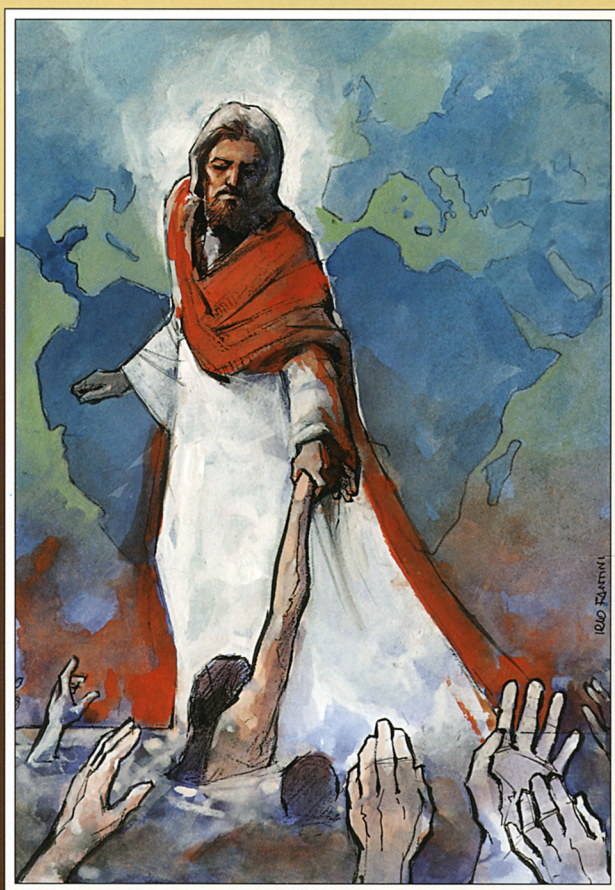


**PONTIFICAL COUNCIL
FOR HEALTH PASTORAL CARE**

Church: drugs and drug addiction

**Pastoral
Handbook**



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PONTIFICAL COUNCIL
FOR HEALTH PASTORAL CARE

CHURCH:
DRUGS AND DRUG ADDICTION
PASTORAL HANDBOOK



LIBRERIA EDITRICE VATICANA
00120 CITTÀ DEL VATICANO

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Tel. (06) 698.85003 - Fax (06) 698.84716

ISBN 88-209-7341-3

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. School-teachers 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

INTRODUCTION

1. Drugs and drug addiction are phenomena that are invading all societies in the world and do affect youth in a particular way, whatever be the environment to which they belong. The enhancement of more varied drugs and their use has never been so prominent and even deliberately sustained. The substances are made to appear as if they are a supplement to “freedom”, a source of well-being and life in common. Yet, whatever be the ways of using them and the expectations placed in them, the outstanding question is: “Why does one take drugs?”.

*Drug addiction
invades the world*

2. The reasons that lead to taking drugs are manifold, but we hold that it is above all the attitude of the person that makes an addict, and not the substance. Education and prevention will therefore be concerned about taking action on what gives rise to this behaviour, and not just pay attention to the substances, even though it is still useful to offer abundant information about drugs.

3. The growing use of psycho-active substances, that is substances with stimulating or inhibiting effects on the brain, the diffusion of some of these products and the continuous appearance on the market of new substances, arouses an expectation of “well-being” that most of the time turns day after day into suffering and peril. We must sympathise with all those who believe they cannot live without drugs, because they are instead destroying themselves, even to the point of death; they destroy their relationships, they destroy the milieu around them, and seriously compromise their future. Will society allow this to continue, something which is certainly not a sign of health and confidence in life? In effect, drugs testify to a kind of contempt for life and represent a personal attempt, which is certainly imaginary, of extricating oneself from reality and from the circumstances of human life.

*Solidarity with drug
addicts*

4. If some adults have been long-term consumers of psychotropic plants, this practice is not a mass phenomenon.

Nor is it right to conclude that “a society without drugs does not exist”, accepting that all societies are part of the drug culture. So the appropriate response is to simply put in place a system in which a minimum consumption is acceptable. Today the use of drugs is no longer limited to adults or to some particular individuals; in the contemporary world and for about forty years now, the problem has spread to all sectors, especially adolescents. A society concerned about the well-being of its children and peace between the generations, cannot accept that it has to learn to live with drugs, which are a source of ruin and death, and not life.

