

Manila Archdiocese to build rehab center for drug users

Rehabilitation 'farm' is aimed at preventing drug users being killed in Philippine anti-narcotics campaign Manila Archdiocese to build rehab center for drug users



The Archdiocese of Manila is to build a rehabilitation center for drug dependents amid Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs in which more than 6,000 people have been killed.

The move is aimed at helping users avoid falling victim to death squads accused of killing many dependents and dealers in Duterte's drugs war.

"We want to show people that there is really hope," said said Father Anton Pascual, head of the social services ministry of the archdiocese.

The priest said the church will offer those who have succumbed to drugs "a new life, a home that will welcome them, regardless of their past."

Father Pascual said the archdiocese is looking for a 20-hectare property outside Manila to set up a "drug rehabilitation farm."

Fazenda da Esperanca, or Farm of Hope, a therapeutic community that started in Brazil in 1983, will

manage the facility.

Franciscan Father Hans Stapel, Fazenda's founder, said his organization shows a "different way of living and addressing the problems about various addictions of different individuals."

He said the drug rehabilitation farm would be run based on the principles of "spirituality, community life, and work."

Father Pascual said the facility to be built by the archdiocese will accommodate 100 "drug reformists" to ensure quality and intensity of the program.

He said the farm is "just one of many programs" the church in the Philippines is introducing to help the government's fight against illegal drugs.

A similar facility was established in Masbate province in 2003 and has already facilitated the recovery of some 300 drug dependents.

In his homily during a Mass for drug dependents on Jan. 8, Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila said the church should embrace "the guilty and those people who seek hope and new life".

"No person will be discarded by Jesus. Every person is welcome to follow the light and hope," said the prelate during the celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany.

Some 6,000 suspected drug users and dealers have been killed in the past six months after Duterte declared an "all-out war" against illegal drugs.

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