

Safe Environment of the Archdiocese

January, 2017

Safe Environment Office

For Many People a New Year Means “Resolutions”!

New Year’s Resolutions are great as long as we use them to improve ourselves—spiritually, physically, emotionally or professionally. As we begin 2017, I would like to suggest that we work on some resolutions regarding Safe Environment in your parish, school or religious education program.



Look at your web page. Is Safe Environment information clearly visible for all to see?

Have you been faithful to making sure that the **parish bulletin announcement** is published in a timely manner?

Are Safe Environment **posters** clearly visible in your meeting places?

Has **everyone who works** for the parish/school completed the Safe Environment protocol of the Archdiocese? Is all the paper work in proper order?

Have **all volunteers who work with youth or vulnerable adults** completed the protocol and is the paper work in order?

If your answers to the above questions are not 100% “yes” then you have some ready made resolutions!

Happy New Year to all! May 2017 be filled with many blessings for each of you!



Since it is the month of January, I remind you that it is time to publish the **Parish Bulletin** announcement. This should be the **THIRD** time for this publication. It can be found in your Manual, Section VII, page 2.

Sometime in February you will be receiving quarterly statements for background checks. The statement will cover the months of November, December and January. All payment checks should be sent to the attention of Rose Mary Story, Data Base Administrator. Your prompt attention to these bills would be appreciated.

If you have not already done so, please put on your calendar, **Thursday, April 27, 2017**. This is the date of our annual in-service from **9:30-12:00** in the Conference Center. A flyer and registration information for this important meeting will go out in February.



“I depend upon every parish/mission in our Archdiocese to strictly adhere to the protocol of our Archdiocesan Safe Environment Program.”

Archbishop Coakley





Research on Pornography



Children need to be monitored

***The use of porn
has precipitated a
crisis in our society
and in our Church!***

Recently I purchased a book called The Porn Phenomenon: The Impact of Pornography in the Digital Age. The book is a summary of a research project conducted by the Barna Group (www.barna.org). The goal of this study was to assess the extent to which pornography has permeated Christian families, the Church and our society at large, and to determine its impact. The study was conducted across many Christian religions including Catholic youth and young adults. In the preface by Josh McDowell there are some startling and eye opening statements. For example:

“The easy access our kids have to pornography is distorting their views of morality and the Christian faith.”

“Porn is undermining God’s truth in the lives of young people and eroding the credibility of the Church.”

“Pastors, youth workers and parents are coming out of the shadows to sound the alarm.”

The Introduction to the study is subtitled, “Why the Church Can No Longer Ignore Porn”. It is stated, “Today, porn slips invited or not onto every screen with an Internet connection. For that matter, much of it *originates* in regular households with a wireless signal: 50 percent of young women ages 12 to 24 who use porn say they have sent a nude image via text, email or smartphone app.”

It further states, “...the ubiquity of porn today and the unwillingness or inability of local Christian communities to talk about it—have precipitated a crisis the Church can no longer afford to ignore.”

As I read this study, the verified statistics on the use of pornography by youth and young adults becomes more and more alarming. In upcoming newsletters I will share some of the findings of this study. Our April in-service (April 27th) will focus on the topic. What has become so clear to me is that the trends among our youth will definitely have an impact on them, their relationships and ultimately on all society.

The prevalence of pornography HAS precipitated a crisis in our society and in our Church! What can we do to help reverse this alarming trend? Education is always the key.





More Excerpts from:
Create in Me a Clean Heart:

A Pastoral Response to Pornography

USCCB, 2015

“Parenting & the Family”

In his 2014 Lenten message, Pope Francis noted, “How much pain is caused in families because one of their members—often a young person—is in thrall to alcohol, drugs, gambling or pornography!” Parents today face increasing challenges in protecting their children’s innocence. Pornography can enter the home through a variety of doors. The most obvious is media and technology, which includes not only computers, tablets, and mobile phones but also video games connected to the Internet. Many parents feel ill-equipped to understand the various devices their children use, let alone monitor them or install parental controls or filters. Another challenge parents face is the occasion of events such as campouts or sleepovers, where children could be exposed to pornography by peers or even other adults, while their parents are not present.

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. Parents struggling with pornography addiction waste time watching pornography, and they may inflict financial burdens on the family through their compulsion. Fatherhood is gravely impacted because a son will look to his father as a model, and a daughter will look to her father to understand how a man should treat a woman. Lastly, given pornography’s strong correlation with divorce, many children suffer the effects of their parents’ divorce as “collateral damage” to pornography use.

“To All Parents”

Parents and guardians, protect your home! Be vigilant about the technology you allow into your home and be sensitive to the prevalence of sexual content in even mainstream television and film and the ease by which it comes through the Internet and mobile devices. Educate yourselves about filtering software that can assist in protecting your home. Foster openness and trust with your children, so they know that they can come to you if they see a sexual image; by talking about it with them calmly, you can

give them a healthy framework in which to interpret it. The Holy Spirit is your guide as you assess the situation of each child. None of us is perfect, and parents are the first to model the mercy and forgiveness that all families need. Rely on the Father’s mercy, especially if you face the difficult situation of a child who has seen or uses pornography. Many good families experience this; you are not alone, and the Church is here for you.

“To all who work with youth”

Grandparents, godparents, teachers, religious educators, youth ministers, and safe environment coordinators: parents have given you a responsibility to protect their children not only from physical dangers but also psychological, moral, and spiritual dangers. You can have a great influence on the children and youth entrusted to your care, and you can help equip parents with the resources they need to protect and teach their children. Children are vulnerable to all influences, good or bad. Create an environment suitable for learning chastity by modeling and teaching the chaste life. Be vigilant over technological access, and monitor it in age-appropriate ways. Young people should be taught that certain types of websites or programs are inappropriate and sinful. Be sure to explain the reasons why they are unacceptable.

“To all people of good will”

The Church advocates for a culture in which purity, chastity, and authentic love are esteemed and supported and pornography is resisted and rejected. The Church is grateful to all who are working to acknowledge the harmful and destructive nature of pornography and speaking up against its proliferation. May we work together for laws and for a culture that removes pornography from its prominent and privileged place and counter its numerous injustices, building instead a culture that honors the true dignity and meaning of human sexuality.

Be vigilant about the technology you allow in the home!