*Drug-use and self-
destruction*

5. We now know a great deal more about the fatal effects of drugs on the psychic balance, on family life, on the personal and social life of adults and youth. They cause various handicaps for many people who seek “a supplement to life” offered by the psycho-stimulants. They lead in fact, to results that are contrary to what was expected, because the consumption of the substances can give rise to negative behaviour, which interferes with the relationships, and which seriously reduces the freedom of a person, sometimes to the extent of cancelling it completely. They also dim the mind of those who cannot liberate themselves from their consumption, and motivate demands on doctors for prescriptions of drugs that can alleviate difficulties in living, reduce their suffering, and inner anxieties. This blindness is greater when it leads to political pressure for the liberalisation of drugs. However, those who are more lucid among the addicts do not hesitate to launch an appeal, from the very depth of their dependence: “Tell the youth never to use these substances, to have the courage to reject them, to find adults and youths who can help them to live and resolve their problems, rather than taking recourse in drugs”.

*Socio-cultural
complexity of the
phenomenon*

6. The phenomenon of drug-use does not limit itself to private actions of taking toxic substances. It is related to socially supported systems.

7. In fact, an underground economy and an international crime ring have developed, with the aim of producing and commercialising drugs in large quantities.

8. Drugs also pose problems for public health, whose cost is very heavy to sustain, especially for countries with scarce resources. It is not feasible to encourage drug related behaviour, which causes organic pathologies, and also causes social and psychological problems that will have to be treated in the future.

9. Drugs encourage a way of behaving which borders on individualism and egocentrism, leading to withdrawal from meaningful communication with others. A society, which promotes development, based on economic criteria, service and efficacy, to the detriment of religious, spiritual and moral values, does not assist the integral development of a person. In promoting these values human behaviour is improved and the conduct of a person acquires a highly positive sense. To forget this means mistaking the symptoms for the cause.

10. What should be done then? How should the Church concern itself with the phenomena of drugs and drug addiction? The parents, and even the social agents, priests, religious and the laity are witnesses and the first protagonists trying to understand, intervene and propose to the individuals an alternative to a dependency on various drugs.

*Proposing a credible
alternative*

11. The family is one of the first places for the prevention of drug-use. However, it is not always supported and enhanced in its educative work, especially by contradictory legislations that are in effect in many countries. Youth movements within the realm of the parish also play a part in drug prevention through the promotion of a style of life that is based on the Gospel message so as to better discover God. Developing the inner life of youth, with the help of prayer, the sacraments and above all the celebration of the Eucharist, offers them a glimpse of the eternal and blessed life of Christ, thus revealing a fuller sense of human existence.

12. Preventing addiction, and treating and rehabilitating drug addicts are the most important ways of helping people

who are caught up in the relentless cycle of drug taking. But we also know that the problems are complex and that the way of handling them depends on a diversity of activities and many helpers. The Church, in dealing with the questions that present themselves in drug related situations and phenomena, exercises her role and gospel mission, with the aim of helping people to come out “of a world pressed for hope”.¹

*Pastoral action of the
Church for drug
addicts*

13. For many years now, the Church has been engaged in helping drug addicts through the pastoral action of many priests, religious and laity, within institutions or in open precincts, and in situations created to respond to people with drug-related problems. In some countries, the Church has developed programmes for the assistance and reintegration of drug addicts. It contributes by educating to true freedom and responsibility, by promoting prevention of drug-use, by assisting drug addicts and helping in their rehabilitation. The establishing of community structures, with the intention of promoting the dignity of the human person, has often led to positive results. However, in most cases the work is difficult and costly; it requires patience and needs the collaboration of many people, especially volunteers who can dedicate their time to drug-prevention and support of drug addicts. It is important here, to acknowledge the work of many professionals and volunteers, who do all they can to help drug addicts and their families.

