



Supporting Marital Chastity

ADDRESSING PORNOGRAPHY WITH
THE GUIDANCE OF “CREATE IN ME A
CLEAN HEART” IN NFP EDUCATION

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Supporting

Married Couples in a Culture of Normalized Pornography

1 Introduction:

- The challenge of pornography in today's culture.
- The impact on marital love and the sanctity of marriage.
- The need for a compassionate, fact-based approach.

2 Understanding the Struggle:

- Recognize pornography as not just a social issue but a profound spiritual and psychological challenge.
- Emphasize the Church's teachings on the sacredness of marriage and sexuality.
- Point out barriers to practicing NFP.

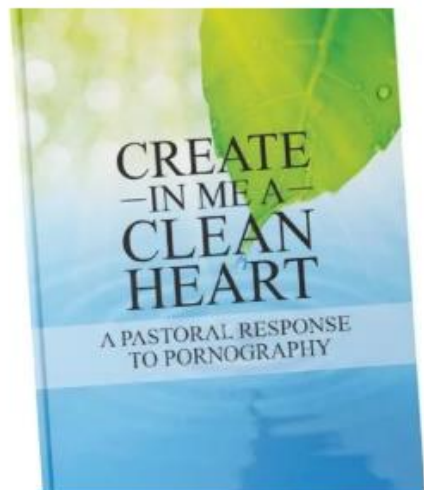
3 Role of Parish Leaders and NFP Educators:

- Offer guidance rooted in Church teachings.
- Provide support that is compassionate, factual, and resourceful.
- Equip couples with the tools to begin to heal and protect their marriage.

4 Resources and Strategies:

- Introduce key resources and strategies for supporting couples.
- Highlight the importance of ongoing education and dialogue.
- Encourage accountability.

Create in Me a Clean Heart



PROACTIVE & COMPASSIONATE APPROACH

- Highlight the Church's active and compassionate response to the challenges of pornography.
- Align our ministries with the vision outlined in the document.



REASSURANCE & ENCOURAGEMENT

- Reassurance that Church leaders are making substantial efforts.
- Provide hope and encouragement for you as you engage in this ministry.



CONTINUED RELEVANCE

- Acknowledge the ongoing importance of "Create in Me a Clean Heart" as we approach its 10th anniversary.
- Allow the document to guide and inform current and future ministries.



ACTIONABLE STEPS

- Equip you as educators and parish leaders with tools for helping those you mentor and teach.
- Build your confidence in addressing the topic.

The background is a blurred photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. To the left, a glass of water sits on a wooden surface. The overall scene suggests a workspace or a moment of focused activity.

Understanding the *struggle.*

The background of the image is the interior of a church. It features a central aisle with a light-colored carpet, flanked by dark wooden pews. The walls are made of light-colored stone or plaster, with arched windows on the sides containing colorful stained glass. The ceiling is high and features a series of vaulted arches. The lighting is warm and soft, creating a serene atmosphere.

CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART

"In the confessional and in our daily ministry and work with families, we have witnessed the corrosive damage caused by pornography: children whose innocence is stolen; men and women burdened with guilt and shame from viewing pornography, whether occasionally or habitually; spouses who feel betrayed and traumatized; and individuals exploited by the pornography industry. While the production and use of pornography has always been problematic, its impact has surged in recent years, largely due to the Internet and mobile technology. Some have even described it as a public health crisis. Everyone, in some way, is affected by the growing presence of pornography in society. We all suffer from its distorted view of the human person and sexuality."

-United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

COLLECTIVE AND FOCUSED RESPONSE

1.

PARENTS

4.

EDUCATORS

2.

CLERGY

5.

MENTAL HEALTH
PROFESSIONALS

3.

DIOCESAN &
PARISH LEADERS

6.

CHILD GUARDIANS

Statistics

64%

of Christian men
report watching
pornography at least
once a month.

15%

of Christian women
report watching
pornography at least
once a month.

70%

of women admit to
keeping their porn use
secret.

17%

of all women struggle
with porn addiction.

90%

of men have been
exposed to
pornography by the
age of 18.

60%

of women have been
exposed to
pornography by the
age of 18.

Pornography's Pervasive Influence

The global pornography
industry generates over **\$97
billion annually**, illustrating its
powerful influence in shaping
societal norms and behaviors.

