

Be Clean both Inside and Out!

By Bishop Victor Galeone

“Are you serious? The only difference between these two plants is the way they were treated for just an hour a day over the last two months?” - *“That’s right, Father Victor.”* - “I find that hard to believe.” - *“Well, you do the experiment and then you’ll see.”*

This exchange between me and a seventh grader took place in 1992 at our parish school’s annual Science Fair. While making the rounds, I came upon a rather unpretentious experiment. Placed on a table were two clay pots, each with its own plant. One pot had a vibrant plant in full bloom, while the other, a drooping plant with its leaves all shriveled.

A large poster explained that two months prior, the student had buried two seeds from the same packet in two pots, filled with soil from the same plot of earth. On a daily basis, each pot received two ounces of water, one hour of direct sunlight while placed on a window sill, and spent the rest of the day in the same room except - for one single hour. During that hour, the pots were put in separate rooms: one lighted, with soft classical music playing; the other room darkened, with heavy metal rock blaring. In addition, the student went back and forth, telling the one plant, “You’re beautiful! I’m so proud of you!” In the other room she kept shouting: “Who do you think you are? You make me sick! You’ll never amount to anything - so just give up!”

Plants - unlike animals and human beings - cannot see or hear or experience sensations. Yet if just one hour a day in a negative environment can so adversely affect a plant, what effect are hours of daily exposure to the harmful influence of TV, the Internet, and Cyberspace having on impressionable teenage minds?

This month’s cover story lists some tragic instances of the influence from daily exposure to today’s mass media. Here are four others:

- Psychiatrist Dr. Mary Anne Layden testified before the Senate in 2004 that brain scans of adults viewing pornography were similar to those of cocaine users. Namely, porn is addictive, and internet porn is crack cocaine.
- At their 2003 annual convention, two thirds of matrimonial lawyers said that cyber porn was involved in half of the divorce cases they represented.
- A Nielson survey found that 25 percent of employees with Internet access view sexually-explicit sites at the office.
- While the BP Gulf oil spill was spewing unabated, government officials, charged with overseeing off-shore drilling, were caught downloading pornography at work.

If this is the case with husbands and employees who were not reared on cyber porn, what can we expect of today’s youth - who are reared that way - as they enter marriage and the job market? Accordingly, I want to stress the crucial importance of the following points:

- No TV sets in children’s bedrooms.
- Only one home computer, placed in an open area.
- No cell phones with cameras or Internet access for children.
- Help your children develop a love for good reading.

To exemplify the last point, I cite the case of two men, who were contemporaries:

Ted Bundy, born in 1946, was the son of Christian parents who worshipped regularly as a family. At the age of 13, he came upon a Playboy magazine in a trash can, progressed to hardcore porn, started acting out, and over time sexually abused and killed at least 28 young women in ways too gruesome to describe. In 1989 he was executed in Starke, Fla.

Ben Carson was born in 1951 in Detroit’s inner city. From the age of eight he was raised by a single mother, who limited the TV for her two sons to only one hour a week so that they could read books

instead. Rebellious at first, by the end of third grade Ben went from being the class “dummy” to the top of the class. After high school, he worked his way through college, earned a scholarship to Yale, graduated from medical school, and ultimately became one of the best pediatric neurosurgeons in the world. He states in his autobiography: “Everything I am and everything I have become I owe to my darling Mother.”

These two men could well serve as distinct icons for the experiment of the two plants that introduced this message. During their formative years, Ben Carson had his vision elevated through wholesome reading, while Ted Bundy was corrupted for life by drinking from the cesspool of pornography.

Jesus said, “I am the vine, you are the branches...No branch can bear fruit all by itself, but must remain on the vine.” (Jn. 15) Parents, please keep your children firmly joined to Jesus by warding off the worst of today’s mass media!

Can you imagine what would happen if you spent the same amount of time, energy, and interest on your *soul* as you do on your *body*? The one lives only for a few years, the other forever. If someone did a study of your life and saw how much attention you gave to each, which one would they think you considered *immortal*?

In closing, I challenge you to apply this message to your Parish Stewardship Appeal. God’s Word sets 10% as the goal for our sharing. For those who are unable to respond with the full tithe, try to give God back **at least one hour of your weekly income**. Even in these dismal economic times, have no doubt that God will never be outdone in generosity!