



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE
OF CHARLESTON
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

December 28, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our social, economic, political, and religious lives in ways no one ever imagined. Yet we are not without hope during this time, as people have been working hard for better treatments and now several effective vaccines are available.

The two current vaccines available in the U.S., made by Pfizer and Moderna, have not been derived from the morally tainted fetal stem cell lines. Unfortunately, a fetal stem cell line was utilized for some of the testing of these vaccines. However, after careful examination and consultation with Catholic theologians, scientists, and bioethicists, the Church teaches that it is morally permissible for people to take these vaccines, if others without any connection to these stem cell lines are unavailable. Put most simply, it is not sinful to receive these vaccines.

Catholics also have a duty to make pharmaceutical companies and political leaders know their complete disagreement with developing any vaccine derived in an unethical manner. I call upon each of us to pray and work for the continued development and distribution of safe and effective vaccines that are untainted by involvement or association with abortion.

Lastly, I want to convey the importance of individual discernment as we determine our own healthcare decisions. Certain subsets of our society may be required to vaccinate for the health and safety of those in their care or simply by the nature of their stage of life or health conditions. However, those individuals who are outside the immediate at-risk groups and caregivers, must make a prudential judgment weighting all the factors, such as individual circumstances, responsibilities to the common good and the particular vaccines available. Let us all continue to pray for an end of the pandemic and working for an end to abortion.

In the Lord's Peace,

Most Rev. Robert E. Guglielmo
Bishop of Charleston