



March 14, 2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

*By wisdom a house is built,
by understanding it is established;
And by knowledge its rooms are filled
with every precious and pleasing possession.*

PROVERBS 24: 3-4

Our homes are not merely buildings that provide shelter, but rather are dwellings of respite and peace. Our homes are special places where our Catholic faith is passed on from generation to generation, where love is shared, and where memories are created. As your Bishop, please know that I pray that homes throughout our Diocese of Savannah are “domestic churches” where good values are learned and lived and discipleship is cherished. Every household must embrace the responsibility of determining the atmosphere for their home so that it is truly a place pleasing to God.

Modern technology has given us easy and affordable access to information and images, and has helped us to stay connected with one another, especially during this time of pandemic. Unfortunately, the internet and smart phones have also allowed access to information and images, specifically pornography, that are harmful to our relationships and to our souls. The introduction of pornography into a home is a dark reality that leads to brokenness of relationships, disrespect for the human body and even addiction. Statistics show that by age eleven many children have already viewed pornography online. The earlier a child is exposed to it, the deeper the wounds caused, and the more difficult it is to be freed from it. The statistics on adult usage of pornography are even more alarming. The moment to set good boundaries for internet usage is now.

Today throughout our Diocese, we are observing ***Safe Haven Sunday***. In each of our parishes, materials are available to help you make your home a ***Safe Haven*** for you and your family. I encourage you to prayerfully read the booklet entitled *Equipped*, which offers concrete assistance in setting good boundaries for technology and internet usage. Whether you are a household of one or of many, I ask you to take the booklet and prayer card and join with me and with the faithful across our Diocese in ensuring that our homes are sacred places where holiness, chastity, and purity are desired and valued.

Thank you for making your home a “domestic church” and a ***Safe Haven***. Be assured of my prayers for you and your loved ones during this season of Lent and always. In a special way, I pray for those who are in need of help and healing from addiction. May you be courageous in setting good and healthy boundaries for your household and for your family. As we journey together this Lent and into the future, we will meet in our prayers and *Rejoice in the Lord always*.

In Christ,

+ *Stephen D. Parkes*

Most Rev. Stephen D. Parkes, DD
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