

Can society survive pornography's effects?

Continued from page 1

The pastor's beliefs reflect those of AFA's president, the Rev. Donald E. Wildmon, a Methodist minister who gained nationwide prominence by spearheading a campaign against the 1988 movie *The Last Temptation of Christ*.

In an October statement announcing an AFA boycott of K mart stores, Wildmon claimed "there is no doubt that pornography plays a major role in sexual harassment and sex crimes." AFA hopes to persuade one million U.S. households to refrain from buying at the chain until K mart stops carrying "pornographic magazines."

An official with the K mart chain in Rochester said K mart stores do not sell pornographic materials. The official, who asked that his name not be used, explained that K mart is the parent company of Waldenbooks. The subsidiary bookstore chain sells *Penthouse* and *Playboy* magazines, he said, noting that the AFA boycott is actually aimed at Waldenbooks.

Earlier this year, NOW also began a boycott of the publishing company Knopf-Random House, and for reasons similar to those that inspired AFA's campaign against K mart.

Knopf-Random House published Bret Ellis' novel *American Psycho*, a "comedy" that graphically describes the mutilation and murder of several women.

A few years ago, NOW began championing legislation that would compel publishers of violent pornography to compen-

sate crime victims when it can be proven that the pornographic materials contributed to "causing" the crime.

But does hard-core and violent porn actually "cause" crime?

According to a number of sources, women, children and even men have been molested, raped, kidnapped and killed in the production of certain types of outlaw porn.

Listing some of the reported detrimental effects of violent pornography, for example, RAAP noted that in 1989 two Virginia men were arrested for conspiracy to buy or kidnap an adolescent boy for the purpose of making a "snuff" film — one in which the "star" is killed.

And reports from federal, state and city police agencies often note that most sex offenders were exposed to hard-core pornography at an early age.

But no study has conclusively proven that using pornography "causes" the user to commit sex crimes.

Nonetheless, anti-pornographers cite dozens of studies showing that pornography can coarsen the moral attitudes of those who use it and inspire some of them to commit sex crimes.

When young men watch films depicting rapes of women, for example, "then (rape) becomes part of the turn-on to young men," said psychologist Robert Brannon, director of the Center for Sex Research at Brooklyn College. Brannon also serves as co-chair for New York NOW's Task Force on Pornography.

Brannon noted that evidence gathered in his research and that of other scholars indicates a "monkey-see, monkey-do" attitude overtakes the minds of pornography's chronic consumers.

"The pattern strongly suggests that (hard-core porn) makes men be more violent in sex," Brannon told the *Catholic Courier* in a phone interview from his Brooklyn office.

He also cited studies showing that both men and women might be morally coarsened even by viewing soft-core pornography.

In one such study, researchers at the University of Indiana showed a non-violent "soft-core" film to men and women, and then asked them what punishment a rapist should receive for his crime. The men and the women who had watched the movie suggested lighter punishments for the rapist than did male and female members of a control group that had not seen the film.

On the other hand, skeptics and critics of the anti-pornography movement argue that instead of encouraging sex crimes and the degradation of women, pornography simply reflects women's status in society as well as the perverse fantasy worlds of those who use the material.

"In fact, the linkage between sex and status in society long predated the mass production of pornography in our time," Gordon Hawkins and Franklin E. Zimring stated in their 1988 book, *Pornography in a Free Society*.

The authors, both law professors from the University of California at Berkeley,

carefully dissected arguments against the unregulated distribution of pornography. Their book points out several inconsistencies in feminist, moral and civil arguments against the distribution of hard-core porn.

The professors argued that instead of criticizing pornography for promoting sexism, society must change its attitudes toward women.

"A sexist society produces a pornography — and not only pornography — that reflects the relative position of men and women in that society," the writers commented.

But for many Catholics, it is simply splitting hairs to argue about the harm that may or may not be caused by pornographers. Although the church would not necessarily frown on nudity in art, it does condemn the abuse of sexuality that pervades pornography, noted Marvin Mich, associate professor of Christian ethics at St. Bernard's Institute in Rochester.

Mich pointed out that nearly all pornography stresses the momentary physical nature of sex while ignoring the eternal, spiritual and emotional aspects of conjugal union.

"It's a self-centered pleasure, rather than a pleasure in an interpersonal interaction," he remarked.

Worse yet, Mich stated, even those who use the most benign pornography overlook one fact: By using the materials, they become participants in violating the dignity of the real, live people they see portrayed in a magazine, film or video.

"(Pornography) is an exploitation of the person you're viewing," he concluded.



FREE

CHIMNEY INSPECTION

With any furnace cleaning or service.

PROTECT YOURSELF
AGAINST CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

"Carbon monoxide, even in small amounts, can cause severe illness or death. This gas is tasteless, colorless & odorless and can be present when a fuel is burned—whether the fuel is propane, natural gas, oil, or wood. When your furnace is properly cleaned and adjusted, there should be no carbon monoxide present."

