Dear Parents,

Last night Matt Fradd spoke to our 7th and 8th grade students and parents and those from other schools and parishes on the virtue of chastity.  For the first hour he spoke to the combined group of parents and students about what love truly is and how to live/show it and how not to.  Then the students went to the lower hall and participated in activities flowing out of the presentation.

During that time, Matt spoke to the parents in the Mini Auditorium, giving them eye-opening information and statistics on the destructive ability of the internet; this same internet that allows us to Skype with family members living far away, helps us with our homework, searches for medical information, streams sporting events, and on and on.  The main premise he spoke from is that it is not that we view our children as reprobates or do not trust our children, it is the opposite: we have put too much trust in the internet!!  It is the parents’ and our Christian community's duty to protect our vulnerable children from innocently falling into the trap that the pornography industry has set for them.

He outlined five steps as practical strategies to protect our children:

1.  educate ourselves first about the destructive nature of pornography (look up any of Matt Fradd’s website listings)

2.  talk to your kids about pornography. “If any pictures/videos depict a person’s body parts that should be covered by a bathing suit” the child must come to you to tell you. For older children, if they are viewing pornography, the first step is to turn to their parents for nonjudgemental help/advice (or their parents ask them!) and then go to confession

3.  install “Covenant Eyes” filter device on all phones, computers, tablets, etc that are available to your child in the home (available at [covenanteyes.com](http://covenanteyes.com/))

4.  talk to your kids’ friends’ parents and find out where they ‘hang out' when your child goes to their house (in the bedroom behind closed doors with internet access?)

5.  be hopeful for a better future for our children with our care and protection for them.

In response to at parent’s question: three sure-fire signs that a child is viewing pornography, according to Matt’s extensive studies, work and communication with children and parents:

1. the child withdraws from usual activities that used to animate him/her, thus spending more time alone perhaps in bedroom or bathroom

2. skittish behavior when you enter the child’s room; i.e. closing or turning off computer, tablet or phone. Trying to prevent you from checking phone or computer use or history

3. is a teenager

If you and your child did not attend the presentation last night, please talk to someone who did and get their feedback also.

**Dear Parents or Guardians,**

**Thanks for all that you do! Being a parent requires tons of self-sacrifice.  Most of what you do for your child is seen by no one, and often not even appreciated by your child!  But THANK YOU.  On behalf of the faith community to which you belong--the Catholic Church--thank you!  Because of you--and only because of you--your child will grow up Catholic.**

**In times past, parents often believed that it was the job of the parish to "teach their child about religion." But today we know that if a child has any chance at all of growing up with faith, it's because of the parents.  Even then, children grow up and become their own people, don't they?  You can only do what you can do, and the rest is a bit of a guessing game.  Still, helping your child grow up Catholic is part of the great work of being a Catholic parent--or being married to one!**

**We know that you have many things going in your life since you became a parent.  If you're a single parent, you have even more to do!  And if you're a couple, but one of you is not Catholic, then the "Catholic part" of all this is a little foreign (and possibly even a little *strange*in some cases).**

**We know what it's like.  You've got a household to run, a job or two to keep up with, your own parents and family to keep track of, a couple of TV shows you like to watch, not to mention keeping groceries in the house and taking out the trash and recycling!  So when the parish calls with a request (or sometimes a demand) that you take part in your child's program, we understand if you consider it a low priority.**

**And yet - this is a time of tremendous bonding between you and your child. Think of this as a real chance to grow together. Having faith and growing in your faith brings some wonderful happiness to your life: forgiveness, generosity, hospitality, a sense of hope, and most of all, a closeness to God. Friends, this will last a lifetime! Don't skip this process or cut it short because you're too busy now. All too soon, the time will pass and your children will be beyond your reach.**

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| **With Christian love and gratitude**  **for ALL that you do,**  **Paul Canavese & Ann Naffziger**  **Directors of Growing Up Catholic**  **God bless,**  **Mrs. Gulden** |