

Human Trafficking & Pornography

Awareness

Human Trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery with over twenty-seven million people enslaved worldwide. The scope of the problem is hard to define because human trafficking is largely a hidden crime, making accurate numbers of trafficking incidents difficult to determine. It is a crime under state, federal and international law and is currently the second fastest growing criminal activity, exceeded only by the illegal drug trade.

A person is a human trafficking victim if she/he is induced by force, fraud or coercion or if she/he is a victim under 18 years of age. There are two major types of human trafficking: **sex trafficking**, in which the victim is forced to commit a commercial sex act and **labor trafficking**, which is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for labor or services for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery. Sex trafficking is especially reprehensible because it specifically targets vulnerable women and girls. Some victims are abducted; others are runaways or are lured out of poverty or sold by their destitute

families. Many are desperate for acceptance and enticed by the false promise of romance, good jobs or a better life. There are many factors contributing to the tragedy of human trafficking, a significant one is pornography which is the focus of this module.

Pornography creates a climate in which violence and exploitation of women and children is both tolerated and tacitly encouraged. Taking on pornography means challenging the culture's libertarian attitude about sex, which basically says anything goes between consenting adults, and those who don't like pornography can change the channel. Lies about pornography must be dispelled. For example, viewing it will satisfy your sexual desire, consumption of it is harmless and even helpful to building stable relationships or those involved in its production are there by choice.

Pornography is prevalent and destructive. Recent statistics are staggering. *Enough is Enough*, (www.enough.org), a nonprofit

organization working to make the internet safer for children and families, provides the following information:

- Every second, 28,258 internet users are viewing pornography



- American children begin viewing pornography at an average age of 11
- About 67% of young men and 49% of young women believe that viewing pornography is acceptable
- The pornography industry is a \$97 billion industry worldwide, with child pornography taking in at least \$3 billion
- Child pornography is one of the fastest-growing online businesses.

Additionally, the *Human Dignity, Slavery, and Sex Trafficking Symposium* reported:

- 89% of pornography comes from the U.S.
- 260 new explicit sites are put online every day
- 20% percent of all internet searches are related in some way to pornography
- 66-90 % of women involved in the production of pornography were sexually abused as children.

The Richmond Justice Initiative website reported in September 2011, that one out of every five pornographic images is of a child, and 55% of child pornography comes from the U.S.



Analysis



to expect sexual fulfillment on demand, and to continually seek more explicit or violent content to create the same high.³

As Victor Malarek put it in his book *The Johns*: “The message is clear: if prostitution

What is the link between pornography and human trafficking? There are two links. The Freedom Youth Project Foundation, (www.freedomyouthproject.org) reports that thousands of trafficked children and young adults are forced to make pornographic films. The second is that those addicted to pornography eventually lose satisfaction with just watching sexual encounters and seek encounters with trafficked persons. An estimated 40% to 80% of consumers of child pornography abuse and molest a child (www.CitizenLink.com). It is a cruel cycle with little thought given to the victims.

Pornography drives demand for sex trafficking because as Catherine Mackinnon, a professor at Harvard Law School says “consuming pornography is an experience of bought sex” and thus it creates a hunger to continue to purchase and objectify, and act out what is seen.¹ And in a very literal way, pornography is advertising for trafficking, not just in general but also in the sense that traffickers and pimps use pornographic images of victims as specific advertising for their “products.”² In addition, viewing pornography and gratifying oneself with it creates a drug-like addiction, which distorts the individual’s view on sexuality. It also trains the mind

is the main act, porn is the dress rehearsal.”⁴ Pornography becomes a training ground for johns’ tricks. When pornography is the source of sex education for our generation, the natural outcome is a culture of commercial sex and sex trafficking.

Many women and children who are being sexually exploited and trafficked are also being used for the production of pornography. Sometimes acts of prostitution are filmed without the consent of the victim and distributed.⁵ On other occasions victims are trafficked for the sole purpose of pornographic production. In today’s era of webcams and chat rooms, the lines between interactive pornography and virtual prostitution websites have been blurred.⁶

Recruitment for and retention of victims in the pornography industry occurs in many ways, including being bombarded with calls to come and perform after posting a personal ad, through social media or by contact in places where women and girls gather

such as malls, coffee shops, or specialty shops. Sometimes the women and girls are held captive on pornography sets or driven under the command of a pornographer or agent to and from the sets. This fits the trafficking definition of “harboring and transporting.” Those used in pornography are considered a commodity, easily discarded when no longer needed. They are used to create a product that is supplied to countless consumers across the world. The pornography industry is continually providing the world with commercial sex acts, which can be consumed without end.

