



Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3040 • FAX 202-541-3176

February 4, 2015

Dear Brothers,

Greetings as we approach the holy season of Lent and the annual commemoration of our Lord's Passion.

As you may be aware, a film called *Fifty Shades of Grey* is being released in theaters on February 13th, 2015. The books and film, marketed as a romantic story, are a graphic portrayal of a young woman agreeing to be abused and degraded in a sexual relationship.

Leaders in the Religious Alliance Against Pornography (RAAP) have stated, "The contrast between the message of *Fifty Shades of Grey* and God's design for self-giving and self-sacrificing love, marriage and sexual intimacy could not be greater." As you know, we as bishops have spoken with a united voice against domestic violence, and in particular, violence against women (see *When I Call for Help*, 1992, rev. 2002). We have also emphasized the need to overcome the exploitation of sex and violence in communications (see *Renewing the Mind of the Media*, 1998).

As the Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth continues its work with other committees on the development of a statement on pornography, I wanted to call your attention to the release of this film and to RAAP's statement (*enclosed*), in addition to our own resources. This is an opportunity for us to remind the faithful of the beauty of the Church's teaching on the gift of sexual intimacy in marriage, the great dignity of women, and the moral reprehensibility of all domestic violence and sexual exploitation.

A list of resources to help men and women who are struggling with pornography is available at <http://www.foryourmarriage.org/help-for-men-and-women-struggling-with-pornography-use-or-addiction/>. I also take this opportunity to alert you to an initiative by Morality in Media (soon to be called the National Center on Sexual Exploitation) in reference to the film: <http://endsexualexploitation.org/fiftyshadesgrey/>.

With gratitude and prayers for your ministries, I am

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Richard J. Malone
Bishop of Buffalo
Chairman

Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth

Encl.