



March 3, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I come to you as your Bishop, concerning the COVID-19 vaccines. I know that there are many questions out there and I want to provide you with important information and clarity regarding these vaccines as you make an informed choice.

While each vaccine has been morally compromised to some level, it is not wrong to take the vaccine. All things being equal, the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are the preferred choice. But the Johnson and Johnson vaccine may be used when all things are not equal, like an allergy to the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or availability.

Attached is a document from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops with links to other reputable resources on the COVID-19 vaccines.

I encourage everyone to get vaccinated. It can be an act of charity that serves the common good. Ultimately, the decision to vaccinate is up to you decide based on your own formed conscience.

These are difficult times, but let's support each other and remain calm. Please know of my prayers for each of you.

In Christ, I am

Most Reverend Austin A. Vetter
Bishop of Helena

O F F I C E O F T H E B I S H O P

Diocese of Helena • P.O. Box 1729 • Helena, MT 59624

Phone: 406.442.5820 • Fax: 406.442.5191



NEWS

Office of Public Affairs
3211 Fourth Street, NE
Washington, DC 20017
202-541-3200
Fax 202-541-3173
www.usccb.org

U.S. Bishop Chairmen for Doctrine and for Pro-Life Address the Use of the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 Vaccine

March 2, 2021

WASHINGTON – On March 2, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Doctrine, and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City in Kansas, chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Pro-Life Activities, issued a statement on the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine recently approved for use in the United States.

“The approval of Johnson & Johnson’s COVID-19 vaccine for use in the United States again raises questions about the moral permissibility of using vaccines developed, tested, and/or produced with the help of abortion-derived cell lines.

Pfizer and Moderna’s vaccines raised concerns because an abortion-derived cell line was used for testing them, but not in their production. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine, however, was developed, tested and is produced with abortion-derived cell lines raising additional moral concerns. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has judged that ‘when ethically irreproachable Covid-19 vaccines are not available ... *it is morally acceptable to receive Covid-19 vaccines that have used cell lines from aborted fetuses in their research and production process.*’¹ However, if one can choose among equally safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, the vaccine with the least connection to abortion-derived cell lines should be chosen. Therefore, if one has the ability to choose a vaccine, Pfizer or Moderna’s vaccines should be chosen over Johnson & Johnson’s.

While we should continue to insist that pharmaceutical companies stop using abortion-derived cell lines, given the world-wide suffering that this pandemic is causing, we affirm again that being vaccinated can be an act of charity that serves the common good.

For further details, we refer people to our earlier [December 2020 statement](#), to our [Answers to Key Ethical Questions About COVID-19 Vaccines](#), to the [Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith’s Note](#), and to the [statement of the Vatican Covid-19 Commission in collaboration with the Pontifical Academy for Life](#).

###

Media Contacts:

[Chieko Noguchi](#) or [Miguel Guilarte](#)

202-541-3200

¹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Note on the morality of using some anti-Covid-19 vaccines” (17 Dec 2020), no. 2.