



Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Office of the Cardinal

Statement of Daniel Cardinal DiNardo On the Moral Permissibility of Recently Announced Vaccines for COVID-19

December 8, 2020

On December 2nd Governor Abbott announced that the federal government will be distributing an initial allotment of approximately 1.4 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines in Texas during the month of December. These vaccines will be administered by qualifying providers throughout the state.

Some individuals and groups are publicly asserting that if a vaccine is connected in any way with tainted cell lines then it is immoral to be vaccinated with it. This is an inaccurate presentation of Catholic moral doctrine and I would like to offer some clarifications regarding the moral permissibility of using the COVID-19 vaccines developed by the companies Pfizer and Moderna.

Neither the Pfizer nor the Moderna vaccine involved the use of cell lines that originated in tissue taken from the body of an aborted baby at any level of design, development, or production. However, these vaccines are not completely free from any connection to abortion, as both Pfizer and Moderna made use of a tainted cell line for one of the confirmatory lab tests of their products. There is thus a connection, but it is relatively remote and should not be the basis for refusing to receive the vaccine.

A third possible vaccine, this one produced by AstraZeneca, is morally concerning because of its origins. However, 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 in a given place.

It is morally permissible to receive the COVID-19 vaccines which will be available for distribution in Texas beginning this month.

On this Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary we unite ourselves more closely to the intercession of the Mother of God as we pray for an end to the Coronavirus pandemic. Please be assured of my continued prayers for the clergy and lay faithful of the Church in Galveston-Houston.

###