Understanding Pornography Addiction

Early Onset

- Addiction often begins with early exposure in childhood/adolescence.

Independence from Marriage

- Addiction is typically brought into marriage, not caused by the spouse.

Coping Mechanism

- Used as a way to handle stress, anxiety, or emotional pain.

Brain Feedback Loop

- Masturbation + Pornography = Reinforced addiction.
- Dopamine surges create a hard-to-break cycle.

Harmful Impact

- Temporary relief leads to long-term damage to both the individual and the relationship.

Healing Approach

- Focus on addressing underlying issues and brain responses, with an emphasis on not blaming the spouse.



Made for Love

"Because of the beautiful meaning and dignity communicated by our bodies—which communicate our very selves—our bodies should be treated with the greatest respect. We, and therefore our bodies, are not meant to be used but loved. As Karol Wojtyła (St. John Paul II) taught, the opposite of love is not hate but rather using a person, as if he or she were an object. To love others is to recognize them as the gift they are, to seek what is truly good and best for them, and never to use them and thereby objectify them as something less than persons. The body, then, is not raw, biological matter open to manipulation but is rather inseparable from who we are." - USCCB, *Create in Me a Clean Heart*

The widespread use of pornography distorts our divine calling.

The Church upholds that human sexuality is a profound and sacred gift from God, meant to be expressed within the covenant of marriage as an act of love, mutual respect, and self-giving. It is within this sacred bond that the fullness of human love is realized, reflecting the very love of God for humanity. Sexuality is not merely a physical act but a sacramental gift, calling spouses to offer their bodies to each other as a visible sign of God's life-giving love.

KEY TAKEAWAYS ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY:

- ✓ Reduces the gift of sexuality to mere consumption.
- ✓ The distortion inflicts deep wounds.
- ✓ Focus becomes self-gratification and the objectification of one's spouse.
- ✓ Makes it difficult to approach marital life with reverence and respect.





“

Using or creating pornography within marriage is always wrong and can never be justified. It **violates marital chastity** and the dignity of the spouses.

CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART

Impact of Pornography on Natural Family Planning (NFP)

NFP and Marital Discipline

- NFP requires periodic abstinence during fertile periods.
- Discipline, self-control, and mutual understanding are essential.

Challenges Posed by Pornography

- Pornography fosters an instant gratification mindset.
- Couples may find abstinence more challenging due to distorted views on sexuality.

Impact on Marital Intimacy

- Pornography can make NFP seem burdensome.
- Leads to frustration and potential conflicts in marriage.

NFP vs. Pornography-Influenced Perspectives

- NFP promotes a holistic unity in marital intimacy.
- Pornography skews focus towards the physical aspect, hindering the deeper connection that NFP fosters.

