

# DEATH WITH DIGNITY ACT

## Summary of “Death with Dignity Act”

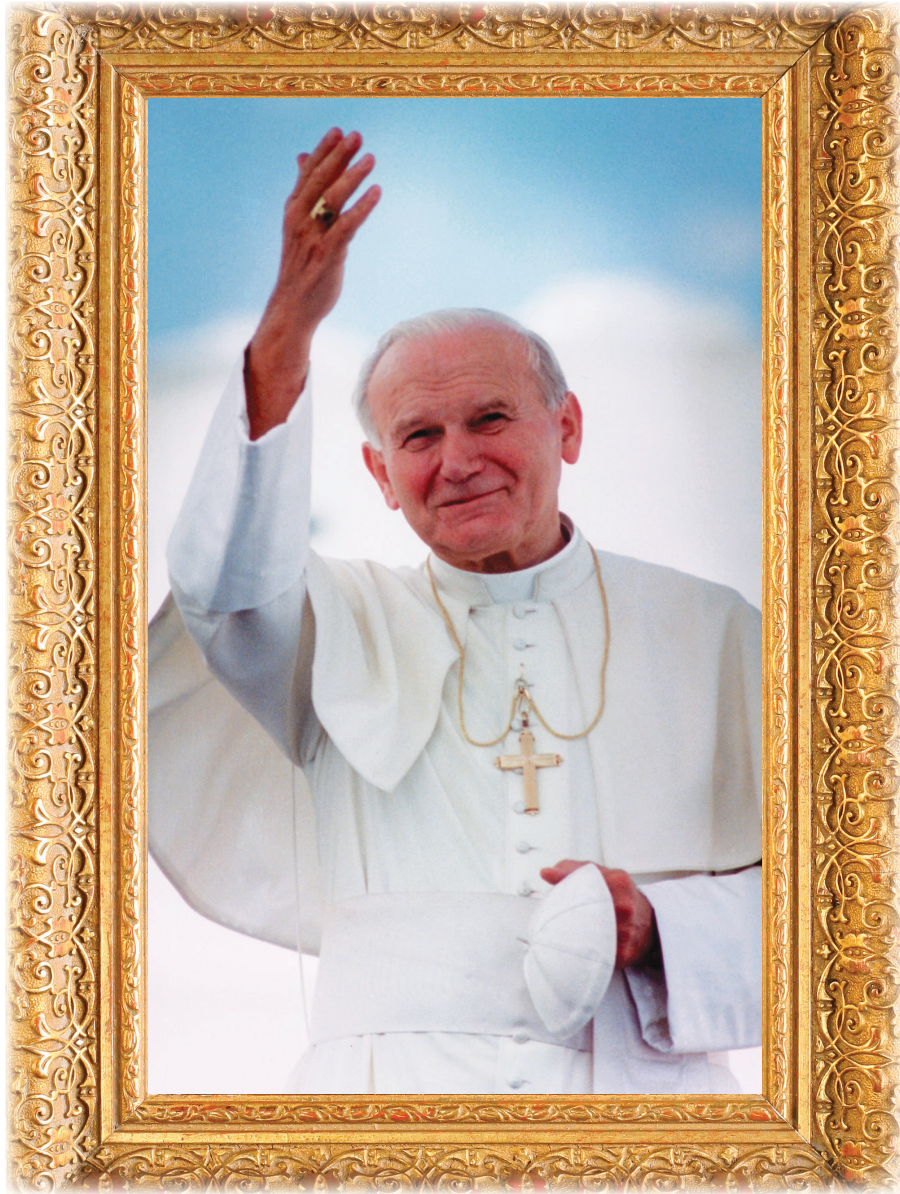
On Election Day in November 2012, the people of Massachusetts will be asked to accept or reject the so-called “Death with Dignity” Act. If passed, it will allow an adult resident of Massachusetts, deemed to have the capacity to make health care decisions, and determined by two physicians to have a disease that will likely result in death within six months, to request and receive a prescription for a lethal drug that he or she may self administer.

*The bill has several flaws including:*

- The petition allows a person to choose PAS if he or she has a prognosis of six months or less to live. Most people believe that doctors are incapable of accurately estimating how long a person has to live and all of us are familiar with people who outlive their diagnosis. The inability of anyone to pick an appropriate life span estimate is a major flaw in this bill.
- The petition does not require a person to seek a psychiatric evaluation before choosing PAS. Mental health research verifies that the overwhelming number of suicides could be avoided with the right therapeutic intervention.
- Once the prescription is written there is no requirement for a re-evaluation.

The Catholic Church and all major religions have always taught that assisted suicide is wrong because it is contrary to the good of the human person. The American Medical Association, the American College of Physicians and the Massachusetts Medical Society oppose physician assisted suicide. Advances in pain management and palliative and hospice care, make it possible to treat pain and to give the dying patient many choices.





**“...euthanasia must be called a false mercy, and indeed a disturbing ‘perversion’ of mercy. True ‘compassion’ leads to sharing another's pain; it does not kill the person whose suffering we cannot bear.”**

Blessed John Paul II from his 1995 encyclical,  
*Evangelium Vitae* or the *Gospel of Life*

