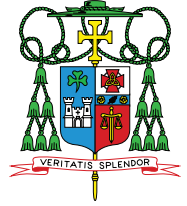




CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH
THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



STATEMENT OF BISHOP MICHAEL F. OLSON
REGARDING THE MORAL PERMISSIBILITY OF THE USE
OF THE RECENTLY RELEASED VACCINES FOR COVID-19

December 2, 2020

Today in Austin, Governor Greg Abbott announced that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has made an initial allotment of over 1.4 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccines to the State of Texas for the month of December. These vaccines, which should start to arrive in Texas the week of December 14, will be distributed to qualifying providers across the state who will administer these immunizations.

During recent weeks, I have received questions from many faithful Catholics as to the moral permissibility of using the vaccines for COVID-19 especially those that have been developed by Pfizer and Moderna. In order to assist in the formation of the consciences of the faithful I am posting with permission a Memorandum issued by Archbishop Joseph Naumann and Bishop Kevin Rhoades, the respective Chairs of the Pro-Life Committee and Doctrine Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that addresses these concerns in greater detail.

As the Memorandum indicates, there appears to be some confusion in the media regarding the moral permissibility of using the vaccines for COVID-19 developed by Pfizer Inc. and Moderna. Some have asserted on social media that if a vaccine is connected in any way with tainted cell lines then it is immoral to be vaccinated with them. This is an inaccurate and rigorist portrayal of authentic Catholic moral teaching. I wish to assure Catholics and men and women of good will that it is morally permissible to receive the vaccines for COVID-19 that are to arrive in Texas beginning December 14, 2020.

Since the Memorandum to all Bishops was sent, a third possible vaccine, this one produced by AztraZeneca, has been in the news. Although this particular vaccine is morally concerning because of its origins, according to Catholic moral teaching it is also acceptable to receive it for the sake of our own health and the health of others if it is the only vaccine available to us in this area.

Please continue to pray for an end to this COVID-19 pandemic. Please continue to pray for those who are especially working in caring for the sick, including those affected by COVID-19. Let us continue to do our respective parts in preventing the spread of COVID-19 by following sound protocols of prevention.

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