

REGISTER EXCLUSIVES

Porn-Free Vision

Recovering Smut Addicts Bring Hope to Others

BY JIM GRAVES, REGISTER CORRESPONDENT

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OTTAWA, Ontario — After successfully battling an addiction to pornography, Matthew Fradd has dedicated himself to helping others.

“Porn is not just naughty — it’s evil,” said Fradd, a 27-year-old Australian living in Ottawa, Ontario. “It emasculates men, degrades women and destroys marriages.”

Fradd has begun his second year operating his anti-pornography website, ThePornEffect.com. He launched it on Aug. 14, 2009, on the feast of St. Maximilian Kolbe, patron of addicts, using \$12,000 in seed money donated to him by a priest-friend.

Fradd’s is a lonely voice going against the culture on the issue, especially considering that nearly 25 million websites (12% of all websites) and 25% of all daily search-engine requests are pornography-related.

In addition, a surprising number of women are regular viewers of pornography. A third of those Americans regularly visiting porn websites are women.

A variety of polls have revealed that those active in Christian churches have difficulties with porn. Promise Keepers, one of the largest Christian men’s conferences in the United States, asked men at their 2008 conferences in anonymous polls if they had viewed porn in the last week; 53% of the nearly 10,000 who responded admitted that they had.

Pornography is hard on marriages, too. In a 2002 survey of 350 members of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, an association of divorce attorneys, for example, 56% said “obsessive interest in pornographic sites” was a factor leading to marital breakups.

Fradd’s site features information about how pornography affects men, women and marriages, inspirational stories of individuals who have become porn-free, information on how to beat porn addictions, videos, and opportunities to offer support to those who want to be free of porn. Fradd launched the site, he explained, because while there are millions of websites that feature pornography, “there’s not a lot out there for men and women who are struggling to be free from porn.”

‘Hooked’ at 8

Fradd, who is from southern Australia, got “hooked” on pornography at the age of 8 when he found some in his grandfather’s shed. By age 12, he was stealing porn from neighborhood stores, and in his teen years, he had acquired a vast collection.

“No one had to tell me it was a bad thing,” he said. “I knew it was shameful. I was hoping I’d grow out of it.”

Fradd’s teen years were troubled; he recalls how he dressed all in black and wrote suicide poems. His father discovered his porn collection but only expressed mild disapproval.

In 2000, Fradd spent two weeks in Rome for World Youth Day and was inspired to become Catholic. Going to confession, he admitted his addiction to pornography. He said he received mixed responses from the priests to whom he confessed. Some suggested it wasn’t that serious, but he recalls one who told him “that’s a terrible preparation for marriage.”



"That's what I needed to hear," Fradd reflected. "I didn't want to justify my porn addiction, but admit that it was wrong. I don't even like to use the word 'addiction,' as it suggests that my use of it is somehow not my fault."

In fact, Fradd continued, the first thing someone who wants to get away from pornography must do is admit that it is wrong, stop blaming others and make a commitment to change.

For Fradd, the struggle to be porn-free has been "brutal." He related, "Every day I wake up and decide what kind of man I want to be. Purity is not a destination one arrives at; you don't wake up one day and say, 'I'm pure.' It's a daily battle."

Once the porn user has made the choice for chastity, he must next get rid of all pornographic material in his life, Fradd advises. This includes the installation of Internet pornography filters on one's computer, some of which can be downloaded for free. (He recommends X3Watch.com.) Having accountability partners — such as a spouse or friend undergoing a similar struggle — is also important. Fradd makes a point of telling his wife, Cameron, when he is tempted and seeks her support.

Prayer and fasting also play a key role. "Self-denial, such as fasting, leads to self-mastery," Fradd said.

7,000 Daily Visitors

ThePornEffect.com is currently receiving up to 7,000 visitors daily. It features articles by well-known Catholic speakers who address the topic of chastity. Prominent chastity speaker and Catholic Answers apologist Jason Evert, for example, is a contributor.

"Matt Fradd's website is top-notch," Evert remarked. "Not only does he expose the true harm of porn, but he offers pastoral and uplifting advice for those who find themselves trapped by its allure. If you know anyone, male or female, married or single, who struggles with this vice, encourage them to spend some time at the site."

Beth Meier of Kansas City, Kan., is also a featured contributor. Beth and her husband, Sam, are consultants offering leadership to the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas' My House Initiative (LovesFaithful.com), a prototype diocesan program that helps individuals become smut-free. Sam's addiction to pornography almost led the couple to divorce in 2004. He sought help and has overcome his addiction, and, like Fradd, has devoted his career to helping others who struggled as he once did.

As Sam observed, "Matt has done a great job confronting the lies of pornography and offering hope through the beauty of the Church's vision of love and human sexuality. Its emotional articles, inspiring talks and humorous videos are powerful resources for spreading the message of Christ's love and healing to our sex-saturated culture."

Fradd said, "Our desire at The Porn Effect is to offer helpful, practical and free resources to help our viewers in their daily battle against lust. I'm excited and pleased that we've helped many people already, and by God's grace look forward to growing the ministry to reach out to many more people in the future."

Jim Graves writes from Newport Beach, California.