

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR HEALTH PASTORAL CARE

CHURCH: DRUGS AND DRUG ADDICTION

PREFACE

After a long work of preparation, we are now able to present this Pastoral Handbook on "Church: Drugs and Drug Addiction".. Early in 1997, the Holy Father, through the Secretary of State of the Holy See, entrusted the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care with the duty of following up on the terrible problem of drug abuse in the world. Since then, we have organised a series of study sessions, meetings, International Conferences, and set up special work groups, in order to accomplish the mandate received from the Pope. Among our concerns there emerged a need to prepare a Handbook on Health Pastoral Care, in the specific area of the world of drugs.

Often, questions are asked on what to think and do in the pastoral area with regard to the problem of drugs. Many bishops, priests, men and women religious, and anguished parents ask themselves: what can we do as Christians, faced with the drug problem? With this manual, we do not pretend to offer a definitive answer but to give some suggestions that could be of help in pastoral work. We know that there are many methods, and that there are many experiences of people who are totally and heroically dedicated to this pastoral work. We respect this plurality -at times not very harmonious - of ways that are applied to prevent and treat drug addiction: we do not intend to propose a new method, but to offer a simple practical guide, to questions that we consider important for pastoral action, and which perhaps will also be of use to those who through much dedication and care work in this field.

We offer this Handbook particularly to the bishops, in whose dioceses this problem is present, and this is a problem they cannot overlook among youth, children, and even adults. This work is for the priests and other pastoral workers, who together with the bishop carry on the work of making the Kingdom of God always present in the world. We have in mind also the parents of addicted children who do not know how to help them; then the families to which we strongly address ourselves.

Politicians are very important in the fight against this scourge. Any results attained in stopping the problem depend very much on their attitude. To them also we offer our Handbook, which perhaps will help them in realising the difficult

and delicate mission to which they are dedicated, in order to save and treat the many people who suffer from this terrible evil.

In a particular way we look to the world of health, particularly to health professionals. This handbook is not a specialised treatise of the problem, nevertheless, we offer here values and guidelines that will facilitate their preventive and curative mission.

The Handbook takes into consideration youth; we would wish that they use it as an appropriate instrument both to prevent this evil and to quit drug addiction. Schoolteachers at all levels, especially those in the primary schools, can offer to their students adequate information and education on this problem. To them, as well as to all those interested in this serious problem of our time, we dedicate our Handbook.

As we said before, the Handbook opens with the words of the Holy Father John Paul II. The chapters that follow thereafter are a kind of commentary on His words.

The Pope speaks of three particular actions for a pastoral programme capable of dealing with the problem of drugs: prevention, care and suppression. The Handbook takes into consideration the first two: prevention and care. It does not treat suppression, to which the Pope makes reference stressing that we all have to fight against the production, processing and distribution of drugs in the world and that it is a special duty of governments to face with courage this fight against the "traffickers of death." This point will not be developed in the Handbook; however, in unison with the words of the Pope we invite all to fight strenuously against drugs.

We know very well that if there is no demand there is no supply. Prevention, as well as education to the meaning of values which make life worth living, and the deep sense of life, love and sex, will certainly lead to the reduction of this demand and as a consequence the supply of drugs will also diminish. We can no longer speak of producer countries on the one hand and consumers on the other. Nobody is a stranger to this evil wave that embraces everyone. All nations produce and all consume, especially now with the availability of synthetic drugs. We are all involved and drug barons are very powerful and are causing more damage in the rich countries than in the poorer ones. We all have to be seriously involved in the fight against this fatal evil.

We thank all those, who with a lot of dedication have helped us in the writing of this Handbook. Special thanks go to the Rev. Father Tony Anatrella and his collaborators who worked a lot on the drafting of this Handbook, in order to offer to all this pastoral aid.

We would like to place our Handbook under the special protection of our Lady, Health of the Sick (Salus Infirmorum). May the Blessed Virgin entrust to her Son Jesus, all who suffer because of this terrible evil, so that in Him all may find the profound values that can fill the emptiness of the life of many people in today's society; may the Lord Jesus through his death and resurrection, which is the only valid basis for accepting to live or to die, give us all an authentic meaning to life.

Vatican City, 1 November, 2001.

His Excellency Msg. JAVIER LOZANO BARRAGÁN
President of the Pontifical Council
for Health Pastoral Care

Contents

Preface.....	5
Introduction.....	7
Chapter I: The teaching of John Paul II on the phenomenon of drugs and drug addiction.....	14
1. The phenomenon of drugs today.....	14
2. The causes of the drug phenomenon.....	17
3. Moral judgement.....	20
3.1. The human being does not have right to harm him/herself.....	20
3.2. No to the liberalisation of drugs.....	22
4. Suggested Remedies.....	25
4.1. Prevention.....	26
4.2. Suppression.....	28
4.3. Rehabilitation.....	29
5. The Church in front of drug addicts.....	31
Chapter II: Drug Addiction is a symptom of dependency.....	36

