

## **A STATEMENT FROM THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS OF THE ANGLICAN PROVINCE OF AMERICA ON THE COVID-19 VACCINES**

As we reach the first anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Church is faced with questions regarding the moral liceity of the newly-released COVID-19 vaccines. Many of our faithful have already chosen to receive the vaccines, which are becoming more widely and rapidly available. The vaccines produced by Pfizer and Moderna initially raised concerns because an abortion-derived cell line was used for testing them. The newly available Johnson & Johnson vaccine, on the other hand, was developed, tested, and is produced with abortion-derived cell lines, raising additional moral concerns.

Over the last year, a consensus has developed within the episcopate of the historical Catholic and Apostolic Churches worldwide wherein it is asserted that when ethically irreproachable COVID-19 vaccines are not available, it is morally permissible to receive whichever of the COVID-19 vaccines are currently available. Though one is not under a moral obligation to receive the vaccines, one does not commit a grievous sin by doing so. In fact, we affirm that being vaccinated during this current pandemic can be an act of charity that serves the welfare of the human family.

Why is this so? In orthodox moral theology, it is permitted to receive a medical treatment that is not ethically irreproachable when 1. the medical emergency is life-threatening or seriously grave and 2. there are no other effective preventatives available. In our judgment, the COVID-19 pandemic meets these criteria. Concerning the welfare of the human family, the moral obligation to preserve the sanctity of human life must be applied both to the millions of potential vaccine recipients as well as to the small number of unborn whose cells have been perpetually used in this way for decades. Unfortunately, without the availability of an entirely irreproachable vaccine, our current circumstance seems to force us to choose between one and the other.

In light of the dilemma, our determination is this: if one is free to choose among equally safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, the vaccine with the least connection to abortion-derived cell lines should be chosen. Therefore, until an entirely irreproachable option exists, if one has the ability to choose a vaccine, the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines should be chosen over Johnson & Johnson's or any similar vaccine.

It is through such a stand that faithful Christians may continue to insist that all pharmaceutical companies cease using any abortion-derived cell lines in the research, development, and production of medicine.

God bless you.

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