14. The principles and values that inspire the teaching of the Church and its pastoral action in this field have been expounded many times in various ways by Pope John Paul II. Nevertheless, the decision to confront this problem in a more immediate and organic way was made by the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Health-Care Workers, after Doctor Giorgio Giacomelli, the then Executive Director of the United Nations' International Programme for Drug Control, approached the Pope, asking the Church

¹ John Paul II, *To the Participants at the International Symposium on Drugs*, 11 October 1997, in *Insegnamenti*, XX/2, 1997, p. 533, n. 3.

to help in resolving one of the most serious problems of our time, indicating in particular that drug trafficking and consumption are a “menace that could endanger the future of an entire population”. The Cardinal Secretary of State, Angelo Sodano, then entrusted the task to our Dicastery.

15. Dr. Giacomelli said in his note that “the police and the international judiciary system, alone, were not capable of defeating a phenomenon that is so wide-spread”. Hence, his approach to the Church for help, “above all in the area of prevention, so that the diffusion of strong values may keep the young generation away from drug consumption”.

16. The phenomenon of drugs constitutes without doubt a worrisome problem in the entire world and requires serious study. It is proper that this question should be treated according to the illuminating teaching of John Paul II. Within the past few years, the Holy Father has dealt with this problem, in over eighty statements.

*The Pope expresses
his worry as
universal pastor*

17. From 9 to 11 October, 1997 a Church Symposium organised by the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Health-Care Workers, was held in the Vatican on the theme “United for Life”; this meeting is a proof of the decisive and energetic commitment of the Holy See to addressing the drug problem. The Catholic Church, which is strongly involved in the sector of prevention and rehabilitation of drug addicts, considers the drug phenomenon to be of pastoral urgency on the world scale, since it concerns all countries and all social groups (rich and poor, youth and adults, elderly, men and women); a phenomenon of such breadth requires a strong and decisive response, in order to check the ethical decay that arises from it.

18. For this reason, 90 experts (delegates of Episcopal Conferences, specialists, those in charge of rehabilitation centres, and interested international organisations), from 45 countries where the problem is particularly present (because of drug production, consumption, trafficking and laundering) met in the Vatican to study the situation,

*Guidelines of the
world Congress of
1977*

exploring various aspects of the phenomenon, and learning from the different experiences in prevention and rehabilitation realised up to now by local churches.

19. At the end of the Congress, the first of its kind, in terms of its wide representation and the experience of the participants, it was possible to express various ideas and guidelines upon which there was a wide agreement.

20. The experiments carried out so far in certain countries, on liberalisation and legalisation of drugs have been disastrous. It is certainly important to state the problem correctly, for it does not only concern the substance consumed but rather the person using it.

21. The drug phenomenon is a symptom of a profound malaise affecting the culture and moral sense; it exceeds therefore, the limits of a medical question and cannot be limited to a particular sector of society.

22. The problem of drugs is at the same time a fruit and cause of high moral loss and of a growing social disintegration.

23. The phenomenon is not only the concern of rich countries. Drugs are consumed for various motives (poverty, unemployment, urbanisation, changes in customs) in many developing countries, and the problem is intensifying on four fronts: production, consumption, trafficking and laundering.

24. The contribution of the Church aims to complement the efforts of workers in a variety of fields (politicians, social and health workers, parents, educators, judges and directors of sectors of action); it presents itself as an itinerary of liberation that leads people to the discovery of their proper dignity both as human beings and as children of God, which they can then recover.

*The handbook is a
guide for pastoral
protagonists*

25. In order to put the fruits of this important congress at the service of the Church, the decision was made to compile a pastoral handbook, in which doctrinal principles

related to the question, and also important practical guidelines for a pastoral approach to drug addicts, would be included. It is this handbook that we are offering. It is in the first place addressed to the bishops, to the pastoral workers, as well as to all people who are concerned about the drug problem, with the hope of offering some help to them in this difficult and delicate field of their apostolates.

