

Internet Pornography: **Practical means of avoiding the near occasion of this sin**

Sister Marysia Weber, R.S.M., D.O.
Sacred Heart Mercy Health Care Center
Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Michigan

*“So let us confidently approach the throne of grace
to receive mercy and favor and to find help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16)*

What are means of purifying the mind of pornographic images?

- ❖ Sacraments—One of the most effective means for transformation are the sacraments
 - Sacrament of reconciliation
 - Reveals the true nature both of sin and forgiveness
 - Sanctity does not lead to self-deception, but self-knowledge
 - Another formative aspect of confession of sin is that it brings us into communion not only with God, but with people as a church.
 - Pope Benedict stated in his *Catechesis on the Apostles*:
"communion" is truly the Good News, the remedy given to us by the Lord to fight the loneliness that threatens everyone today
 - Eucharist
 - Holy communion augments our union with Christ
 - Holy Communion separates us from sin
 - Holy Communion strengthens our charity
 - The Eucharist preserves us from future mortal sins
- ❖ Sacred Scripture
 - Another means of helping to rid our minds of pornographic images is taking time to read and memorize Scripture every day
 - There is a free download resource available from the Family Life Center at www.dads.org/pornography
 - Different Scripture passage appears with each computer start up
 - Pure Mind Scripture Memory Kits are also available for persons struggling to find freedom from pornography
 - Each card has Scripture verses which can be memorized to purify the mind
 - There are about 20 cards per set which fit in the pocket for approximately \$4.00 each
- ❖ Additional means of purifying the imagination
 - Custody of the external senses
 - Prudent selection of reading material
 - Attention to the duty of the moment
 - Indifference to distractions

- ❖ Additional means of purifying the memory
 - Forge forward from past sins or offenses against others
 - Cease thinking of past injuries
 - Remember the benefits you have received from God
 - Consideration of the hope for your own salvation

- ❖ Exercise ascetical principles
 - Formation of the will → self-control, self-discipline
 - Fast and abstinence
 - Spiritual reading
 - *Lectio Divina*
 - Recollection
 - Acquisition of the virtues
 - Moral
 - Theological
 - Little Virtues

- ❖ Prayer
 - Beg Our Lord for purity
 - Pray the Hail Mary
 - Ask friends to pray for you on your trip
 - Ask a contemplative religious order to pray for you daily in their intentions

- ❖ Sacramentals
 - Hold onto a crucifix while in bed and say a prayer to St. Michael the Archangel
 - Pray the rosary while in bed, holding onto the beads
 - When staying at a motel, ask desk clerk to disconnect the cable for Internet pornography

- ❖ Avoid both the remote and approximate occasions of sin
 - Move the computer to an open location
 - Destroy any pornography literature, magazines, videos, CDs, DVDs or games that are sources of sexual temptation
 - Install an Internet filter
 - Filtering software features include
 - Blocking offensive and objectionable websites
 - Selectively blocking Instant Messaging, Internet Chat and more
 - Determining when and how long the Internet can be used
 - Creating lists of websites that will always be allowed or blocked
 - Selecting different levels of blocking for each user
 - Recording when inappropriate or personal material is posted to *MySpace, Facebook*, etc
 - Blocking file sharing and other programs that can compromise security and privacy

- Giving instant alerts via phone, text or e-mail when the user tried to bypass the filter
 - Allowing the appropriate use of YouTube but blocks objectionable videos
 - Filters and accountability software for cell phones, iPods, Playstations (contact your cell phone carrier to inquire about available “control” bundles)
- Create accountability measures
 - Accountability software
 - Takes away the anonymity of Internet pornography and replaces it with accountability
 - Cost for software \$7.99/month and add \$1.50/month for the filter
 - *Covenant Eyes* and *Safe Eyes* are both excellent programs
 - The software tool is intended to help persons who want to bring their Internet use “into the light”
 - Includes a trusted friend, pastor, spouse who is equally committed to helping with the goal of filtering out undesirable material
- If you must go online for legitimate purposes
 - Prioritize the online tasks that need to be performed during each Internet session
 - Before logging onto the Internet, prepare a list of specific tasks that need to be accomplished online and stick to that list as you use the Internet. A simple task list might look like the following:
 - Check e-mail using *MS Outlook Express*
 - Send file attachment to a co-worker using *MS Outlook Express*
 - Process vendor orders on *PurchasePro.com* for a new project at work
 - Look up real-time stock quotes on *E-trade.com*
- ❖ Accountability groups
 - St. Joseph’s Freedom Groups (existing groups can be found at www.dads.org or by calling 1-800-705-6131)
 - Sexaholics Anonymous (www.sexaholicsanonymous.org or www.sexaa.org)
- ❖ Place sacred pictures, Scripture passages in your living environment
 - Post Scripture passages/holy images in key places (e.g. computer, monitor, bedroom, bathroom, office)
 - Play or sing spiritual songs at home to help protect you and help you focus on God
 - Tune your radio and TV to Christian stations or turn them off
 - Listen to tapes/DCs, read books that encourage your efforts at purity

