

January 17, 2021

Dear Parishioners,

+JMJ

In my last bulletin letter, I addressed the question of whether a Catholic can morally accept a vaccination that has been produced with some connection to abortion (e.g., use of a cell line from aborted fetal tissue). It seems prudent in this current bulletin letter to answer another question that I have heard: “Is a Catholic *obligated* to receive the COVID-19 vaccination?”

Back in December the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith wrote a statement on the morality of Covid vaccinations, which includes the following paragraph (*Note on morality of using some anti-Covid-19 vaccines*, 5):

[P]ractical reason makes evident that vaccination is not, as a rule, a moral obligation and that, therefore, it must be voluntary. In any case, from the ethical point of view, *the morality of vaccination depends not only on the duty to protect one's own health, but also on the duty to pursue the common good*. In the absence of other means to stop or even prevent the epidemic, the common good may recommend vaccination, especially to protect the weakest and most exposed. Those who, however, for reasons of conscience, refuse vaccines produced with cell lines from aborted fetuses, must do their utmost to avoid, by other prophylactic means and appropriate behavior, becoming vehicles for the transmission of the infectious agent. In particular, they must avoid any risk to the health of those who cannot be vaccinated for medical or other reasons, and who are the most vulnerable.

With this document in mind, the Diocese issued an instruction on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021, which includes the following two paragraphs [*Guidance for Covid-19 Vaccinations – All Diocesan Entities*]:

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), which is responsible for safeguarding the doctrine on faith and morals, with the approval of the Holy Father, recently confirmed that no one is morally obligated to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Each person, however, has the duty to protect one's own health and to pursue the common good of all. When means to prevent the ongoing spread of the virus other than vaccination do not exist, the pursuit of the common good may suggest vaccination with a view to protect the most vulnerable, the weakest and the most exposed. Accordingly, the Diocese recommends that each person, particularly those at higher risk, seriously consider the possibility of receiving a vaccine in order to protect one's own health and the health of those around them.

Those who choose to receive a vaccine, should be careful to receive one that is not morally compromised. For information concerning the moral implications of receiving vaccination, see the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's, “Note on the Morality of Using Some Anti-Covid-19 Vaccines,” the USCCB statement, and the statement from the Bishops of the Catholic Conference of Ohio.

As the CDF has stated, no one is morally obligated to receive a vaccination, and the Diocese has determined that it will **not** mandate that diocesan employees, or parish/school employees, be vaccinated.... Also, no government authority has mandated vaccinations.

In summary, everybody should seriously consider receiving a vaccination, but it should not be forced

upon anybody. Those who choose not to receive the vaccination for serious reasons still have the duty to pursue the common good of society and prevent the spread of the virus.

Have a blessed week!

*In cordibus Iesu et Mariae,*

Father Poggemeyer