ourselves to the other. John Paul tells us that if we live according to the nuptial meaning of our bodies, we "fulfill the very meaning of [our] being and existence." It is for this reason that a man clings to his wife and they become "one flesh" (see Gn 2:24).

Pornography's victims lose their freedom to truly love as God intended and instead, settle for emptiness. *Theology of the Body* gives us the blueprint to live and experience the nuptial meaning of our sexuality and a call to rediscover the very meaning of life.

HELPFUL RESOURCES: (based on *Theology of the Body*, to help break the chains of pornography addiction)



A counseling service called RECLAIM Sexual Health offers Catholic Online Recovery - reclaimsexualhealth.com. Endorsed by many bishops and priests, The RECLAIM Sexual Health Online Recovery Program provides a unique integration of *Theology of the Body*, the Brain Science of Change, proven cognitive tools, accountability, group support, faith practices and prayer all in one, online community.

Freedom: 12 Lives Transformed by the Theology of the Body by Matthew Pinto from Ascension Press. This book looks at twelve lives, each with their own unique experiences; their search for and discovery of real love; their renewed hearts and minds; and their redeemed bodies.

More can be learned about *Theology of the Body* and about pornography through the USCCB website at www.usccb.org and at the USCCB's Marriage site www.foryourmarriage.org.



Up & Coming

Family Ministries Has Gone Digital!

Come visit us on all these new channels for great original content as well as all manner of news, reviews, commentaries and resources regarding all things family!



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Marriage Preparation Training - FOCCUS



One Day Training
Saturday, April 16

Maloney Center, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
\$75 initial trng.; \$20 refresher.

Registration required contact: Carolyn Kupper, 502-471-2142 or email ckupper@archlou.org.

Helpers of God's Precious Infants



7:00 a.m. - Mass at Cathedral of the Assumption followed by procession to local abortion facility.

9:00 a.m. - Benediction at Cathedral

Saturdays: April 9 Fr. Shayne Duvall
 May 21 Fr. Jeff Nicolas
Visit: HelpersLouisville.org

Marriage Encounter

A weekend retreat for married couples who desire time away to enrich their marriage. Indianapolis weekend - Apr 29 - May 1, 2016
To learn more, visit www.wvme.org



Retrouvaille (French for rediscovery)

This ministry is designed to help couples in troubled marriages to heal and renew.
Next Louisville area weekend - Sept. 16, 2016.
To learn more, visit www.HelpOurMarriage.org



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