

COVID-19 Vaccines What you need to know!

On December 14, 2020, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement about the release of COVID-19 vaccines in the United States. This is what every Catholic should know:

1. The U.S. Bishops make no claim about the effectiveness of any company's vaccine. This is only a moral evaluation concerning the use of the COVID-19 vaccine and how each company developed its vaccine.
2. While each person must form a conscientious decision about whether or not to be vaccinated, the Catholic Bishops have advised that **the best moral decision is to be vaccinated against the coronavirus**. Quoting the Bishops' statement:
"In many cases the most important effect of vaccination may not be the protection it offers the person who receives the vaccination, who may be of relatively robust health and unlikely to be seriously affected by the disease. Rather, the more important effect may be the protection it offers to those who are much more likely to be seriously stricken by the disease if they were to contact it through exposure to those infected."

So, the moral imperative to be vaccinated is to protect family and community members who could become ill because any person might be an asymptomatic carrier of the virus. Even should one believe s/he does not personally need the vaccine, Christian concern for the well-being of others requires the individual to consider the health of others as equally or more important than one's own, regardless of personal opinion or personal comfort.

3. Currently, three U.S. companies are producing COVID-19 vaccines. Two of the three researched and produced vaccines without the use of stem cells from aborted infants. One company directly employed stem cells from aborted infants in the research and development of its vaccine.
 - A. **Pfizer** and **Moderna** have the general approval of the United States Bishops for the method of research and production of the vaccines they are releasing. The truth is that post-production testing by third party companies did use abortion-obtained stem cells. But these two companies avoided abortion sources for their direct work. **There is no moral wrong in using vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna.**
 - B. **AstraZeneca** does not have the approval of the U.S. Bishops because this company did use abortion-derived stem cells in the research and production of its vaccine. The Bishops' statement says: ***"The AstraZeneca vaccine should be avoided if there are alternatives available."***
 - N.B. However, if the only vaccine available is by AstraZeneca, the Bishops have stated that the need to receive a COVID-19 vaccine for the sake of eradicating this virus removes personal moral guilt from the person who cannot wait for another vaccine.

Summary: *Get vaccinated against the coronavirus, hopefully by the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, but if you have no choice, vaccination is still better than non-vaccination!*