



Diocese of Armidale

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STATEMENT ON COVID-19 VACCINES

The rollout of the COVID-19 virus vaccines has begun, and authorities are encouraging everybody to receive the vaccine. The development of these vaccines has raised ethical questions which I shall address briefly here. I naturally leave any medical questions regarding their efficacy to others.

1. For the sake of the health and common good of all, it is appropriate that our governments work together to roll out a nation-wide process of vaccination for all residents.
2. Likewise, for the common good, everyone should respect the decisions of individuals who, for medical, safety or moral reasons, are not ready to receive a vaccination yet. The Church is very much in favour of vaccination (as evident in Pope Francis being vaccinated), but asserts that, like other medical treatments, it must be voluntary.
3. It is morally permissible to receive a vaccine which may have been produced, developed, or tested using cell lines created from tissue harvested from the bodies of aborted babies. The abortions in question occurred in the 1970's and the cells in these lines are descendants of those cells. Further, the cells themselves are not present in the vaccines that patients receive.

The reason it is morally permissible is twofold:

- the connection between the vaccine and the abortion is very remote; and
 - the promotion of public health and protection of peoples' lives is a great good and a grave responsibility constituting what we call a 'proportionate reason' – not proportionate to an abortion but proportionate to receiving a vaccine produced, developed, or tested, utilising such cell lines.
4. A person should choose a vaccine without questionable origins *if* one is available to them, and make their objections known if it is not.

For further information and a more thorough treatment of these ethical questions I recommend the 2 page leaflet produced by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [Answers to Key Ethical Questions About COVID-19 Vaccines.pdf \(uscgb.org\)](#)

For anyone with health and safety concerns, please speak with your doctor.

Yours in Christ

Most Reverend Michael Kennedy
Bishop of Armidale
3rd March, 2021