



CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST THE KING

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Father Andrew's Summer Challenge!

Part II - What's the point?

Oh, have I received comments in the last week! And I have gotten "the look" from a number of people, ranging from sheepish grin to skin scorching stare!

Many people have started talking about my challenge, which is ultimately what I hope for from this annual event. The fact is, I want us to THINK about what we watch and when we watch it. Do we stop and choose to view a show, or are we so programmed that we automatically turn on the tube whenever we feel like it?

It is the unthinking, automatic, unfiltered approach that concerns me. Just because something is on doesn't mean that we have to view it. Consider the following:

- Do I turn on the TV for comfort or background noise?
- Do I watch TV because I can't think of anything else relaxing to do?
- Do I watch TV programming that I'm not interested in, only because I'm bored?
- Do I watch TV late into the night, losing sleep and gaining nothing in return?
- Does the content of my TV viewing conflict with my morality, integrity, and beliefs?
- Is TV keeping me from a relationship with: spouse, kids, family, friends, faith, or life?
- Am I constantly checking social media?
- Do I text spontaneously? Can I live without my phone for longer than one hour?
- Do I surf the web mindlessly? Do I find myself online even when it is not necessary?
- Am I using the web as a tool or an escape? Have I lost the ability to entertain myself?

Now, if you are looking for an excellent source for information about television and movies there is hope!

Common Sense Media

<https://www.common sense media.org/>

Parents Television and Media Council

<https://www.parentstv.org/>

US Conference of Catholic Bishops
(Catholic News Service)

<https://www.catholicnews.com/movie-reviews/>

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Next week I will offer some ideas for life apart from television. Now, for those who missed last week, here's the challenge:

1. Cold Turkey. That's right! Dump the screens and fill your life with 1001 activities that are good for your mind and your body. Unplug the set(s), stop the video games, and shut down the internet wherever possible. Take back your life and CHOOSE for yourself what kind and type of entertainment and recreation is good for you. And if you need "screen time," rent a movie (or check one out at the library), but only when YOU CHOOSE what and when you watch. If you can't handle this.....

2. Cut the time. The average American now watches 38+ hours of television a week (that's 5 hours and 31 minutes a day). Decide for yourselves what you choose to watch and set a goal for each person in the house to watch no more than 10 hours a week (about 1 ½ hours a day). If this is still too much for your electronic addiction then.....

3. Have a household discussion. Sit down and discuss what you are watching and come up with a plan. How much TV is too much? What kind of programming is being viewed? How much “surfing” on the web is really useful? What are some alternatives to the mind-numbing effects of the tube? Set limits for yourself.

Talk about the challenge and decide if you would be willing to follow through for 3 months. Some people think that I am crazy to even suggest this, but do we really want our lives completely wrapped around a screen? Do we really want to open our minds and hearts to programming, images, and ideas that are contrary to the Gospel?

This can be an incredible opportunity for all of us to rediscover the beauty and power of summer. In the coming weeks I will suggest different activities and ideas.

Another thought for concern: TV & Violence

In a position paper citing research statistics, the American Academy of Family Physicians sites the following:

- The average American youth will witness 200,000 violent acts on television before the age of 18
- Cartoons are now available on demand and frequently have between 20-25 violent acts an hour, about five times the average prime-time program
- 46% of all violence on TV now comes from cartoons
- 91% of all movies on TV contain violence

Taken from: Violence in the Media and Entertainment (Position Paper)

<https://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/violence-media-entertainment.html>

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