



Love from a Pure Heart

KEEPING YOUR FAMILY SAFE FROM PORNOGRAPHY

In the first letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul gives us perhaps the most beautiful and often quoted description of love:

Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, it is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.

It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

Love is more than an emotion. True love is a gift, a decision to sacrifice for the good of another. Jesus gave us the ultimate example of love when He sacrificed His life for us: *No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends* (Jn 15).

The first letter of John says succinctly: *God is love*. We are made in God's image and likeness, and we resemble Him

most when we love unconditionally. Our love for our families is intended to be a reflection of God's love for us.

Marriage as a sacrament reveals God's love for the world. Sexual intimacy is the language of love, which says, "This is my body, given for you!" The love between husband and wife is so powerful that it often results in new life.

Our society has lost sight of this vision of love, and many people suffer as a result. Pornography, divorce, extramarital sex, abortion, sexual addictions, and abuse — these are the sad realities of today, the result of a misdirected desire for love.

However, with God's forgiveness and grace, with prayer and with assistance, we can reawaken the world to the true nature of love and sexuality.

If you or someone you know has a problem with pornography, contact one of the resources listed below for assistance. We hope that this information will help you and your family to "love from a pure heart."

A Prayer for Purity

God of glory and majesty, you have clothed Your creation with the raiment of beauty and the mantle of dignity, and have created man and woman in Your own divine image and likeness.

Forgive those who have distorted the gift of human love, and offer them the grace to turn away from their sins, and to embrace the gospel of life.

Liberate those imprisoned by addiction, and provide them the wisdom to seek help and break the chains of despair and shame. Soothe the suffering of those who have been exploited by pornography, and enable all families and individuals to live in a peaceful and just society.

May we embrace Your gift of chastity as a means of giving You glory, and of sharing in Your loving plan of salvation. Amen.

Healing and Reconciliation

*How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered!*

*I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,"
And You forgave the guilt of my sin.*

— Psalm 32:1, 5

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is our Lord's opportunity to assure you of His love and mercy. Through the ministry of the Church and words of the priest, Christ Himself says to you, "I absolve you."

Respond to Jesus' loving invitation to renewed life in Him. Trust in the power of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Contact any priest for further information; he will be happy to share with you the peace and pardon of the Lord Jesus.

Diocese of Pittsburgh Contacts:

Commission to Counter Pornography: 412.456.3156, socialconcerns@diopitt.org, www.diopitt.org/pornography.pdf
Catholic Charities Counseling: 412.456.6999, www.ccpgh.org

Non-Diocesan Contacts:

WholeHearted: *A project of the Pittsburgh Coalition against Pornography:* 412-281-4565, www.wholehearted.org

We gratefully acknowledge the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas for providing much of the enclosed information. To receive this information in brochure format, please call the Diocese of Pittsburgh Secretariat for Social Concerns at 412.456.3157.

Pornography: It's not what you think ... Debunking the Myths

Each of us has a God-given desire for intimacy and union. We are created to love and be loved.

Pornography's influence is powerful because while it seems to satisfy these desires, it is destructive because it actually perverts desire and makes true union impossible.

Pornography teaches an exploitive view of sexuality and creates unrealistic expectations. It desensitizes the viewer and often leads to other destructive behaviors.

Learning the truth about pornography helps us to understand why we must fight to keep ourselves and our families safe.

Myth: Pornography is used by only a small percentage of the population.

Truth: Forty million US adults regularly visit pornographic websites. Forty-seven

percent of Christians say that pornography is a major problem in the home.

Myth: Pornography is a relatively small industry.

Truth: At an estimated 57 billion dollars, U.S. pornography revenue exceeds the combined revenues of ABC, CBS, and NBC.

Myth: The primary users of pornography are adults.

Truth: The largest consumers of internet pornography are 12- to 17-year olds.

Myth: Children are not often exposed to pornography.

Truth: Ninety percent of 8- to 16-year olds have been exposed to pornography (most while doing homework).

Myth: Pornography is a harmless vice.

Truth: Studies show that as little as 6 hours of exposure to soft-core pornography is enough to destroy the viewer's satisfaction with his or her spouse.

Myth: Pornography only hurts the viewer.

Truth: Pornography hurts everyone:

- Those who feel alienated from their loved ones.
- Children whose parents can't set a good moral example.
- The thousands of people involved in the industry who are victims of sexual exploitation.
- Men whose understanding of sexuality is destroyed by pornography.
- Society whose standards of decency and human respect have been eroded.

Checklist for a Spiritually Healthy Family

Does your family pray together?

A family that prays together stays together. Prayer will form the bond with God that He desires from us.

Never	Sometimes	Always
1	2	3

Does your family celebrate Sunday Mass together and participate in the life of the parish?

Sharing in parish life and celebrating Mass together will instill a lifetime desire to give back to God and the community.

Never	Sometimes	Always
1	2	3

Does your family enjoy regular meals together?

Meals are a great opportunity for sharing as family, and may be the only uninterrupted time of the day.

Never	Sometimes	Always
1	2	3

Do the parents set rules for the children regarding telephone and computer use, video games, study time, and curfews?

Kids are still kids; they need and actually yearn for the guidance their parents can provide in setting limits. Don't be fooled by children testing the limits. This behavior allows them to grow and understand authority.

Never	Sometimes	Always
1	2	3

Do the parents monitor and limit what the children are allowed to watch on television?

Children, when left to their own choices, will develop a very unrealistic view of societal expectations.

Never	Sometimes	Always
1	2	3

Are all home computers and televisions in open and visible places (in particular, not in children's bedrooms)?

Even with the proper guidelines in place, children will test your boundaries and need to be monitored.

Never	Sometimes	Always
1	2	3

Does your family regularly participate together in activities aimed at physical and mental development?

Stimulating physical and mental activities will increase our quality of life. People who are physically and mentally challenged on a regular basis demonstrate increased learning capacity.

Never	Sometimes	Always
1	2	3

Do the parents make wise and virtue-centered choices about their own entertainment? Do the parents, both publicly and privately, model the kind of behavior they want their children to emulate?

It can't be "do as I say not as I do." We can't expect our children to learn by example if we don't model the right behavior, including choices in television viewing, movies, reading material, and internet activity.

Never	Sometimes	Always
1	2	3

Parents will seek pastoral or professional care if needed and will be advocates.

We must be open to accepting help if we discover a problem. Professional help from a pastor or a counselor may be invaluable in a search for solutions.

Never	Sometimes	Always
1	2	3

- If you scored **25-30**, you are clearly concerned about making good choices for your family. Keep up the good work, and share the secrets of your success with others.
- If you scored **15-25**, perhaps your family could benefit from better monitoring. Visit www.diopitt.org/pornography.pdf for helpful resources.
- If you scored **less than 15**, we urge you to make positive changes for the health of your family. Visit www.diopitt.org/pornography.pdf to find resources and individuals ready to help you.