



Catholic Diocese of Columbus

April 2, 2024

Office of the Bishop
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Dear Reverend Fathers and School Administrators,

This year on April 13 and 14 we will once again participate in Safe Haven Sunday throughout the Diocese of Columbus. Pornography is one of the leading causes of addiction, adultery, divorce, and human trafficking. Pornography creates an unsafe environment for children, and produces distorted attitudes toward the body, sex, and marriage. It is devastating to marriages and families, damaging society, and the common good.

The effects of this distorted view of human life can be seen in the devastation of human trafficking and the abortion industries. Our announcement of the Gospel of Life is a proclamation about the dignity of all human life and the gift of sexuality. All people should be treated with dignity and respect, worthy of love, and not reduced to an object to be viewed or used for pleasure.

As a Church, we have a specific responsibility for the care and protection of young people, and we must confront this issue so that our young people may be both safe and free. We cannot afford to ignore the problem. The USCCB's statement, *Create in Me a Clean Heart*, states, "We must see our role in protecting children from pornography as our sacred duty, as well as an aspect of our work to create safe environments in accord with our ongoing implementation of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*."

Together we can address this issue and create a safer environment for those who have been entrusted to our care. The Safe Haven Sunday awareness weekend on April 13 and 14 will give us the opportunity to address the harmfulness of pornography in marriages, families, and the culture as a whole while providing helpful resources to both individuals and families and to highlight its relationship to the evil of human trafficking.

I will provide a recorded message that I encourage you to share throughout your parish and school websites, emails, and social media channels. I also encourage you to include in your weekend homilies and pastoral communication information about how to keep individuals and families safe especially during Child Abuse Prevention Month. Resources can be found on the Diocese of Columbus website by visiting columbuscatholic.org/safe-haven.

Grateful for your ministry and assuring you of my blessing, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Earl K. Fernandes

Most Reverend Earl K. Fernandes
Bishop of Columbus