



## Archdiocese of New Orleans

Office of the Archbishop

7887 Walmsley Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70125-3496  
Office: (504) 861-9521  
Fax (504) 314-9614  
Email: [archbishop@arch-no.org](mailto:archbishop@arch-no.org)

October 5, 2018

To: All Parishes and Schools in the Archdiocese of New Orleans:

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Through an abundance of reliable and valid data, the media and the seriousness of the opioid epidemic, we realize that there is a serious drug problem that affects the safety and health of all people in our community, particularly our youth. Drugs are a key factor behind many societal problems such as crime, violence, accidents, mental illness, suicide, overdose deaths and others.

It is sad to report that 2,500 adolescents have a substance abuse disorder and are in need of clinical intervention. An additional 5,000 students are in need of intervention services just to stop the progression before it becomes more serious and addictive. There are 15,391 young adults in New Orleans between the ages of 18 to 25 that will experience a Substance Use Disorder this year. In 2017 there were 494 deaths due to drug overdoses, 64 of those deaths were from fentanyl-laced marijuana.

As a people of faith who believe in the Gospel message, we boldly state that our children deserve safe and drug-free environments. This can become a reality if we work together as a faith community with government leaders, teachers, parents, caregivers and those who interact with our young people. Drug prevention is the first and best defense.

I ask you to take a stand against drugs by joining me in the following:

1. Pray for all people who are tempted by drugs, particularly our youth.
2. Parents, talk with your children and inform them of the dangers of drugs.
3. Schools, continue to be empowered to protect children from drugs and to help them understand the physical and emotional consequences that come from drugs.
4. Community members, be a voice in our community to ensure that members of our community, particularly our youth, know that we value them and are willing to be a voice for their protection.

In order to safeguard the lives and safety of our youth, we must commit to making the Archdiocese of New Orleans a safer and healthier community, free of the plague of harmful drugs.

Wishing you God's blessings, I am

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond  
Archbishop of New Orleans