TRUE JOY AND FULFILLMENT

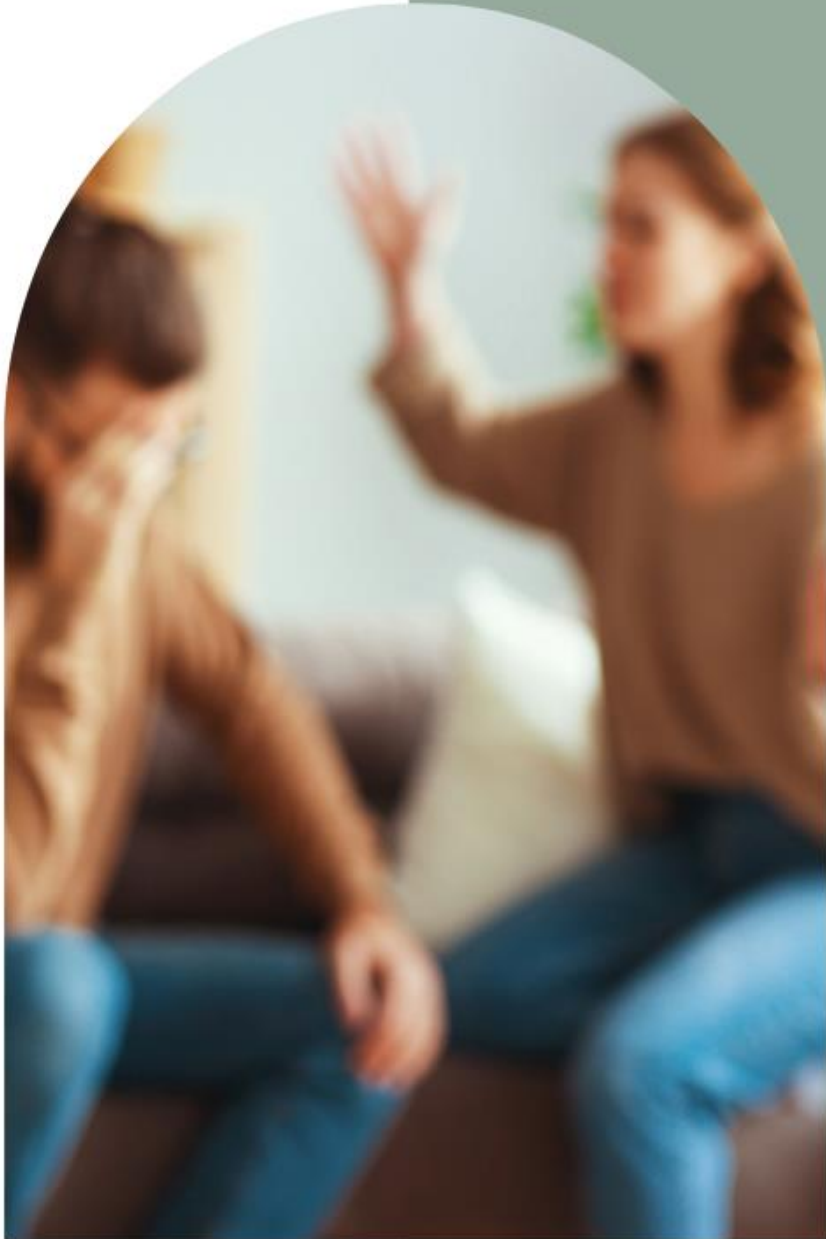
Chastity in marriage is not about saying “no” to sex; it’s about saying “yes” to a deeper, more fulfilling love.

A life of
chastity is a
life of *joy.*

Pornography Damages

- Divorce lawyers have identified pornography use as a major factor in over half of divorces.
- Spouses who discover their husband's or wife's pornography use will often feel betrayed, and many experience a sense of trauma akin to post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Data also indicates that husbands and wives who use pornography are more likely to have an extramarital affair.
- Contrary to the common idea that pornography can be an aid to marital intimacy, pornography use tends to decrease sexual satisfaction and interest in sex and can lead to impotence in men.
- One spouse might also feel degraded by the other's requests for demeaning forms of sexual activity common in pornography.

In contrast, God's plan for marriage and chastity within marriage brings real happiness!



The Impact of Pornography on Trust and Marital Chastity

Pornography Undermines Trust

- Deep feelings of betrayal and insecurity.
- Challenges in maintaining mutual love and respect.

Distortion of Sexuality

- Promotes a self-gratifying view over mutual self-giving.
- Leads to the objectification of the spouse.

Emotional Fallout

- Intense emotions: anger, mistrust, loneliness.
- The overwhelming impact of betrayal—both initial and repeated offenses..

Sever Consequences

- Approximately 70% of wives experience symptoms similar to PTSD.
- Symptoms include hypervigilance, nightmares, anxiety, and depression.

PORNOGRAPHY USE AFFECTS EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

Shame and Guilt

- Leads to decreased self-worth, affecting openness in communication.

Trust and Vulnerability

- NFP requires mutual trust and vulnerability, which pornography usage undermines.

Communication Breakdown

- Lack of open dialogue leads to misunderstandings and frustration.

Emotional Strain

- Resentment and frustration can further strain the marital relationship.

THE PATH TO HEALING

- Requires time, patience, and commitment from both spouses.
- Essential process to rebuild trust and restore the relationship.



A photograph of a man and a woman in a close embrace, smiling. The man is on the left, wearing a blue and white patterned shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt. They are standing behind a black metal railing. The background is a blurred green landscape with some autumn-colored trees on the left. A large white rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the title text.

Role of Parish Leaders and NFP Educators

Guiding Couples



DISRUPTION OF SEXUALITY

Pornography distorts the natural, God-given design of sexuality, affecting intimacy and undermining the purpose of NFP.



CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION

Couples exposed to pornography may struggle with re-education on the true purpose of sexuality and the benefits of NFP, requiring more than just technical fertility awareness.