26. The first chapter of this manual presents in a synthetic way the position of Pope John Paul II on the issue of drugs, whereas the second offers practical information on the different types of drugs, and of treating the problem of drug addiction under the aspect of dependence. The third chapter offers a reflection both on the question of freedom and on the discovery of the sense of pleasure and joy, demonstrating that every person is called to build his or her life positively and to learn to love life. The fourth chapter deals with the topics of education and prevention as fundamental means of fighting drug addiction; the fifth chapter presents in a synthetic way the pastoral attitudes and the delicate ministry of a spiritual guide to the drug addicts and their families.

Scheme of the work

Chapter I

THE TEACHING OF JOHN PAUL II ON THE PHENOMENON OF DRUGS AND DRUG ADDICTION

27. This chapter offers a synthesis of the mind of John Paul II on the question of drugs. It also makes reference to some observations of the Cardinal Secretary of State, Angelo Sodano as well as the position of the Pontifical Council for the Family and that of Pastoral Assistance to Health-Care Workers.

1. The Phenomenon of drugs today

28. The Pope said that, “among the threats facing youth and our entire society today, drugs take the first place as an invisible and insidious danger, that is not yet adequately evaluated according to the amplitude of its seriousness. [...] the infection spreads like wild fire, extending its tentacles from big cities to small centres, from rich and industrialised nations to the Third World. [...] There are torrents of illegal trafficking that interlace and cover international routes to reach, through thousands of channels, the purification laboratories and from here to capillary circulation”.² Drug trade, the pope underlines, upsets nations. “The scourge of violence and terrorism, aggravated by the foul trade of drugs for which it is often the cause, puts the social equilibrium of countries at risk”.³

*Drugs put the world
equilibrium at risk*

29. Referring to drug related groups, the pope adds. “Deep sadness and abhorrence stirs up in our hearts [...] because of the crimes that people and groups commit in

² John Paul II, *To the Youth of the Therapeutic Community for Drug Addicts*, 27 May 1984, in *Insegnamenti*, VII/1 1984, pp. 1538-1539, n. 2.

³ John Paul II, *To the members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See*, 13 January 1990, in *Insegnamenti*, XIII/1, 1990, p. 79, n. 14.

order to build illegitimate sources of income through the drug trade".⁴ For the pope, therefore, drugs are a phenomenon that is closely connected with the culture of death.

30. "One cannot but observe with sorrow, that the culture of death threatens to overtake the love for life [...], death procured with violence and drugs".⁵ On the other hand, "One cannot fail to deplore the damages caused by any type of violence and drug dealing in certain societies, to the point of shaking their foundations; I think particularly of the people who have been assassinated, those taken as hostages, or the disappearance of innocent people".⁶ "We must unfortunately note that today this phenomenon is reaching all spheres and regions of the world".⁷

*Drugs and the
culture of death*

31. The pope is worried about the extension of the phenomenon. "We are now faced with a phenomenon of terrifying scope and proportions, not only because of the very high number of lives brought to an end, but also because of the worrisome spread of the moral contagion, which for some time now has been reaching the very young as well. As in the case unfortunately not uncommon, of children along with their peers being forced to become pushers, and consumers themselves".⁸

*A phenomenon that
is widespread among
the youth of every age*

32. "The tragic episodes show that this disgusting epidemic, involving a vile market, has become so widespread as to surpass national and continental boundaries [...], and its

⁴ John Paul II, *To the Cardinals and the Roman Curia for the for the Christmas Greetings*, 22 December 1989, in *Insegnamenti*, XII/2, 1989, pp. 1597-98, n. 9.

⁵ John Paul II, *To the Pontifical Athenaeum "Antoniano"*, 16 January 1982, in *Insegnamenti*, V/1, 1982, p.139, n.4.

⁶ John Paul II, *The Address to the members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, during the audience for the exchange of the New Year Greetings*, 12 January 1991, in *Insegnamenti*, XIV/1, 1991, p.82, n. 4.

