

Statement on COVID-19 Vaccinations

Perhaps you have concerns about the moral and ethical development of the COVID vaccines; in particular, the use of cell lines or processes that involve cells from aborted children.

Since respect for the dignity of the unborn and their right to life holds the pre-eminent place in the Church's moral and social teaching, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and other Catholic and pro-life organizations have been advocating for the development of a vaccine with no link to abortion. They have also been involved in assessing all of the vaccines in production so that recipients can make well-informed decisions regarding vaccine choices.¹

On December 14, 2020, the USCCB released a statement on moral concerns about the creation of a vaccine for COVID-19.² Regarding the vaccines mentioned above:

Neither Pfizer nor Moderna used morally compromised cell lines in the design, development, or production of the vaccine. A confirmatory test, however, employing the commonly used, but morally compromised HEK293 cell line was performed on both vaccines. Thus, while neither vaccine is completely free from any connection to morally compromised cell lines, in this case the connection is very remote from the initial evil of the abortion. **In view of the gravity of the current pandemic and the lack of availability of alternative vaccines, the reasons to accept the new COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna are sufficiently serious to justify their use, despite their remote connection to morally compromised cell lines.** [emphasis added]

In short, because there is a serious health concern and no other options are available, it is morally permissible to receive one of these vaccines. If you wish to be vaccinated, I strongly encourage you to do so.

The Catholic Church does not forbid the use of morally compromised vaccines, but does encourage discernment regarding their use. As other COVID-19 vaccines receive FDA approval and consumer choice is restored, I ask that vaccine recipients give careful consideration to the development and production of all available vaccines and make decisions based on an informed conscience.³

May Our Lord continue to bless, guide and inspire everyone working to bring us through this crisis, especially front-line medical and emergency personnel and those researching, developing and testing vaccines and other pharmaceuticals.

I thank all of you for your continued observance of our diocesan guidelines, and for your vigilance in caring for one another. Let us pray for wisdom and patience while vaccines and treatments are developed and perfected, especially those with no connection to the evil of abortion.

Please know that I pray for you, your loved ones and your intentions. I ask you to pray for me and my Episcopal ministry here in the Diocese of Savannah. Although we may not see one another each day, we can meet each day in our prayers. *May we Rejoice in the Lord always!*

¹ <https://lozierinstitute.org/update-covid-19-vaccine-candidates-and-abortion-derived-cell-lines/>

² <https://www.usccb.org/moral-considerations-covid-vaccines>

³ <https://www.ncbcenter.org/s/NCBCVaccineStatementFINAL.pdf>