- Invest in wholesome videos/DVDs—this can be a challenge but they do exist
- Make time for rest
 - Physical rest
 - Also a Sabbath day for spiritual renewal to refocus on God
- ❖ Learn how to establish healthy boundaries and develop healthy relationships
 - Develop friendships which strive for a mutual growth in Christian virtue
 - Avoid friendships based mainly on sensuality, sentiments or that negatively influence behavior
 - Exhibit genuine modesty in matters of dress and behavior
- ❖ Healthy leisure
- ❖ Try to identify the weaknesses or shortcomings which give an opening to the temptation
 - Self-knowledge is always key to affective maturity and a life of virtue
 - When beginning to fantasize, ask yourself
 - What does this fantasy mean?
 - What am I feeling?
 - Am I sad, lonely, afraid or what?
 - Take responsibility for your problems
 - Stop blaming others
 - Instead of manipulating others to get your needs met, learn to ask for what you need directly
 - Seek out a counselor, formator, spiritual director or confessor
 - For constructive and guiding advice
 - Who is willing to confront old behaviors if they recur
 - Key to this process is honesty
- ❖ **The above steps may have to be repeated several times before the temptation subsides**
 - It **requires persistence and resolve** to stop giving into lustful thoughts.
 - When we repeatedly exercise our “spiritual muscles”
 - We grow stronger in using our free will
 - Making it easier to resist the next temptations we face
- ❖ Helpful Websites for Internet pornography addiction
 - Dad’s.org –Resources for Catholic fathers
 - National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families
 - Porn No More
 - Pure Intimacy
 - True Knights
 - Catholic Culture
 - Pure Warrior

- Saint Augustine Group (for priests)
- ❖ Additional Resources
 - *Bought With a Price*, Pastoral Letter, Bishop Paul S. Loverde, www.arlingtondiocese.org/offices/communications/boughtprice.html
 - *Blessed are the Pure in Heart*, Pastoral Letter, Bishop Robert W. Finn, www.catholicculture.org/library/view
 - *Pornography, Electronic Media and Priestly Formation*, Sister Marysia Weber, R.S.M., D.O., www.hprweb.com
 - *Breaking Free 12 Steps to Sexual Purity for Men*, Stephen Wood—Family Life Center Publications, <http://www.family.org>
 - *Breaking Free Audio CD Series: Twelve Steps to Sexual Purity*—Steve Wood; *An Affair of the Mind*—Laurie Hall; *The Healing Power of Confession*—Scott Hahn; Family Life Center Publications; <http://www.familylifecenter.net>
 - *Renewing the Mind of the Media A Statement on Overcoming the Exploitation of Sex and Violence in Communications*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, www.usccb.org
 - *Real Love Answering your questions on Dating, Marriage, and the Real Meaning of Sex*, Mary Beth Bonacci—Ignatius Press, <http://www.ignatiuspress.com>
 - *The Pornography Plague CD*—Jeff Cavins; <http://www.luminousmedia.org>

Pope Benedict XVI renews the importance of maintaining a depth in our prayer and supplications so that we maintain a clear focus. “Our petition must not sink into superficiality; ...the central point is still ‘that we be freed from sins.’ That we recognize ‘evil’ as the quintessence of ‘evils,’ and that our gaze may never be diverted from the living God.” (Joseph Ratzinger, Jesus of Nazareth, p.168).