

The Immorality of Drug Abuse

“The use of drugs inflicts very grave damage on human health and life. Their use, except on strictly therapeutic grounds, is a grave offense.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 2291

While the use of such drugs as alcohol and caffeine in moderation is permitted in a social context – to provide a mild stimulation or relaxation that is truly helpful in carrying on with one’s personal or social responsibilities, without any degree of intoxication – the “recreational” use of other drugs, including marijuana, is always sinful.

Marijuana consumed for the specific purpose of getting “high”, like deliberate drunkenness, is gravely sinful. In addition, those who use marijuana demonstrably run a risk to mind and body which cannot be justified morally for purely social usage. Such activity reduces man to the level of a brute animal by impairing his ability to live according to reason and depriving him of freedom. What St. Thomas Aquinas explained about drunkenness applies equally to the illicit use of drugs: “because when a man willingly and knowingly deprives himself of the use of reason, whereby he performs virtuous deeds and avoids sin, he sins mortally.”