



Diocese of Fall River
Office of the Bishop
Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.

October 18, 2016

To God's Faithful People of Our Diocese of Fall River:

Allow me this opportunity to ask for your assistance regarding a matter of great importance for the students in our schools, their families and our communities.

On Election Day next month, citizens of Massachusetts will be asked to vote on a proposal to legalize recreational use of marijuana. If this referendum is approved, there will be an extremely damaging impact on our society, particularly children and young people. The Massachusetts Catholic Conference (MCC) issued a statement providing citations from numerous research studies concerning the detrimental effects that follow from the legalization of marijuana. The MCC statement can be found on our website by clicking on the following link: <http://www.fallriverdiocese.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Statement-on-Legalization-of-Recreational-Marijuana.pdf>. Or just go to our website www.fallriverdiocese.org and under Latest News click on "[Massachusetts Bishops Urge Voters to Vote NO on Question 4](#)".

As our society battles the devastating opioid crisis, which each day claims the lives of those who have been snared in the trap of addiction, it is beyond reason that we would legalize a gateway drug that, in addition to its own damaging effects, has led far too many users to the destruction of opioids. It is notable that Governor Baker, Attorney General Healy and many others strongly oppose the legalization of marijuana, with particular recognition of the harm such an action would bring to children and young people.

I ask that you please seriously consider this issue as you plan to vote on November 8th. We have an obligation to express our concern about the consequences of the legalization of marijuana.

Thank you for your assistance with this critical issue, which will be voted on just a few days from now. Your dedication, commitment and genuine care for our young people and their families is a gift and a blessing for us all.

With the assurance of my prayers for you and all whom you hold dear, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.
Bishop of Fall River