



Diocese of Winona-Rochester
55 West Sanborn Street | P.O. Box 588 | Winona, Minnesota 55987
507-454-4643 | FAX: 507-454-8106

Office of the Bishop

Most Reverend Robert Barron

May 21, 2024

As you are likely aware, in 2023 the Minnesota State Legislature legalized the use of recreational marijuana and established a retail industry for it in our state. Despite the claims of those who pushed for this legislation (that it's a harmless drug, it will bring added revenue to the economy, etc.), having lived seven years in California where it was also legal, I can assure you that the legalization of marijuana brings with it a great deal of societal evils. Homelessness, joblessness, addiction, and mental illnesses have all been on the rise in the states that have legalized recreational marijuana.

My brother Catholic bishops of Minnesota and I are aware of the destruction that often follows from believing this "recreational" drug is harmless, and we have written the attached primer "[Living in the Real](#)" to bring clarity to what the Catholic Church teaches on this subject. Our guidance is not an attempt to limit freedom and happiness, but instead to create the conditions necessary for it.

May God bless you.