

Letter from Bishop Kemme for Safe Haven Sunday March 31, 4th Sunday of Lent

Pornography is not a topic most adults are comfortable speaking about. This is especially the case when it comes to parents addressing it with their children. Regrettably though, it's the topic that's becoming more and more necessary to address in our digital age. Too many parents, grandparents, and guardians think that internet-based pornography is beyond the interest of their children. I want us to be informed on this matter. Statistics tell us another story.

First exposure is often during the elementary school years. This often occurs by accident. It can happen to a child just by typing in the wrong word on social media, or clicking on the wrong YouTube video, or someone showing an explicit image on Instagram. When parents and guardians haven't created an environment where it's safe and welcome to talk about uncomfortable topics, children will often hide these experiences out of shame and embarrassment.

As your Bishop, I am passionate about the domestic church. I want all homes to be safe. I want to help you and your families overcome pornography! It is my sacred duty to protect the children in our great Diocese of Wichita from this great goliath of our time, and it is my holy responsibility to guide and equip individuals and parents with forming children to live virtuous and holy lives online and offline. Pornography creates an impediment to obtaining deep and lasting relationships with Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is to be the center of our very lives, homes, and vocations. Pornography is a bondage and a fake. It is a mockery of true and holy intimacy that is celebrated through the Sacramental life of the Church.

This awareness weekend is inspired by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' formal statement *Create in Me a Clean Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography*, where my brother bishops and I explain, "The use of pornography by anyone in the home deprives the home of its role as a safe haven and has negative effects throughout a family's life and across generations."

By celebrating this awareness day with the 2019 theme *Equipping the Family, Safeguarding Children*, we as a community are saying we want holy, healthy, and safe homes, free of pornography and other online threats that deprive the home of its role as a safe haven. To help marriages and families, after Mass please take home a Covenant Eyes' book, [Equipped: Smart Catholic Parenting in a Sexualized Culture](#). This book includes a unique seven-day text-to-opt-in program: *The Equipped 7-Day E-mail Challenge*. This Challenge provides practical tips any caring adult can take to create safer digital environments for themselves and our young people. We encourage you to take advantage of these resources and ask that you be intentional about taking the steps suggested to ensure safety and joy for you, your loved ones, and the greater community.

Again this problem doesn't need to be fought alone. It is my hope that the resources provided to you on *Safe Haven Sunday* will both encourage and teach all individuals and families dealing with the effects of pornography that loving support is available. It's worth battling pornography for wholeness and purity for you, your spouse, your children, and the future of everyone in our diocese.

May God bless you,
Most Reverend Carl A. Kemme
Bishop of Wichita