



ANGUISH FOR MY FATHER

After I discovered he'd been looking at pornography, my feelings about my father were in turmoil.

Name withheld

My father is a good man. But when you're 12 and you find pornography hidden in a remote file folder on your father's computer, your emotions get sliced open. I felt like it would be difficult to see him in the same way again.

Two years later, when I was 14, I was looking through the computer's history files and again stumbled upon a few websites he had viewed and was forced to admit that maybe my father had a problem. I knew I had to talk to my mother.

She and I were driving together in the car when I blurted it out.

To my astonishment, she was not surprised.

She sighed. "Your father's been struggling with this for a while now," she said. "He'd told me he'd stopped, but I guess not."

When we got home, I watched as she typed a letter

to my father explaining what I had told her. After that, I tried to put it out of my mind again.

My father and I argued bitterly during my early teen years. I didn't trust him, I didn't like him, I didn't respect him. I mistakenly thought, "Nobody else's dad looks at pictures like that. He must be a bad person."

It escalated when I was 15. Sometimes I would come into the room and glance at his computer screen and see that a pornography site was minimized to the task bar. He would pretend to have been playing a game of solitaire. I watched as my father didn't take the sacrament, and I listened as my mother explained how my father had finally been convinced to go to the bishop. I felt burdened by humiliation.

What I didn't realize at first, of course, was that these were incredibly wonderful steps on the path to full repentance. I later stumbled once or twice upon



my father deep in fervent, aching prayer. This image is burned into my brain just as deeply as that file I'd found when I was 12.

At 16, the problem had not gone away. Once, I was doing homework late at night and overheard my mother sobbing and shouting at my father.

I crept back to my room, knowing from my father's silence that he was suffering. I felt his remorse radiate through the house, as well as his sense of helplessness.

My brother and sister knew nothing about it, and I wanted it to stay that way. The only thing they knew was that sometimes, especially when Mommy wasn't home, Daddy would come out of his room in an awful mood.

My father was trying. The bishop sent him to a support group for men with problems like his. I had learned to respect him again, learned how, on the good weeks when we read scriptures as a family every morning and

he whistled hymns, to like and even love him again. I saw that there was much more to him than simply this ugly problem. I learned to let him ask me about school without turning it into an argument. I learned to pray for him.

Good men can do wrong things. My father gives a generous fast offering, he's always willing to lend a helping hand, he serves in his Church calling readily, he never swears or speaks vulgarly, but most of all he wants to be better. He knows that what he's done is wrong, and he is hopeful that he will change.

To anyone else in my situation: Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and He will carry you through. He will carry you through not only if you're the one who struggles under the burden of sin, but also if you are the one who stands by, watching as the one you love fights for salvation. **NE**