



Joint Statement on Pornography

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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.