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## Pope Francis: “Drug dealers and traffickers are murderers”

Drug dealers and traffickers “are murderers”, and drugs “trample on human dignity.” This was the exhortation of **Pope Francis** during his catechesis for the Wednesday general audience, dedicated this week to the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. At the end of the audience, greeting the Italian-speaking faithful, the Holy Father entrusted to Saints Peter and Paul, the patron saints of Rome, whose liturgical feast is celebrated on 29 June, “the peoples suffering from war: the martyred Ukraine, Palestine, Israel, Myanmar, that they may soon find peace.” “Drug abuse impoverishes every community where it exists. It diminishes human strength and moral fibre. It undermines esteemed values. It destroys the will to live and to contribute to a better society”, Francis said quoting from Saint John Paul II’s 1987 Message at the UN. “let us remember that each addict “has a unique personal story and must be listened to, understood, loved, and, insofar as possible, healed and purified... They continue to possess, more than ever, a dignity as children of God.” Everyone has dignity”, he added in unscripted remarks:

“We cannot ignore the evil intentions and actions of drug dealers and traffickers. They are murderers.”

Francis went on to recall Benedict XVI’s “stern words” during a visit to a therapeutic community: ““I therefore urge the drug-dealers to reflect on the grave harm they are inflicting on countless young people and on adults from every level of society: God will call you to account for your deeds. Human dignity cannot be trampled upon in this way.” “And drugs trample on human dignity”, the Pope continued in unscripted remarks.

“A reduction in drug addiction is not achieved by liberalizing drug use – this is a fantasy! – as has been proposed by some, or has already implemented, in some countries”,

Francis said. The Pope continued with a specific warning: “**you liberalize and drugs are consumed even more**”, he said. “Having known so many tragic stories of drug addicts and their families, I am convinced that it is a moral duty to end the production and trafficking of these dangerous substances”, he cautioned:

“How many traffickers of death there are - because drug traffickers are traffickers of death! – driven by the logic of power and money at any cost! And this scourge, which produces violence and sows suffering and death, demands an act of courage from our society as a whole!”.

“This scourge, which produces violence and sows suffering and death, demands **an act of courage** from our society as a whole”, is the appeal of the Pope, for whom “Drug production and trafficking also have a destructive impact on our common home.” And “this has become increasingly evident in the Amazon basin.” Another key way to counter drug abuse and trafficking “is through prevention, which is done by promoting greater justice, educating young people in values that build personal and community life, accompanying those in need, and giving hope for the future.” “**In my journeys in different dioceses and countries, I have been able to visit several recovery communities inspired by the Gospel**”, the Pope said: “They are a strong and hopeful witness to the commitment of priests, consecrated men and women, and lay people to put into practice the parable of the Good Samaritan. So too, I am comforted by the efforts undertaken by various bishops’ conferences to promote just legislation and policies regarding the treatment of people addicted to drug use, and prevention to stop this scourge.” “Faced with the tragic situation of drug addiction of millions of people around the world, faced with the scandal of the illicit production and trafficking of such drugs,

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we cannot be indifferent”, the final appeal. “The Lord Jesus paused, drew near, healed wounds”, Francis said: “In the style of His closeness, we too are called to act, to pause before situations of fragility and pain, to know how to listen to the cry of loneliness and anguish, to stoop to lift up and bring back to life those who fall into the slavery of drugs.”

“And we pray, too, for these criminals who spend and give drugs to the young: they are criminals, they are murderers. Let us pray for their conversion!”, the Pope exclaimed.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhqQ36C15TA>

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