

**Statement by the Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano  
Ninth Bishop of Burlington  
Regarding the Legalization of Doctor-Prescribed Suicide**

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington is sincerely saddened and deeply regrets the passage and signing into law of Senate Bill S.77, legalizing Doctor-Prescribed Suicide in the state of Vermont.

Our Catholic faith teaches that God is the author of all life, both human and divine and no woman or man has the radical autonomy to subjectively determine when life begins and ends, when it is worthwhile and when that ceases. It is a tragic moment in the rich history of our state that our elected officials have passed and signed into law legislation placing medical professionals in the position of legally prescribing medicines with the sole intention of terminating human life. Doing so has implicitly declared that life is no longer precious but just another commodity in the business of living.

Under the guise of offering patients “choice” and “autonomy” at the end of life, this new law asks those in the medical profession, which is a vocation dedicated to the service of life, to destroy the very lives they have pledged to save and to comfort at life’s most critical moments. It is a heavy and unjust burden which has been placed on the shoulders of others when attention and resources should be devoted to palliative care and human compassion.

Vermont is now identified as one of the few Death States, where it is legal for life to be terminated both at its beginning and end stages; a State that so rightly opposes the death penalty and the tragedies of war now sends a confusing and conflicting message that undermines its stand for life. The magnificent landscape of this State, which echoes life from its majestic mountains to its powerful waterways, no longer is reflected in the laws which govern the Green Mountain State.

Moved by the example of Jesus Christ in the Gospels and our sincere concern for our brothers and sisters, especially those in the most vulnerable stages of life, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington today renews its commitment to promote the inherent dignity of and care for every human life, from the moment of conception until natural death.

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