



The Roman Catholic Diocese of Fresno

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STATEMENT FROM THE MOST REVEREND JOSEPH V. BRENNAN, D.D. IN COLLABORATION WITH RIGHT TO LIFE OF CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

On Thursday, November 19th, I released a video about possible ethical issues with the vaccines that are in development to combat COVID-19. That video, along with subsequent comments to media entities that were disseminated in local, statewide, and national outlets, created some confusion among Catholics about the Church's stance on these possible treatments. In this press release and accompanying letter to the Diocese of Fresno, I wish to clarify and correct certain aspects of my remarks, as well as to expound upon the Church's teaching.

- Some vaccines are developed from cell lines that originated with tissue taken from aborted children. The use of such material by pharmaceutical companies and researchers is immoral. Catholics have an obligation as citizens, patients, and doctors to urge their healthcare systems and governments to provide ethical vaccine alternatives that are not made with material derived from the moral evil of abortion.
- Nevertheless, due to how relatively far removed end-users are from the original moral evil of abortion, Catholic doctors, patients, and parents may utilize such unethically sourced vaccines for serious and proportional reasons where no ethical alternatives exist, while maintaining consistent moral clarity in opposition to abortion. This was a particular point of confusion from my prior remarks that I wanted to clarify.
- I also wish to clarify information about specific vaccines that may come to the market in early 2021. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines only utilized illicit materials to a small extent in their testing phase, not in their development or composition. Without better alternatives and following serious reflection upon the health risks and needs for oneself, one's family, and the broader community, Catholics may ethically decide for serious reasons to utilize such vaccines. We strongly discourage Catholics from using the AstraZeneca vaccine due to its development from a morally questionable cell line.
- The Roman Catholic Diocese of Fresno and Right to Life of Central California will provide the lay faithful with ethical guidance on COVID-19 vaccines, as well as other vaccines, in ongoing educational materials.

Along with this press release, I am issuing a pastoral letter to the Diocese, produced jointly with our friends at Right to Life, entitled "COVID Vaccines: A Pastoral Guide." In this document, I explain more fully the teaching of the Catholic Church and give a more detailed assessment of the COVID vaccine options. I hope these communications bring clarity, and I apologize for any confusion my original comments caused.

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