

УКРАЇНСЬКА
КАТОЛИЦЬКА ЄПАРХІЯ
ПРЕСВЯТОЇ РОДИНИ
В ЛОНДОНІ



UKRAINIAN
CATHOLIC EPARCHY
OF THE HOLY FAMILY
OF LONDON

**PASTORAL LETTER
COVID-19 VACCINATION**

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear Reverend Clergy, Religious and Lay Faithful
of the Eparchy of the Holy Family of London

Our Country is the first to begin vaccination against COVID-19. This is a serious disease caused by Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The virus has caused a pandemic that is linked to the death of more than 60,000 people in the United Kingdom and over one million people globally. We are all wondering whether we should participate in the nationwide vaccination program that will happen over the next several months.

Bishop Richard Moth, Chair of the Department of Social Justice at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, in a statement released on 3rd December 2020 stated:

“The development of a vaccine against COVID-19 presents an important breakthrough in protecting others as well as oneself from the virus; a virus which has not only caused a global pandemic and led to a huge loss of life but has also placed a great burden on healthcare workers and systems.”

There is no doubt in my mind that each of us at times has had to face overwhelming challenges these past several months that a year ago we could not have even imagined. We most certainly know someone who has suffered serious health issues or has even lost their life due to this virus. We are experiencing loneliness, isolation, and for many, hardship or loss of employment. Many special moments in our lives have had to be postponed or cancelled, such as weddings and baptisms, holidays, and travel both in our country and abroad. In March, we saw the closure of our churches for public worship and, when permitted to open again in July, it was under very restricted circumstances. Then in November, we were plunged into another lockdown, which meant that our churches remained closed for public worship until the beginning of December.

The statement from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW) goes on to say: *“Each of us has a duty to protect others from infection with its danger of serious illness and for some, death. A vaccine is the most effective way to achieve this unless one decides to self-isolate.”*

There are several matters that need consideration when making your decision regarding receiving the vaccination. One of these deciding factors has its roots in a moral discussion. Here again we, the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, have addressed this question with the following response:

“At present, debate concerns the use of the vaccines developed by Pfizer & BioNTech, Moderna, and AstraZeneca. Some have questioned the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine since it has been developed from cell-lines originating from the cells of an aborted foetus in 1983.

The [Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith](#) and the [Pontifical Academy of Life](#) have expressed the view that one may in good conscience and for a grave reason receive a vaccine sourced in this

way, provided that there is a sufficient moral distance between the present administration of the vaccine and the original wrongful action.

In the COVID-19 pandemic, we judge that this grave reason exists and that one does not sin by receiving the vaccine.

Both the Pfizer & BioNTech and Moderna vaccines have a different source since they are mRNA-based vaccines. On 2 December 2020, the Pfizer & BioNTech vaccine was approved for use in the UK.

“Each Catholic must educate his or her conscience on this matter and decide what to do, also bearing in mind that a vaccine must be safe, effective, and universally available, especially to the poor of the world.

Catholics may in good conscience receive any of these vaccines for the good of others and themselves.”

Whether the vaccine is safe or not, is a concern for all. The vaccine which is currently available in the United Kingdom has been certified as “safe” by the Government regulators. Recent comments in the media have suggested that by not being vaccinated may result in restrictions being imposed upon some daily activities such as international travel and attendance at public events etc.

The Pontifical Academy for Life issued a document with regard to vaccination issues and one of their observations that offers us guidance today is that there is *“the moral obligation to guarantee the vaccination coverage necessary for the safety of others is no less urgent, especially the safety of more vulnerable subjects such as pregnant women and those affected by immunodeficiency who cannot be vaccinated ...”*

As soon as the vaccine becomes available for me, I will, without hesitation, take part in the immunisation program against COVID-19. Having stated this, you may decide to refuse a particular vaccine for one reason or another. However, I wish to remind you of our obligation to protect one another from infection. The most effective way to do this currently is by participating in the mass vaccination programs throughout the world. To this end, I encourage all our faithful to partake in this COVID-19 related initiative. Naturally, please consult your own health-care provider should you have any concerns regarding your own eligibility for vaccination.

I continue to place each of you under the protection of the Holy Family, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Most Holy Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary, and the holy and righteous St. Joseph the Betrothed.

The blessing of the Lord be upon you!



+Kenneth
Eparchial Bishop

Given on the Eleventh Day of December in the Year of Our Lord 2020
At the Cathedral-Sobor of the Holy Family, In the God-blessed city of Westminster, London