



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

300 WYOMING AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18503-1279

January 8, 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect our nation and world, we have started to see medical professionals receiving their first doses of life-saving vaccines against the coronavirus. During the last year, their efforts to protect public health have been nothing less than extraordinary.

In response to some questions about the source of the vaccines, I wish to provide some clarity regarding the ethical and moral status of the current COVID-19 vaccines. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) carefully evaluated the two current vaccines as they relate to Catholic Moral Teaching.

They have concluded:

"Neither the Pfizer nor the Moderna vaccine involved the use of cell lines that originated in fetal tissue taken from the body of an aborted baby at any level of design, development, or production. They are not completely free from any connection to abortion, however, as both Pfizer and Moderna made use of a tainted cell line for one of the confirmatory lab tests of their products. There is thus a connection, but it is relatively remote."

Dating back to 2005, the Holy See has addressed such topics, indicating it is morally permissible to accept vaccinations when there are no alternatives and there are serious risk to health. In December 2020, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) confirmed, that due to the situation of the ongoing pandemic, it is morally acceptable to receive the current COVID-19 vaccines.

The CDF's note stated:

"All vaccinations recognized as clinically safe and effective can be used in good conscience with the certain knowledge that the use of such vaccines does not constitute formal cooperation with the abortion from which the cells used in production of the vaccines derive."

Based on this information, I want to emphasize that a Catholic can receive these COVID-19 vaccines in good conscience. I **strongly encourage the faithful to receive a vaccine against COVID-19, unless medically indicated otherwise.** Receiving a vaccine is not only an act of love, but also an act of charity, as it lessens one's chances of infecting someone else.

At the same time, it is important to reiterate the call for pharmaceutical companies and government health agencies to produce, approve, distribute and offer ethically acceptable vaccines that do not create problems of conscience.

I am so grateful to the clergy, religious and lay faithful in our parishes, schools and social service programs who have generously imitated the servant leadership of Jesus through the care that they have provided to those most in need during this difficult time. I pray for all who have died from the coronavirus and for the health and well-being of you and your family.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L.
Bishop of Scranton