



The Porn Addiction: The XXI Century Epidemic. By Fr. Richard M. Samour - Chaplain of Courage, Chapter San Antonio. -

In a recently research regarding pornography it has said that, “pornography is a multibillion-dollar industry. It has been suggested that because so many people are using porn today,

the porn industry is making more money than all professional sports combined. Here are some statistics on adult interaction with pornography: Men admitting to accessing porn at work: 20%; US adults who regularly visit internet pornography websites: 40 million; Christians who said pornography is a major problem in the home: 47%; Adults admitting to internet sexual addiction: 20%.; 13% of women admit to accessing porn at work; 70% of women keep their cyber activities secret; 17% of all women struggle with porn addiction.” Pornography is one of the factors that cause sexual confusion and in consequence homosexual desires and practices, especially in teens and young adults. It's not just a guy's issue, girl's struggle too. In a conversation with some teens, they assure to be gays or lesbians. When I ask them why they assured me with this answer, they said... *“I do not know, I have never been in a homosexual relationship, but watching porn and listen to my friends, my conclusion is that I am gay, I am lesbian, I have this feeling. It is cool.”* It is a matter of unawareness regarding sexual pleasure (lust) and sexuality.

According Bill Consiglio, founder and director of HOPE Ministries, *“Homosexual attraction is determined by a combination of familial, environmental, social and Biological influences.”* In this article, I would like to reflect in a summary, what is pornography, what factor causes it, what are the consequences and if there is hope for healing.

I am not a professional therapist, nor a Psychologist, but through reading books and Spiritual Directions in my ministry, I have concluded that one of the major factors for pornography is low self-esteem. In addition, loneliness, curiosity, stress, anxiety, depression, absence of God and His Church and so on. It would be interminable description of why some people watch pornography and why a high rate are addicted.

According to the CCC 2354, “Pornography consists in removing real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of the partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties. It offends against chastity because it perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other. It does grave injury to the dignity of its participants (actors, vendors, the public), since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others”

The US Supreme Court describes Pornography in 4 categories: (1) Indecent material including messages or pictures on telephone, radio, or broadcast TV that are patently offensive descriptions or depictions of sexual or excretory organs or activities. It is often referred to as “sexual nudity” and “dirty words.” (2) Material harmful to minors represents nudity or sex that has prurient appeal for minors, is offensive and unsuitable for minors, and lacks serious value for minors. (3) Obscenity (“hard-core pornography”) is graphic material that focuses on sex and/or sexual violence. It includes close-ups of graphic sex acts, lewd exhibition of the genitals, and deviant activities such as group sex, bestiality, torture, incest, and excretory functions. There are federal



obscenity laws that criminalize distribution of obscenity on the Internet, but they have not been vigorously enforced. (4) Child pornography is material that visually depicts children under the age of 18 engaged in actual or simulated sexual activity, including lewd exhibition of the genitals.

Let me tell you this, *it is ALWAYS illegal to produce, distribute, or possess child pornography in the United States!* Pornography is confusion between fantasy and reality.

There is a process to be an addict to Pornography especially with teens and young adults: First, it is a matter of curiosity, the famous bullying at school or lack of moral laws teachings in the schools and major institutions. Morality, according to God's vision found it in the Sacred Scriptures, is a subject that is not an option to teach in public or private institutions; then comes, the step of habit. After watching pornography continuously, this creates a habit; this is because the brain tolerates it. It is part of the "schedule of the day, the to-do list." Finally, this habit creates an addiction. Addiction happens because the person loses control of its actions, feelings and thoughts. Addiction increases the times of watching pornography, the person also is preoccupied regarding sex materials or sexual dysfunction. *"Addiction fools the mind of the affected person into not recognizing the gravity of the situation."* Daniel Spadaro - Liturgy Committee USCCB. Addiction is difficult and complicated to heal, but there is hope, there is a way of being free from Pornography.

What Courage promotes and emphasize is Chastity, healthy relationships and practices, *"Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being. (CCC 2337) Chastity is a moral virtue. It is also a gift from God, a grace, a fruit of spiritual effort. (CCC 2345)"* Unfortunately, sometimes Chastity is presented as a negative virtue, it is like *"do not do this or do not do that..."* only, which is not totally true. Chastity has to be presented in a positive way... it is not a burden; it is a gift from God that we have to love, appreciate and take care of obviously avoiding some practices that harm Chastity. Chastity is not about saying "no" to sex. Chastity is about saying "yes" to God's plan for our sexuality.

