



**DIOCESE OF
SAN JOSE**

Office of the Bishop

Memo To: All Clergy and Pastoral Leaders in DSJ
From: Bishop Oscar Cantú
Date: August 13, 2021
RE: Religious Exemption from COVID Vaccination

As recent COVID vaccine mandates have been imposed in certain industries and professions, some Catholics may seek a “religious” exemption from you to the several vaccines now available.

For clarity, a religious exemption is a public declaration that a person’s decision to refuse a vaccine is rooted in and supported by – in the case of a Catholic – authentic Catholic faith. However, such a declaration is inconsistent with the Holy See’s declaration that the COVID vaccines are morally permissible, especially considering the urgency and common good (the need to help curb the loss of life, diminished mental and physical health, and a struggling economy, etc.) during this pandemic.

While a person may decide that, in conscience, they cannot receive the COVID vaccine, we cannot equate individual objection with doctrinal authority. Though an individual has a right to conscientious objection, the authority of their objection derives from their personal conscience, not from the teaching of our Church.

For these reasons, I ask our Pastors to compassionately decline requests to sign declarations rejecting the COVID vaccine on religious grounds.