1.	The products.....	38
1.1.	The action of drugs on the brain.....	38
1.2.	Glue and solvents.....	39
1.3.	Cannabis.....	40
1.4.	Cocaine.....	43
1.5.	Ecstasy.....	45
1.6.	Heroin.....	49
2.	The unbridled search for pleasure hides the difficulties of living.....	52
2.1.	From the first consumption of drugs to the state of dependency.....	52
2.2.	The effects of cannabis.....	57
2.3.	The search for pleasure.....	60
2.3.1.	Pleasure in a psychological sense.....	61
2.3.2.	The finality of pleasure.....	62
3.	The claim for drugs.....	64
3.1.	The freedom to take drugs.....	64
3.2.	The use of drugs and the sense of law.....	65
4.	A society that promotes drugs.....	68
4.1.	The risk of legalising drugs.....	68
4.2.	Social and economic consequences.....	72
4.3.	The media's role in the face of drug addicts.....	74
4.4.	Human life cannot be reduced to chemistry.....	75
Chapter	III: Becoming free.....	78
1.	The dignity and integrity of the human person.....	88
2.	Treat and stimulate a sense of responsibility.....	84
2.1.	Therapeutic practices in harmony with the dignity of the person.....	84
2.2.	Stimulating the sense of responsibility.....	86
3.	Freeing oneself from deadly behaviour.....	89
4.	Moral law at the service of life.....	93
4.1.	Knowing how to say "no" in order to become free.....	93
4.2.	The prohibition against harming oneself and others.....	94
4.3.	The civil law obscures the moral law.....	96
4.4.	The issue at stake is also spiritual.....	98
5.	The Confusion between pleasure and happiness.....	100

5.1. The different interpretations of the of the sense of happiness.....	101
5.2. Spiritual meaning of pleasure and happiness.....	102
5.3. Confusion between strong feelings and happiness.....	105
5.4. The escape form limits and suffering.....	106
5.5. Exalting pleasure in order to eliminate better the desires.....	106
5.6. Desiring: always means being able to wait.....	107
5.7. Individualistic happiness.....	108
5.8. God wants the happiness of man.....	109
5.9. The sense of the good is inscribed in the heart of man.....	110

Chapter IV: Education and prevention..... 114

1. Learning to face life and its difficulties.....	115
2. Education to the sense of pleasure and the presence of adults.....	117
3. Prevention does not replace education.....	119
4. Education is above all an attitude.....	120
5. Young people need to be educated.....	122
6. Liberating ourselves from educational passivity.....	123
7. Attitudes to develop.....	124
7.1. Learning self-control.....	124
7.2. Recognising and identifying the limits.....	124
7.3. The areas for pedagogical support: will, reason, freedom, responsibility.....	124
7.4. Developing the virtue of temperance.....	125
8. Promote a global education to fight drugs.....	126
9. Mission of the Church.....	129
10. Education and pedagogical provisions.....	132
10.1. Criteria for pastoral action.....	132
10.2. Educational meeting places to be developed.....	134
11. Organisation of orientation programmes and pastoral structures.....	135

Chapter V: Pastoral attitudes for the liberation of the person.....	140
1. Behaviour of the drug addict.....	140
2. Accepting pastoral work among drug addicts.....	141
3. A pastoral project: towards a responsible self-acceptance.....	142
4. The role of the family.....	143
5. The role of catechesis.....	145
6. The role of the Catholic school.....	147
7. The role of Volunteers.....	149
8. Spiritual assistance and drug addiction.....	150
8.1. Principles for spiritual action and guidance.....	150
8.1.1. Acceptance and understanding.....	151
8.1.2. Listening.....	152
8.1.3. Education to the sense of time.....	153
8.1.4. Meditating on the word of God.....	154
8.1.5. Stimulation to the sense of prayer and sacramental life.....	156
8.1.6. Transmitting hope.....	157
8.2. The spirituality of the Emmaus pilgrims.....	158
8.2.1. Jesus reveals another way of living.....	159
8.2.2. Jesus walks with the disorientated.....	159
8.2.3. Jesus liberates from sin.....	159
8.2.4. Jesus interprets the events.....	159
8.2.5. Jesus restores dignity to those wounded in life.....	160
8.3. Christ the source of life.....	161
Conclusion.....	162
Appendixes: Documents to help understanding and action at the pastoral level.....	167
1. Products.....	167
1.1. Effects of inhalants.....	167
1.2. The effects of cannabis.....	167
1.3. The effects of L.S.D. 25.....	168
1.4. The effects of ecstasy.....	168
1.5. The effects of heroin.....	168

1.6. The effects of cocaine.....	169
1.7. The effects of crack.....	169
Glossary.....	170
2. How can one intervene?.....	173
2.1. How can one recognise youth in difficulty?.....	173
2.2. Why do youth take drugs?.....	173
2.3. How can one talk to youth about the risks of drugs, tobacco and alcohol?.....	174
2.4. What can one tell parents when they discover that their child takes drugs?.....	174
3. Pastoral approaches	
3.1. The existential risks of a drug addict.....	176
3.2. Organising pastoral assistance.....	178
3.3. Teach and live the change together with the drug addict.....	179
3.3.1 The meetings.....	179
3.3.2. Within a community context or a group of affiliation.....	179
3.4 To help families.....	183

Order contact:

Libreria Editrice Vaticana
Città del Vaticano

E-Mail: lev@publish.va