

Feb. 27-28, 2016

Thoughts from the pastor,

I and several priests from the Omaha have been working with *Nebraska for Founder's Values*, [www.nffv.net](http://www.nffv.net) for the past couple years on different issues that have come up. Most recently we have been working with the issue of the comprehensive sex education program that the Omaha Public Schools has been setting up. On the surface this CSE program seems okay to many parents. It is not. There is way more to this than simply warning our children about the dangers of unprotected sexual contact. This program opens our children to all the notions of sexuality that our culture has been promoting the last few years.

As I have mentioned before, this is no longer just the world as portrayed in our sit-com TV shows, but a look at what is happening in those shows may give an idea of what a danger this carries for our children. Decades ago there were shows like Cheers or Three's Company in which the immoral behavior that people laughed about was the promiscuity that the Bible would label as adultery and fornication. The result of these wonderful shows and other cultural pressures is that these two sinful concepts are now common place in our world. Most of our young people look at you as if you are crazy when you mention that being sexually active before marriage is sinful.

The next decade of sit-coms could be represented by the show called Will & Grace. In these humorous settings we were indoctrinated into another kind of immoral behavior, same-sex hook-ups. Now we have a whole new set of sit-coms like Modern Family which blend all of this together and opens the door to new possibilities of gender humor. All of these shows and the culture around them made it seem that all of these sexual experiences were just light-hearted fun. Occasionally there would be a tear shed as a person's love interest broke off the relationship, but within a few minutes it was all laughter and fun again. As a priest I know that these sins don't heal that easily. Priests and counselors are constantly trying to help people heal from the wounds of sexual experience from these sinful categories. It doesn't happen in a half hour. It is often a lifetime of confusion and hurt.

The good news was that parents could turn to other shows or simply go without TV. The issue with this CSE is that all of this will be taught to our young people without much of a chance for you to observe what they are learning and have the opportunity for it to be screened. It has been hard enough to help Catholics and other Christians to understand that TV is not the real world, but having the authority figures in our school setting put this information in the children's minds is another matter. What makes it worse is that being public schools, with our current understanding of church and state, they cannot give any values clarification as they teach. At best they can simply say, if you have any questions be sure to ask an authority figure like a parent, priest or guardian about these issues. What do you think the odds of this happening are when the authority figure that is representing the school doesn't seem to have any problem with these behaviors?

The other problem with all of this has to do with the age in which these children will be dealing with these issues. Every child develops physically, emotionally, and spiritually at different speeds. That is why the church has always felt that it is important for parents to be in charge of this because they are better equipped to gauge when the child is ready. Because this CSE program is being slated for this fall the group I have been working with has been trying to put together an opt-out format that will work for parents. We are trying to work with the Archdiocese to put this and other ideas together. Even though it is not ready I want to keep you informed because this is extremely serious. Stay tuned.

God bless you,  
Fr. Frank