

Pornography and the Walking Dead

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by John Beaulieu

I have always liked zombie shows and movies – from *Night of the Living Dead* to *World War Z*, I have probably seen them all. One of my favorite TV shows is *The Walking Dead*. It tells the story of a group of people trying to survive in a world full of zombies. On the show, however, they do not refer to them as “zombies.” They refer to them as “walkers.” These poor creatures shuffle across the countryside looking for human flesh to consume.

The new season of *The Walking Dead* starts soon and as I was trying to remember where last season ended (that’s right, they are in a train car at Terminus), it dawned on me how pornography is like zombies. Zombies infect, kill, and consume their victims. So does pornography.

THE WATCHING DEAD

What is the primary effect of looking at pornography? Death. It kills our ability to love. It destroys true intimacy. How? By killing our relationship with God who is the source of all love. That is why the Church has always taught that pornography is a grave matter. The Catechism, in Paragraph 2354, teaches:

Pornography consists in removing real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of the partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties. It offends against chastity because it perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other. It does grave injury to the dignity of its participants (actors, vendors, the public), since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others. It immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world. It is a grave offense.

In zombie terms, pornography is like a creature that rises from the grave and infects, kills, and consumes its victims. Every day porn kills souls, kills relationships, kills marriages, and kills families.

EVERYONE TURNS, EVERYONE CHANGES

On *The Walking Dead*, when a walker bites someone it is only a matter of time before they “turn” – that is, turn into a zombie. Some people turn right away, some take a bit longer. The same can be said about the effects of pornography. For some, it can take over their life very quickly; for others it may take more time. But like zombies, everyone changes eventually. No one can escape the death that zombies bring if they infect your flesh and no one can escape the death that porn brings when it infects your mind and soul.

The passage from the Catechism I shared above talks about how all who are involved in porn are immersed in the *illusion of fantasy world*. I believe that one of the greatest illusions with porn is the idea that it does not hurt anyone or that it is no big deal. Nothing could be further from the truth.

EVERYONE IS FOOD

When someone becomes a zombie, other people become food to satisfy their unnatural hunger. Zombies do not see people as people, they see people as you and I would view a pizza. Porn has the same effect on the human mind. On a purely chemical level, porn changes the human brain. It also changes us on a spiritual level. It distorts our minds and hearts.

Like zombies, we no longer see people as people. Like zombies, we see other people as food to satisfy our lust. This is called objectification. We do not consume them with our mouths but with our eyes. This infection of our minds does not end when we turn off our computers or smart phones. It spreads and infects every relationship we have. We will begin to objectify and devalue every person we are called to love. If you are looking at porn and not feeling anything but lust, I’ve got news for you: you have become a porn zombie. What quickly follows is using people for your own selfish pleasure. Saint Pope John Paul the Great taught that the opposite of love is not hate but using someone.

IS THERE HOPE?

One of the recurring themes in *The Walking Dead* is hope. Can they survive? Is there a cure? Can life go back to normal? If you are struggling or have ever struggled with porn, you know the guilt, the shame, and the loss of hope that comes with bondage to sin. While the verdict is still out on *The Walking Dead*, our story already has its answer: JESUS HAS CONQUERED ALL SIN AND DEATH! He can restore and heal anyone. But we have to do our part.

CUT IT OFF!

In Season 3 of *The Walking Dead*, a zombie bites a man named Herschel near his ankle. One of the other characters quickly chops his leg off at the knee before the infection can spread to the brain. (I know, ewww.) But it works! Herschel lives! It may seem over the top, but Jesus recommended the same course of action:

But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown

into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell (Matthew 5:28-30).

I think Jesus knew the struggles we would have with pornography. He tells us a few important things in this passage. First, if we lust after another person (including a porn actress/actor), we commit adultery in our hearts – a mortal sin that kills our soul. Second, it is so serious that it is better to lose an eye or a hand than to go to hell. Of course, Jesus was not recommending that you actually mutilate your body and neither am I. We do not have to remove parts of our body in order to separate ourselves from the infection of porn, but we must get serious. We must separate ourselves from pornography. We cannot tolerate even a little. If the computer in your bedroom causes you to sin, get rid of it. Move it into the family room. Get an Internet filter. Find a friend who can help if you feel weak. If your smart phone is your weakness, lose it. It is better to go through life without the Internet than to go to hell for all of eternity.

THE ANTI-PORN IMMUNIZATION

It is not enough to rid our lives of porn. If we are not drinking from the Living Water of the Holy Spirit, we will drink from the toilet of the world. Why? Because we will be thirsty. If we do not drink from the fountain of salvation and fill our lives with the true love and grace of Jesus, we will try to quench that thirst with a counterfeit like porn – even though it will destroy us. **Prayer and the sacraments are the safest and truest defense against the temptation of pornography.** Go to Confession and be set free. Replace the lies of the world with the truth of Scripture and other spiritual writing. When Jesus fills your life, you will have no room for porn and you will find new strength to resist temptation.

BE BRAVE, BE STRONG

On *The Walking Dead*, the characters have many opportunities to be brave and strong. In our walk with the Lord, He will give us many opportunities to be brave and strong, as well. Just remember true strength and courage come from Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Do not trust in yourself, but trust in the Lord. He has already died for your sins. He has already paid the price. He loves you perfectly and always will. Be assured of my prayers for your holiness and happiness.

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