Is it possible to heal from Pornography? I believe in the promises of God, *"I can do all this through him who gives me strength."* Phil. 4:13. Healing from Porn addiction can be through: Prayer, good habits, temperance, respecting our bodies as temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.6:19), practice the sacraments especially the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Spiritual Direction. Healing from pornography is not easy nor an overnight process, but it is a decision that the person makes. The heart of *Courage and Encourage* spirituality, *is the belief that sanctity is possible in everyday life.*

The Healing Process: Where to Start? **First**, the person has to take complete responsibility of his/her actions, behaviors and desires. It is an understanding that Pornography is like a poison that daily kills his body and soul. Something that can help is a visual why the person wants to break this habit. Write a 4 or 5 sentences why you do not want to continue watching pornography. **Second**, find help, a Spiritual director or a Catholic Psychologist or Therapist. I emphasize Catholic because the Catholic teachings regarding sexuality are clear and according to the scriptures. It has been disappointed about some "professionals" that they do not find anything wrong with pornography.

*Courage focuses on Five Goals regarding Chastity, “Chastity, Prayer and Dedication, Fellowship, Support and Role Model (www.couragesatx.org), but we also reflect during our meetings using the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous that is now adapted to same sex attraction (SSA). Historically, the Twelve Steps were written to assist those struggling with physical and emotional addiction to alcohol. To say that Courage draws inspiration from the Twelve Steps does not mean that we view Same-Sex Attraction as a disease or addiction, though some of the members deal with issues of sexual brokenness such as compulsive attachments to pornography or promiscuous behavior. **The Twelve Steps are in brief: Honesty, Hope, Faith, Courage, Integrity, Willingness, Humility, Self-Discipline, Love for Others, Perseverance, Spiritual Awareness and Service.***

Third, find healthy friends, Courage Apostolate is a practical way to find friends, male and female who are struggling with chastity. If you are married, share with you spouse, he/she needs to know and will walk with you through this journey; also Courage offers marriage counseling. **Fourth**, avoid occasions (places, times and computers) that you know are tempting and will be difficult for you to gain the battle against porn. **Fifth**, Spiritual Practices: Fasting will help you to develop self-control and temperance. Mt 7:7 **“Ask and you will receive, Knock and the door will be open.”** Pray with faith and the assurances that your miracle will be as big as your faith is. Ask the Holy Family to protect you from the Evil of Pornography. **Sixth**, avoid alcohol and some “celebrations” that could lead you to commit sin of pornography and its consequences. **Seventh**, **“Do not beat yourself up after a setback. The Devil wants you to give up. Seek forgiveness and start again.” (Marcel Le June)** The sacrament of reconciliation is always available. The Devil is the prince of lies, he wants you to fail. **Eighth**, practice a physical activity; this will help your brain to think in something positive, walk praying the Rosary. Ninth, be involved in a ministry or activity of your parish or civil community.

Invite Jesus to walk with you in this journey: Pope Francis has said, “Let the risen Jesus enter your life, welcome him as a friend, with trust: he is life! If up till now you have kept him at a distance, step forward. He will receive you with open arms. If you have been indifferent, take a risk: you won’t be disappointed. If following Him seems difficult, do not be afraid, trust Him, be confident that He is close to you, He is with you and He will give you the peace you are looking for and the strength to live as He would have you do.”

There is hope and a future for men and women experiencing SSA and homosexuality, or Pornography, if you want to know and learn more about Courage or maybe you or someone who you love want to join the group, please do not be afraid and contact me.

Also, **EnCourage** is a Roman Catholic apostolate for parents, friends and family members of loved ones with Same-Sex Attraction. Similar to Courage, EnCourage does not embrace the necessity of changing a loved one’s sexual attraction to seek support from our ministry. All communication with Courage and Encourage is strictly confidential. Fr Richard Samour; www.couragesatx.org; (210) 996-1371 or the email address rmscouragesa@gmail.com