

## **Men's groups created to battle pornography**

The Archdiocese of Omaha Pornography Awareness Truth and Healing (PATH) Task Force was created in 2007 to counter the destructiveness of pornography.

PATH's primary goals are: 1) to increase awareness of the availability of pornography, 2) educate the faithful (clergy, lay ministers, parents, grandparents, young adults, children/youth) about the long-term emotional, psychological and spiritual affects caused by pornography, 3) provide support and healing resources to those harmed by pornography.

PATH is accomplishing its third goal by offering small groups for men who have a history of pornography use.

An urban group started a year ago and meets once a week. A second Omaha group is set to begin in June. The first rural men's group will convene this June in Cedar County.

"The groups are a place where men get strength from one another," said Father Scott Hastings, who facilitates one of the Omaha groups.

The groups are a way to hold accountable men striving to be free from pornography. "Members affirm each other for their periods of being chaste, and challenge and encourage one another when a member reports a setback," Father Hastings said.

Pornography affects our relationship with God. It distorts the truth that all individuals are made in God's image and likeness and must be treated with dignity, rather than objects of fleeting pleasure.

According to Father Hastings, a common root cause of pornography use is a need to have control in our lives; however, pornography produces sexual frustration and the desire to act out.

"What we seek to achieve from pornography in the form of control ends up controlling and enslaving us," Father Hastings said. He said the gift of sexuality is not meant to frustrate or enslave. "It is meant to free us in a life-long relationship of complete giving to another."

A number of studies have found a correlation between pornography and an unhappy marriage. Divorce rates and the likelihood of infidelity increases wherever pornography has infiltrated a marriage

"Pornography distracts us from our call to love," Father Hastings said. "When we are preoccupied with pornography, our mind and heart easily lose sight of what holds real value, including those who are close to us. Instead, we start to view others through a lens of self-gratification."

To join one of the Omaha men's groups, call 402.557.5664. To join the rural men's group, call 402-557-5694.