Pornographers, like other pimps, learn how to exploit economic and psychological vulnerabilities to coerce women and girl to get into and stay in the sex industry.⁹ Other times they threaten or use alcohol and drugs to induce compliance, which is included in some state definitions for coercion.

Understanding that pornography and sex trafficking are interconnected challenges us to seek justice for victims of commercial sexual exploitation. We must acknowledge that pornography is a root cause of human trafficking and fuels the demand for more victims of sexual exploitation. It is essential to understand the reality of pornography and act accordingly.



What Is Being Done?

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), which created current federal legislation against sex trafficking, states that people are trafficked into and exploited in pornography.⁷ Under the TVPA, *sex trafficking* is defined as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act.”⁸ The realities of the pornography industry are perfectly described in the definition of sex trafficking in TVPA.

Clean Hotels

www.cleanhotels.com

lists the hotels and motels in most cities and towns in the U.S. that have taken the pledge to remove in-room porn as a TV offering. Interviews by concerned citizens with local hotel/motel managers about this have led them to remove the porn.

Operation Broken Silence

www.operationbrokensilence.org

is a project that made an analysis of the Online Memphis Sex Industry and human trafficking in which they analyzed the information that traffickers, pimps and victims provided to *Backpage.com* as a means of advertising prostitution. It highlights the trends, patterns and economics of human trafficking in Memphis.

What Needs to be Done?

Sex trafficking will not be eliminated until the demand is eliminated. The demand will not be eliminated until the roots of disordered sexual desire are eliminated. One of the biggest causes of disordered sexual desire is pornography viewing and pornography addiction. A documentary on sex trafficking, *Rape for Profit*, sent the message home: “Prostitution is the main act, and pornography for these men is the dress rehearsal. They see it and then they go and act it out. ... When a society is demanding more pornography, it’s demanding more prostituted women.”

An all-male led film documentary called *Hearts of Men* seeks to address the root of the problem. One of the men who speaks in the film admits, “We’re the root of this, and if we’re the root of this, we have to figure out what has to change. It has to start with us.” Pornography enslaves men physically and psychologically, and this enslaves women and children literally via sex trafficking. Pornography is a major gateway to sex trafficking. Men create the demand; women and children are the supply. If we transform the demand side, the supply side will also cease. Victims captured by pornographers are not there for the pleasure, nor even for the money; but because they have been bought, kidnapped or tricked. There may be a transaction involving money and pleasure, but it’s doubtful the trafficked victim receives much of either.

Reflection

What are our values and sources of our hope in the battle against trafficking of persons?

Scripture (New Jerusalem Bible)

- 2 Peter 2:3 *In their greed, they will try to make a profit out of you with untrue tales...*
- Matthew 5:27-28 *Lust ... adultery in the heart*
- Galatians 5:19 *When self-indulgence is at work...sexual vice...sensuality...*
- 1 Timothy 6:10 *The love of money...root of all evils...given their souls...wounds...*
- Hebrews 13:4 *Marriage must be kept undefiled...adulterers will come under God’s judgement.*

Catholic Social Teaching from the *Catholic Catechism for Adults*:

- Chapter 28 - the section entitled *The Family and Society*, quotes Pope John Paul II’s *Familiaris Consortio*, in which he cites a list of rights of the family, among them is, “the right to protect minors by adequate institutions and legislation from harmful drugs, pornography, alcoholism...”
- Chapter 30 – the section entitled “*Chastity*,” the following are defined
 - ♦ Lust...disordered desire for...sexual pleasure...sought for itself
 - ♦ Sexual abuse...harms the victim on many levels...forcing sexual intimacy of a child...an even graver evil
 - ♦ Pornography...reduces the person to an instrument of sexual pleasure, an object to be used...
 - ♦ Rape...an act of violence...deeply wounds...intrinsically evil act...