ROLE OF EDUCATORS

Parish leaders and NFP educators must recognize the widespread challenges of pornography and masturbation, approaching these topics with openness and compassion to facilitate healing and growth.



Heal Wounds

“The Church, acting as a field hospital, is called to proclaim the truth of the human person in love, protect people from the harms of pornography, and provide the Lord’s mercy and healing for those wounded by it.”

- *USCCB, Create in Me a Clean Heart*

CREATE IN ME A
CLEAN HEART

Many good people struggle with pornography.

The individuals you work with are
beloved sons and daughters of God.
Encourage them not to be afraid to
approach the altar of mercy and seek
forgiveness.



YOUR ROLE AS A PARISH LEADER AND NFP EDUCATOR



Acknowledge the Struggle and Offer Compassionate Support

- ✓ Help couples overcome obstacles
- ✓ Encourage participation in the Sacraments
- ✓ Denounce the spirit of discouragement



Understand the Impact on the Marriage

- ✓ Know the facts
- ✓ Acknowledge the pain
- ✓ Be an active listener and invite sharing



Healing through God's Love

- ✓ Share that God's love is unconditional
- ✓ Invite intimacy in prayer
- ✓ Encourage mutual support



Lead by Example and Offer Hope

- ✓ Give the gift of going first
- ✓ Normalize the topic
- ✓ Provide steps and resources

Resources for Individuals and Couples

Build Support Networks

Provide practical steps and encourage perseverance in healing from pornography and cultivating a life of chastity.

This journey involves daily choices that require ongoing effort, patience, and perseverance. Couples must have accompaniment to recognize their true identity as God's sons and daughters and seek the necessary spiritual and professional support to navigate these challenges.

Accountability
Groups

Retreats

Counseling

Spiritual
Direction

Empowering Couples

Ruah Woods

Counseling

**Freedom
Coaching**

Coaching

**Amanda
Zurface**

Spiritual Direction and Retreats

Imago Dei

Counseling

**Metanoia
Catholic**

Coaching

**Agape Catholic
Ministries**

Webinars, Education and
Sacramental Preparation

**John Paul II
Healing Center**

Workshops and Retreats

Covenant Eyes

Ebooks, Email Challenges and
Accountability and Filtering
Software

**Bloom for
Women**

Trauma Resources for Wives

[HTTPS://WWW.USCCB.ORG/TOPICS/MARRIAGE-AND-FAMILY-
LIFE-MINISTRIES/HELP-FOR-THOSE-STRUGGLING](https://www.usccb.org/topics/marriage-and-family-life-ministries/help-for-those-struggling)

where to start

Restored Vows: A Porn Recovery Series for Couples

by Covenant Eyes

RESTORE TRUST AND INTIMACY

The Restored Vows program offers a personalized, faith-based journey for couples dealing with the impact of pornography on their marriage. It provides a step-by-step guide for both the spouse struggling with pornography and the spouse who has been hurt by it, focusing on healing together. The program acknowledges the pain of betrayal while offering practical advice and spiritual support, integrating Christian principles of grace and forgiveness. It includes accountability tools like Covenant Eyes' software and educational resources such as articles, videos, and workbooks to help couples overcome pornography's effects within their marriage.

SUPPORTING COUPLES IN UNDERSTANDING PORNOGRAPHY'S HARMFULNESS

Build Trust and Understanding

- Create a safe space for the couple to feel heard and understood.
- Use gentle, open-ended questions to explore their beliefs and experiences.

Share Your Story

- Share when and how you came to understand why porn is harmful for you and your marriage.

Educate on Church Teaching

- Explain the sacredness of the marital act as unitive and procreative.
- Address how pornography and masturbation may harm emotional and spiritual connection.

Explore the Harmful Effects

- Share research on the negative effects, such as addiction, erectile dysfunction, brain chemistry changes, and impact on marital intimacy.