Source: Rochester Gas & Electric

Brandt Heating will inspect your chimney, furnace, flue pipe and draft diverter for internal corrosion, soundness, clearance of obstruction and combustibles, and proper venting.

---SALE--- ---SALE--- ---SALE---

FURNACE CLEANING

\$29.95

Reg. \$44.95

Includes:
Clean heat exchanger, clean all burners, clean pilot assembly and adjust flame, oil motor, check and adjust all controls, check and adjust thermostat, check belts & filters, clean smoke pipe. Gas furnaces only.

SAVE \$15.00!

---SALE--- ---SALE--- ---SALE---



24 Hours
Emergency Service

Senior Citizen
Discount

288-4270

946 Atlantic Avenue

Protest

Continued from page 3

versed by legislation, and I'll re-examine my actions."

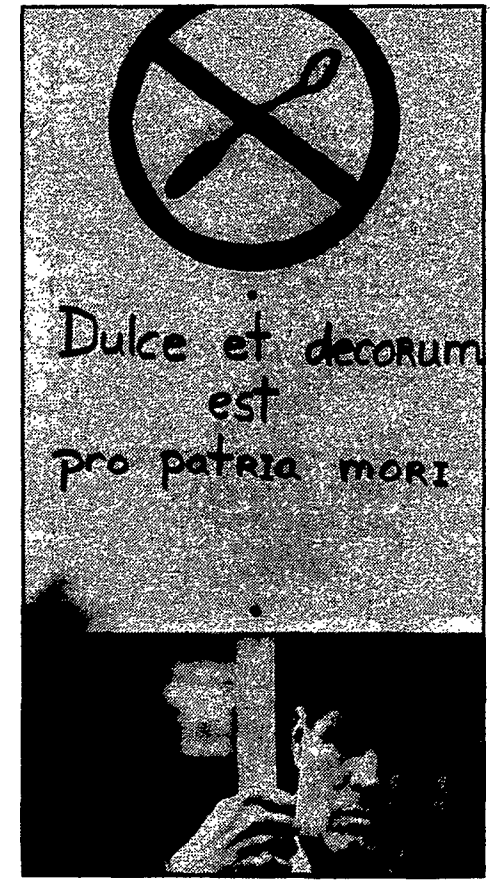
On the other hand, Rachel Studer, head of the Greater Rochester Catholics for a Choice, objected to the anti-abortion protest. "While Catholics may be personally opposed to abortion, surveys tell us that the large majority do not want it made illegal," she said.

Studer said she was certain that most Catholics are turned off by the actions of the rescue movement, "and are leery of any attempts to stop women from entering medical offices."

But Cavanaugh-O'Keefe observed that abortion helps to train people's minds to accept violence against the vulnerable, the weak and the neglected.

As an example, he cited the recent war against Iraq. He said that war killed tens of thousands of Iraqis — mostly women and children.

"When violence begins on a large scale, it's always the women and children that get it first, whether it is war or abortion," Cavanaugh-O'Keefe concluded.



Jeremiah Hickey III was among the 35 participants.

Scholar

Continued from page 3

In one case, he said, a woman is called "Leta the priest." The inscription says that Leta the priest died, and was buried by her husband.

Otranto also cited a ninth century letter by Bishop Atto. In that letter, the bishop wrote — in response to a question from a correspondent — that women did preside at church services in the early church. The bishop explained that the practice was eventually prohibited.

The practice of ordaining women as priests was not widespread, Otranto emphasized. And it was consistently opposed by popes and most of the church hierarchy.

Nevertheless, Otranto said, the evidence shows that a few women priests did exist.

In gathering this evidence, Otranto said, he was not espousing the cause of ordaining women. He added, however, "We need a temperate approach (to the question), keeping in mind developments both in society and in the church."

Father Sebastian Falcone, president of St. Bernard's Institute and one of Otranto's translators during his Rochester visit, noted that the evidence bears examination.

"The evidence that Professor Otranto presents is clear and wide ranging," Father Falcone remarked. "It needs to be taken seriously and must be validated in its own setting of historical investigation."

"As often happens," Father Falcone continued, "a community that is not always sensitive to history will need to be open to this evidence before the issue (of ordaining women) will be resolved."

C
115
Roc
716
Pres
B
Ger
B
Edit
K
Edit
Mar
Ri
Sta
Le
Fi
R
M
Pho
B
Pho
PI
B
Busi
Offi
M
Circ
Je
Adv
B
Adv
K
Rec
A
Pro
Gra
L
Gra
M
Lett
Th
prov
thro
pres
issue
origi
sues
All
ever
inso
bala
pres
of r
chur
for
read
sens
ing
whe
with
write
W
lette
Cou
Roch
Plea
well
com
tion
Thurs