



# Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide

## *Archbishop of Adelaide*

5<sup>th</sup> March, 2021  
20210305:004:L:POR

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

### **RE: Comments on COVID Vaccines**

Grace and peace, I hope that this note finds you well.

Pope Francis has reflected upon COVID-19 in his book, *Let Us Dream – The Path to a Better Future* (2020). In this short book, 160 pages, the Pope explores the spiritual and social dimensions of the crisis. He offers his reflection on how he hopes we may emerge from this time working with others for the betterment of the world. It's a short read. I recommend it to you.

There has been discussion in the media about the application of the vaccines now arriving in Australia and which now are being distributed here in South Australia. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of December, 2020 the Holy See prepared a response which grappled with the very complex questions which had been posed from various pastoral, moral and ethical positions.

In exploring the impact of the crisis, the Holy See identified the terrible suffering of many, the deaths of thousands, the strain on health care professionals and the necessity for nations to seek a way together to fight the virus through the development of vaccines. They reviewed the development of vaccines and determined that those who receive the vaccine are not morally complicit or responsible for the manner of their development which was in response to a world crisis. The advice, mindful of the freedom and rights of individuals, is based upon the principle of the common good. They propose that in choosing to receive the vaccine we in turn participate in the reduction of the spread of the virus and the care of our brothers and sisters.

You may wish to read the text by visiting:

[https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20201221\\_nota-vaccini-anticovid\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20201221_nota-vaccini-anticovid_en.html)

Similarly the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference has previously endorsed the distribution of the vaccine to those able to safely receive the vaccine: <https://mediablog.catholic.org.au/a-letter-to-the-faithful-regarding-development-of-a-covid-19-vaccine/#more-8597>

Understandably some people are nervous about the vaccine, while others anticipate with hope its wide distribution. We are asked to trust in the professional skills of our medical professionals and scientists. The freedom of choice to receive the vaccine is ours and we consider the responsibility we have toward others when we make our decision. There are those whose personal health and other issues which should be carefully considered and discussed with their medical advisors.

As the vaccines begin to be distributed, we remain mindful of those front-line health professionals who continue to support the efforts of keeping Australians safe and work toward the eradication of the virus. Maybe these wonderful people might be highlighted in your Holy Thursday celebration of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper.

The Government has outlined the proposed roll-out of the vaccination, and we are mindful that each person who is vaccinated contributes the common good of all Australians, and therefore, our brothers and sisters across the world.

Should you wish to delve further, you might consider having a look at:- *'The ultimate Catholic coronavirus vaccine morality explainer'*:

[https://www.pillarcatholic.com/p/the-ultimate-catholic-coronavirus?utm\\_campaign=post&utm\\_medium=web&utm\\_source=email](https://www.pillarcatholic.com/p/the-ultimate-catholic-coronavirus?utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web&utm_source=email)

While emanating from the USA, and thus a different cultural and political context, most of the information would be of assistance. The article, by bioethicist Michael Deem, was published in the online news site *The Pillar*. It offers a useful summary of the statements of the Holy See on the vaccine and some of the other moral questions that keep arising.

While, in relative terms, we have been most fortunate here in South Australia as to the impact of COVID, this is not a time to be complacent about things. This is a pandemic, and we must not let the perfect become the enemy of the good. Let us continue to first pray for those who have been affected by the pandemic and for its swift banishment.

In Domino,



+Patrick O'Regan  
**Archbishop of Adelaide**