



Diocese of Davenport

Office of the Bishop

March 11, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This weekend (March 13-14) the Diocese of Davenport will celebrate its second Safe Haven Sunday. Many of you are already familiar with the Safe Haven initiative from last year, during which we provided resources to individuals and families to be used to protect their homes and initiate necessary conversations with children.

Since then, the increase of overall screen time experienced as a consequence of the pandemic has resulted in a significant spike in pornography exposure. COVID has brought the world a contagious and debilitating virus; it has also brought isolation, loneliness, and anxiety to many individuals and families. Given the experience of these additional stressors, it is no wonder that pornography use and addiction are on the rise.

As your bishop, I care deeply about your well-being and desire to do all in my power to guide and equip parents and others in forming children to live safe and virtuous lives. I understand that pornography is not a topic most adults want to talk about, especially with their children or grandchildren. However, given our present circumstances, it is a topic that must be addressed for the health and safety of all.

Pornography use and addiction prevent one from experiencing genuine, intimate and lasting relationships with others and with God. It is a mockery of the true and holy intimacy that is celebrated through the sacramental life of the Church. By engaging in this year's Safe Haven Sunday awareness day, we as a community are affirming our commitment to create holy, healthy and secure environments, free of pornography and other online dangers that deprive the home of its role as a safe haven.

To this end, parishes and schools in the diocese have been encouraged to provide instruction and materials that will support and protect individuals, marriages, and families from the harms of pornography. As a first step, I suggest that you take part in a 7-day Safe Digital Challenge by texting "**SECURE**" to **66866**. This simple action will immediately help you get started in protecting your home from unhealthy online content.

It is my hope that participating in this challenge and utilizing the additional resources offered on the Diocese of Davenport Clean Heart webpage (<https://cleanheart.online/diocese-davenport-0>) will assist you and your family to successfully address the perils of pornography. I encourage you to take advantage of these resources and ask that you be intentional about taking the steps suggested to keep you, your loved ones, and the greater community safe.

For anyone struggling with pornography use or the effects of this addiction within their household, I want you to know that the Church is here to help and support you. Christ offers mercy, hope and forgiveness to anyone who wants to be free from pornography's harmful effects. Please talk with your parish clergy or contact the diocesan Marriage & Family Office for support.

Gratefully Yours in Christ,

+ *Thomas R. Zinkula*

Most Rev. Thomas R. Zinkula
Bishop of Davenport