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Message of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia on International Day Against Drug Abuse



As we travail the third year of the dreadful coronavirus pandemic, it is now widely acknowledged that love of neighbour, compassion and solidarity are crucial to keeping our societies afloat and in effectively tackling the deadly virus and the widespread consequences that accompany this health crisis. Not coincidentally, these values are at the core of our faith and the teachings of the Holy Gospel. And it is precisely these values that we must have as a guide in every aspect of our lives, especially when dealing with the serious social problems that plague modern societies. One such example, is the scourge of drug addiction.

The United Nations wanting to raise global awareness of the dreadful consequences of drug addiction has established the 26th of June as International Day Against Drug Abuse. Unfortunately, despite the systematic efforts of recent decades and the important steps that have been taken, the issue remains vexed causing untold sorrow.

Perhaps the easiest solution is to address only our fellow human beings who are drug users, trapped in deceptive promises and dark impasses. Of course, we will do

this and we will especially address the youth who are targets of this terrifying nightmare. But the most resounding message must be addressed to each and every one of us who, denying the alteration of reality that drugs promise, recognise only the “good change” that occurs in our lives through divine grace. Therefore, we owe it to ourselves not to be indifferent to our brethren who are at a critical crossroad and uncertain about their future. Let us not ignore those who have been trapped and are being tried. Let us not turn our backs on those walking towards us who have given away their drug addiction and are trying to recover. Let practical love for our neighbour, the love that Christ taught us with His own example, be the answer. Let us support each other and walk together towards the “good change”. This is my paternal petition on the occasion of today’s International Day.

Moreover, I would like to thank all those who are working tirelessly amidst adverse conditions exacerbated by the pandemic for the success of the sacred aim of our Holy Archdiocese, which is the operation of two detox centres in Melbourne and Sydney. With faith in God, we expect to be able to complete our plans very soon in order to deliver to the Greek community and the wider Australian society, two shelters of refuge; shelters of real life that will be a strong fortress in the battle against drug addiction.

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