



# Joint Statement on Pornography

06.12.1993 | The Synagogue Council of America and The National Conference of

**The statement was developed in the course of twice-yearly meetings, begun in 1987, covering a wide range of issues of common concern.**

## **Joint Statement on Pornography**

**by The  
Synagogue  
Council of  
America  
and The  
National  
Conference of  
Catholic  
Bishops**

**December 7, 1993**

As Jewish and Roman Catholic leaders in America, we recognize the importance of the constitutionally recognized right to freedom of speech. At the same time, however, we are greatly concerned about the alarming growth of

pornography.  
Graphic public  
displays, books,  
videocassettes,  
advertising displays  
and even  
telecommunications  
frequently portray  
degrading and  
violent sexual  
behavior, which  
demeans the  
human character,  
debases the  
individual and is  
openly pornographic  
and morally  
offensive.

As Jews and  
Catholics, we teach  
that the creator  
fashioned each  
person in the Divine  
image. Any material  
that demeans the  
inherent dignity of  
women, men and  
children by  
removing sexuality  
from the context of  
meaningful  
interpersonal  
relationships denies  
the image of the  
Creator within all of  
us. In our view,  
pornography and  
the portrayal of  
sadistic violence  
debase sexuality,  
corrode human  
relationships, exploit  
individuals --  
especially women  
and young people  
-- undermine  
marriage and family  
life, foster antisocial  
behavior and  
weaken the moral  
fiber of society itself.

As religious leaders, our first responsibility is to teach -- openly and consistently -- important moral truths, including truths about sexual morality. The so-called "ethic" of immediate sexual gratification is fundamentally opposed to integral human growth and fulfillment. We must educate about the values of family life and responsible life in society. We must teach that pornography degrades those used in its production, as well as those who are desensitized or whose values are perverted through its consumption. We denounce pornography because we believe that it reduces the Creator's gift of sexuality to a level that is devoid of personal dignity, commitment and spirituality.

We call upon our fellow citizens to help stem the proliferation of pornography in our community by refusing to purchase or to view such materials. We

further call upon all members of our religious communities to foster a true respect for human sexuality among all those with whom they come in contact. We especially appeal to parents to give guidance to their children in this area. In addition, we believe it is incumbent upon teachers and religious leaders to openly address these issues.