



# The Holy See

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***ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II  
TO MRS NANCY REAGAN,  
WIFE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA***

*Saturday, 4 May 1985*

*Mrs Reagan,*

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you today to the Vatican. I thank you for the courtesy of your visit and I would ask you to convey my respectful greetings to the President of the United States.

I wish to express my appreciation of the reasons which bring you to Rome at this time, namely, your participation in the fight against drug abuse and in the rehabilitation of those whose lives have been affected by this social evil.

The Catholic Church has great concern for the harmful effects of so pervasive and alarming a social problem as drug dependency. The dignity of the human person is seriously offended by the enslavement which results from this dependency. Obviously, the consequences for the family and for society in general are tragic and debilitating. One must indeed ask to what extent this phenomenon is symptomatic of a profound crisis of the social and moral order. Does it not perhaps reflect an inadequacy on the part of modern society to satisfy the spiritual longings of people today?

All efforts in the campaign against drug abuse take on special relevance during this year which has been declared by the United Nations Organization as International Youth Year. One of the great challenges to modern society is to find viable solutions to this problem which affects so many of our young people. Certainly the leaders of society must strive to create the social conditions in which young people are discouraged from seeking refuge in the fantasy world of self-indulgence and drugs, and are inspired and helped to fulfill responsible roles in society.

In particular, I wish to offer encouragement to all who promote international cooperation with a view to arresting, and eventually eliminating, this grave social evil. Internal legislation and law enforcement to curb drug trafficking are ultimately effective only insofar as they receive the support of other nations which are committed to higher human values and to the common good of their respective citizens and of their neighbours. At the same time, international collaboration is needed in programs of therapy and rehabilitation. Treatment must be adapted to the different situations in which this social phenomenon develops and spreads. The exchange of ideas and methods on the international level is most useful and commendable.

In greeting you today I wish to renew my gratitude for the generous work being done for people with drug dependency in your own country and throughout the world, and I appeal to all men and women of good will to join forces in order to meet with skill and compassion the needs of fellow human beings, especially the young.

May the Lord who is rich in mercy bless the many efforts being made, and crown them with success.

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