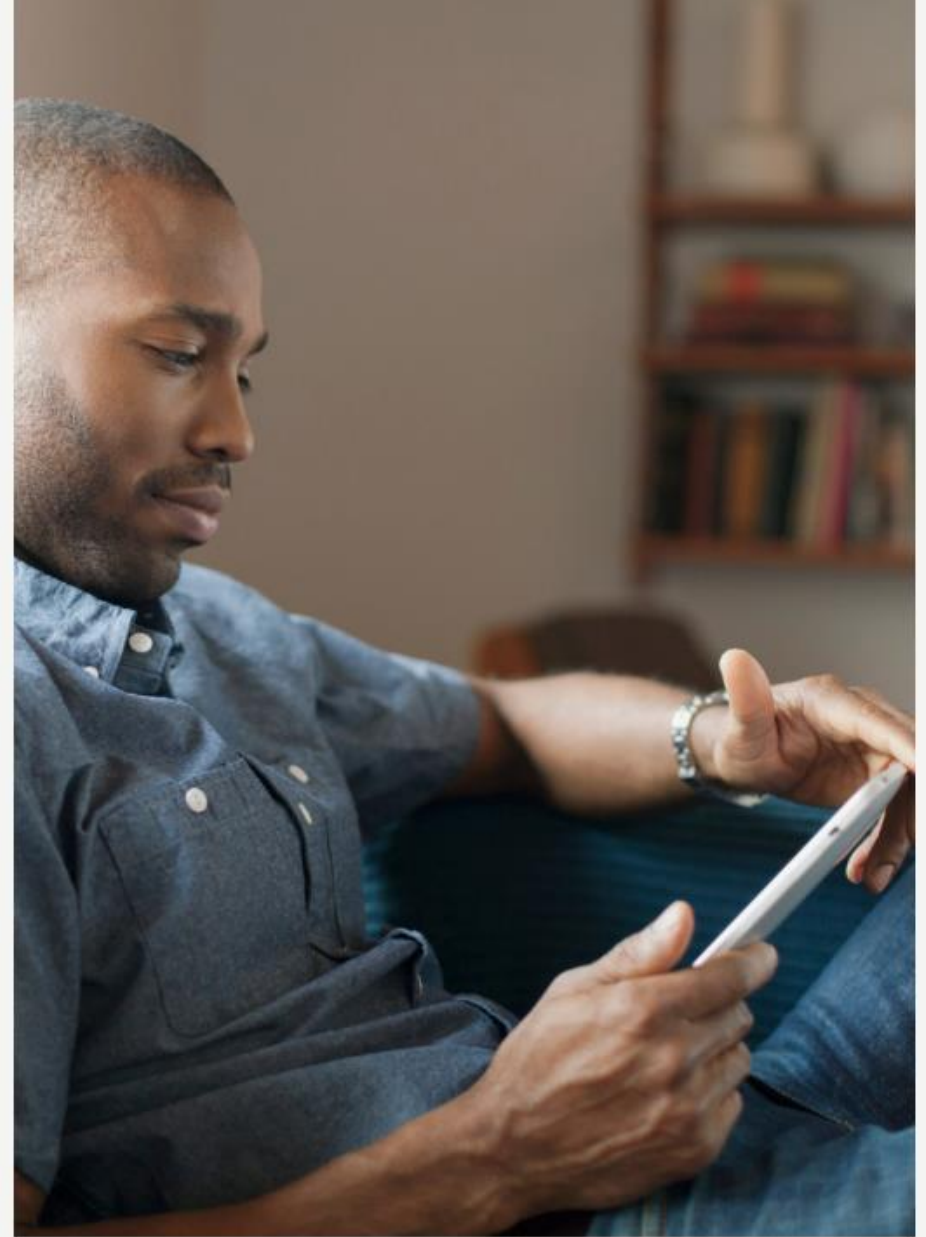
Explore the topic from a secular perspective.


Sharing research on the negative effects of pornography and masturbation, such as addiction, changes in brain chemistry, and the impact on marital intimacy, can provide a broader understanding.

Recommendations

The Porn Circuit
Covenant Eyes Ebook

Porn Stats
Covenant Eyes Ebook



A group of people are shown from the chest up, their hands raised to form a heart shape against a bright, golden sunset. The background is a warm, hazy orange and yellow. The people are wearing casual clothing, including a white shirt and a blue and white striped top. The overall mood is romantic and hopeful.

By fostering open communication,
providing resources, and promoting
marital chastity, you can help
couples strengthen their
relationships and live out the true
meaning of marital love.



Thank You
God bless you!

GET IN TOUCH

amandazurface.com
hello@amandazurface.com
[@amandazurface](https://www.instagram.com/amandazurface)