⁷ John Paul II, *To the participants at the International Congress on Drugs*, 11 October 1997, in *Insegnamenti*, XX/2, pp. 531-32, n. 2

⁸ John Paul II, *To the participants at the VI International Conference on "Drugs and Alcoholism against Life"*, 23 November, in *Insegnamenti*, XIV/2, 1991, p. 1251, n. 3.

connections with delinquency and crime are such that they constitute one of the principle factors of general decadence”.⁹

33. “The drug phenomenon is a particularly serious evil. Many young people and adults have died or will die as a result, while others find themselves impaired in their innermost being and personal capacities”.¹⁰

34. In his opening address at the Church Symposium on Drugs, “United for Life”, to which we made reference in the introduction, the Cardinal Secretary of State spoke of the devastating effects of drugs today, not only on health but also on conscience and the collective mentality. Drugs are both the fruit and cause of a great ethical degeneration and a growing social disintegration, that corrupt the very fabric of morality, of interpersonal relationships, and of civilised community life. He then also revealed the physical damages concomitant with and resulting from drug abuse, ranging from hepatitis to tuberculosis and AIDS. We need not mention, he said the context of violence, sexual exploitation, arms trade, and terrorism in which this phenomenon prospers, and who does not know the family relationships that have been rendered difficult because of it? A particular burden falls on women, often forced into prostitution to sustain addicted husbands. In order to be able to reduce the profit of the traffickers it would be necessary to intercept at least 75% of the international drug traffic. Trafficking of heroin and cocaine is in its major part controlled by trans-national organisations, and managed by criminal groups that are strongly centralised, with a wide range of specialised personnel: ranging from chemists to experts in communication and money laundering, from lawyers to security guards.¹¹

⁹ John Paul II, *In an Address to the Therapeutic Communities*, 7 September 1984, in *Insegnamenti*, VII/2, 1984, p. 347, n. 4.

¹⁰ John Paul II, *To the participants at the International Congress on Drugs*, op. cit., p. 532, n. 3.

¹¹ Cf. Angelo Sodano, *The Opening Address of Cardinal Secretary of State, Angelo Sodano at the Symposium “United for Life” promoted by the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Health-Care Workers* (9 October 1997), in “*L’Osservatore Romano*”, 11 October 1997, p. 4, 1. The “Drug Scourge”; 2. “Devastating Effects”.

2. The causes of the drug phenomenon

35. The pope states: “Psychologists and sociologists say that the first cause that drives youth and adults to the harmful experience of drugs is a lack of clear and convincing motivations for life. In fact, the lack of points of reference, the vacuum of values, the conviction that nothing has sense and that life is not worth living, the tragic and distressing feeling of being unknown wayfarers in an absurd universe, can lead some to the search for a desperate and exasperated escape. [...] Experts in psychology also say that the cause of the drug phenomenon is a sense of loneliness and incommunicability that unfortunately weighs on modern society, noise and alienation even within the family. It is a sad fact, that alongside the absence of intimacy with God, and without justification, there is a seeking after drugs, beginning a journey of flight in order to forget oneself, to dazzle oneself, and to escape from oppressive and unbearable situations. A second cause, according to the experts, involves a search for “artificial paradises” into different types of drugs, so as to escape the defective social structures that do not offer satisfaction, but it is a journey of no return”.¹²

36. Elsewhere the pope adds: “Avarice for money takes possession of the hearts of many people and transforms them, by means of the drug business, into traffickers of the freedom of their brothers, who then become slaves of a slavery that is much worse than that of the black slaves. The slave drivers deprived their victims of the exercise of their freedom; the drug traffickers lead their victims to the destruction of their personality”.¹³

37. With regard to the drug business, “Widespread drug use is a sign of a serious malfunction in the social sys-

¹² John Paul II, *Homily at the Mass for ex-drug addicts* [for the Italian Committee of Solidarity for the addicted youth, directed by Don Mario Picchi], 9 August 1980, in *Insegnamenti*, III/2, 1980, pp. 347-349.