Pope Francis, Easter 2013, said: “Human trafficking is the most extensive form of slavery in this twenty-first century.” In November 2013, **The Pontifical Academies of Sciences** issued their “Statement on Trafficking in Human Beings” which can be found at www.casinapioiv.va/content/accademia/en/events/2013/trafficking/traffickingstatement.html Key points include: there is a compelling need to end trafficking, trafficking in all its forms is a crime against humanity and all persons have a moral and legal duty to eradicate this grave violation of human rights. It also contains suggestions for fulfilling our moral imperative to end human trafficking.

Action

The scope of human trafficking is vast. It is important for individuals to be connected with groups or coalitions to have any significant impact on this crime. Such groups exist throughout the U.S. and in other countries. Websites listed below can help individuals connect in their local areas.

However, as individuals, people can also become involved and effective:

- Pray and sacrifice daily for both the victims and the perpetrators of human trafficking.
- Subscribe online or through the mail to anti-human trafficking newsletters.
- Write letters to local newspapers, keeping the human trafficking issue alive and spreading the news about developments.
- Contact a popular columnist and ask her/him to write a news article on the topic.
- Bring pressure through letters to the editor concerning *Backpage.com* which publishes on the internet, urging them to remove their 'adult' section advertising the availability of persons for commercial sex.
- Discuss with store managers the offensiveness of the pornography on their check-out counters. Some high school students have made it a practice to turn magazines like *Cosmopolitan* backwards at store checkout counters.
- Join your parish social action group and encourage the members to focus on human trafficking.

Further Information

- The aim of the **Bakhita Initiative**: www.bakhitainitiative.com—is to create a specific nationwide network of U.S. congregations of Catholic women religious, connecting those involved in activities to end human trafficking. The website makes available a database and a visual of cross country contacts that will serve to strengthen and unify efforts of the Sisters.
- **Polaris Project**: www.polarisproject.org—is one of the best websites for information and resources. They provide the most accurate statistics, access to direct services for victims, education and advocacy regarding human trafficking. They maintain the national human trafficking hotline (1-888-3737-888) and textline (233733 or BeFree) 24/7 and can provide statistics on the hotline usage.
- **U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops**: www.usccb.org/about/anti-trafficking-program/index.cfm—The mission of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Anti-Trafficking Program (ATP) is to educate on the scourge of human trafficking as an offense against fundamental dignity of the human person; to advocate for an end to modern day slavery; and to provide training and technical assistance on this issue.
- **Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center**: www.ipjc.org—The Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center, Seattle, WA, is sponsored by eighteen religious communities. Provides classroom webinars, prayer resources and faith based presentations on human trafficking.

Additional Websites—Human Trafficking/Modern-day Slavery

- **Stop Trafficking newsletter**: www.stopenslavement.org—provides world-wide information and updates on human trafficking
- **Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking**: www.castla.org
- **U.S. Department of Health & Human Services**: www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking—Rescue and Restore Campaign and www.hhs.gov/news/factsheet/humantrafficking.html
- **For state information**: www.state.gov/i/tip or www.state.gov/i/tip/rls/tiprpt/2013/index.htm

Foot Notes

¹Mackinnon, Catharine A. "Pornography as Trafficking." *Pornography: Driving the Demand in International Sex Trafficking*. By David E. Guinn and Julie DiCaro. [Los Angeles]: Captive Daughters Media, 2007. 31-42. Print, 34.

²Farley, Melissa. *Prostitution and Trafficking in Nevada: Making the Connections*. San Francisco, CA: Prostitution Research & Education, 2007. Print, 153.

³Struthers, William M. *Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009. Print, 97-99.

⁴Malarek, Victor. *The Johns: Sex for Sale and the Men Who Buy It*. Toronto: Key Porter, 2009. Print, 196.

⁵Smith, Linda, and Cindy Coloma. *Renting Lacy: a Story of America's Prostituted Children*. Vancouver, WA: Shared Hope International, 2009. Print, 15-25.

⁶Malarek, 203.

⁷U.S. Dept. of State, Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)2000, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (2001) (enacted). Print, Sec 102 (2).

⁸U.S. Dept. of State, Sec 103 of TVPA 2000 (8) (A), (9).

⁹Farley, 153.

U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking is a collaborative, faith-based network that offers educational programs and materials, supports access to survivor services, and engages in legislative advocacy to eradicate modern-day slavery.