



As Chairperson of the Anti-Pornography Task Force, I want to thank you for attending the second annual **“Face the Truth ... Find the Light”** anti-pornography workshop. Your openness to becoming knowledgeable on this important issue is crucial if we are to combat pornography’s devastating effects on our faith community and the community at-large.

As church, we have moved “mountains” to provide a safe environment for all God’s people through training, background checks and archdiocesan policies. And it would be easy for us to be satisfied with our success we’ve made in protecting the physical, sexual and emotional wellbeing of our children. But we need understand that “spiritual protection” is also essential, for the “care of the soul” is at the core of our faith and salvation.

Pornography is one of the most blatant and aggressive assailants on a child’s soul and on our faith community. Today’s pornography is unlike the pornography of the past. Today’s pornography is more perverse, accessible and anonymous. For example, there are over 42 million pornographic websites on the Internet; more than 20,000 images of child pornography are posted online every week; the top consumers of Internet pornography are ages 12 to 17; and the average age for first-time exposure is 11. These are only a few of the sobering statistics. The real issue is how did we get here?

There are a number of theories that explain the rapid growth of pornography. What we know for certain is that the gradual and bold shift in attitude has made the soil ripe for pornography to flourish beyond our imagination. The high importance of personal pleasure, self-image, materialism and the clear disconnect of the body from the person has produced a culture of “takers” and an attitude of “anything goes as long as no one gets hurt.” One only needs to turn on a television set or attend a movie to see evidence of this. Discernment of what is pornographic becomes difficult because of these cultural attitudes that have saturated all aspects of society.

Now is the time to educate ourselves on the Church’s positive view of sexuality. It’s only in truth, openness and compassion that attitudes change and healing begins in those who have been hurt by pornography. This workshop will uncover the truth about pornography; it will also share the Catholic Church’s teaching on the gift of sexuality, which is our greatest weapon against this evil.

My sincere thanks to Archbishop George Lucas for his support of the Task Force. The Task Force has worked diligently to develop this workshop and provide the resources that will benefit all ministries. I’m deeply grateful for Task Force members for sharing their time, talent and expertise with the Task Force. Their commitment to serve their Church is a blessing to our archdiocese.

I hope you will find this workshop useful to your ministry. I encourage you to partner with the Task Force to combat pornography in your parish and school. Please know that you are the greatest resource to those struggling with pornography. Your compassion, knowledge and support will give them strength to address this issue and begin the healing process.

With gratitude and hope,

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