¹³ John Paul II, *Appeal before the tomb of St. Peter Claver*, 6 January 1986, in *Insegnamenti*, IX/2, 1986, p. 197.

tem; it also implies a materialistic and, in a certain sense, destructive 'reading' of human needs. In this way the innovative capacity of a free economy is brought to a one-sided and inadequate conclusion. Drugs, as well as pornography and other forms of consumerism which exploit the frailty of the weak, tend to fill the resulting spiritual void".¹⁴

*Effect: existential
void and violent
deterioration*

38. On the causes of drug abuse, the pope stresses "that at the origin there is always an atmosphere of human and religious scepticism, and of hedonism, which in the final analysis leads to frustration, to an existential void, to a conviction that life is without purpose, ending in violent negativity".¹⁵ "[...] at the root of alcohol and drug abuse – though in a complexity of causes and situations – there is usually an existential void due to the absence of values and a lack of self-confidence in others and in life in general, [...] and today we are faced with insidious social plagues which have spread throughout the world, fostered by huge economic interests, and sometimes political ones as well".¹⁶

*Drug business and
loss of hope*

39. "Drug addiction is a symptom of a problem in life, of having difficulty in finding ones place in society, with fear of the future and ending with a flight into a deceptive and fictitious life. [...] The growth in the market and of the consumption of drugs show that we are in a world devoid of almost all hope, where vigorous human and spiritual purposes are lacking. In effect, many young people think that all behaviour is the same, and do not differentiate between good and evil or acquire a sense of moral limits".¹⁷

40. For his part, the Cardinal Secretary of State underscores the fact that drug addition is related to the pre-

¹⁴ John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 1 May 1991, n.36, in *Enchiridion Vaticanum*, 1991-1993/13, EDB Bologna 1995, pp. 125-129.

¹⁵ John Paul II, *At the Italian Centre for Solidarity on the World Anti-Drug Day*, 24 May 1991, in *Insegnamenti*, XIV/1, 1991, p. 1784, n. 2.

¹⁶ John Paul II, *To the participants at the VI International Conference on "Drugs and Alcoholism against Life"*, op. cit., p. 1249, n. 2.

¹⁷ John Paul II, *To the participants at the International Congress on Drugs*, op. cit., p. 532, n. 3.

sent state of a permissive and secularised society, in which hedonism, individualism, pseudo-values, and false models prevail. It is a depersonalised and standardised society. What people seek in drugs, continues Cardinal Sodano citing Cardinal Ratzinger, is “the endless perversion of human aspiration..., the pseudo-ecstasy of a world that does not believe, but all the same cannot shake off its shoulders the tension of the soul towards paradise”.¹⁸

41. The Pontifical Council for the Family adds in turn, that the fundamental and constant motive for the use of drugs is constituted by the absence of moral values and the lack of interior harmony in an individual. At the root there is the lack of education, whereby society and the family do not transmit values. Without values, the addict suffers from “lack of love”. “It is not only the drugs in question, but also the psychological and existential human questions underlying this behaviour. Very often there is the refusal to understand such questions forgetting that, what makes drug addiction is not the toxic substance but the person who feels the need for it. [...] The recourse to drugs is a symptom of a profound “illness”. [...] Behind these phenomena there is a request for help from the individual, who remains alone with his or her life; there is the desire not only for recognition and appreciation, but also for love. [...] In effect, the problem is not in the drug, but in the sickness of the spirit that leads to drugs, as Pope John Paul II reminds us: “There is need to recognise that there is a link between the lethal sickness caused by the abuse of drugs and the sickness of the spirit that leads the person to escape from oneself and seek deceptive satisfactions in avoiding reality, to the point of cancelling completely the meaning of one's existence”.¹⁹

*The drug addict,
suffers from lack of
love*

¹⁸ Cf. Angelo Sodano, *The Opening ...*, op. cit., p.4, 4. “To the Ethical-Cultural Roots of the Phenomenon” (J. Ratzinger, *Svolta per l'Europa*, Edizioni Paoline 1992, p. 15)

¹⁹ Pontifical Council for the Family, *Liberalizzazione della droga?*, in “*Enchiridion Vaticanum*”, n.16, 1997, pp. 31-33.