

BUCHAREST CLERICS ACTIVE IN ANTI-DRUG TRAINING AND ACTIVITIES



Romanian police have identified 12 psychoactive substances on the Romanian drug market, which continues unabated throughout the pandemic. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is fighting the increasing drug problem, and the Orthodox Church is also taking an active part in these efforts.

Studies show that those who turn to the Church and those who have a close family are the most likely to escape from drug addiction.

In particular, the deanery of Bucharest Sector 4 has been partnering with the Ministry's National Anti-drug Agency since last year, and several young clerics involved in youth activities have undergone anti-drug training, reports the Romanian Church's Basilica New Agency.

As part of the partnership, priests of the deanery hold regular meetings with Agency experts to keep updated on all the latest data and anti-drug practices. They continue to participate in training course and also carry out information campaigns among young people on the problem of drug use.

Fr. Vlad Mîndru of the Church of St. Daniel of Sihastria is one of those who have

gone through the training, and has dealt with several drug-addicted people. “So far, I haven’t seen happy endings,” he said. “One of my high school classmates died from drug use.”

Those who begin to use drugs are often very sensitive and emotional people, often negatively affected by the breakdown or dysfunction in their families, explains Fr. Vlad.

And drug use is unique among sins, Fr. Vlad says, in that the user himself is the victim and loses control of himself. Therefore, they need to be approached differently than those who do evil with intent. They begin to feel isolated and end up doing a lot of harm even to their loved ones. “Family cohesion is absolutely essential” for recovering from drug addiction, Father comments, referring to a study in Iceland that showed that those who have at least one family activity during the weekend are more likely to break their drug habit.

And according to research conducted by the University of Bucharest, children from church-going families have the lowest rate of drug use, and those who turn to the Church for help have the highest success rate in overcoming addiction.

“Thus, the family and the Church are the essential factors that prevent and at the same time stop drug use,” Fr. Vlad says. Addicts come to the Church because they need something the police and psychologists can’t provide.

“Our perspective is totally different, because we try to understand them, to offer them an outstretched hand without judging them at all,” Father emphasizes, adding that it’s important to understand that all drug users eventually regret that they began to use.

Then they are internally divided. Some have no motivation to fight, but some come to the Church seeking someone with a lot of patience, Fr. Vlad explains. They need spiritual support first of all.

Fr. Vlad has two pieces of advice for young people: Completely avoid drugs altogether and don’t try them even once, and don’t turn your backs on those you suspect are getting interested in drugs. “Isolation makes them more likely victims,” he says.

Last week, OrthoChristian reported that the Romanian Church is contributing to the battle against human trafficking.

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