



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII
DIOCESE OF HONOLULU
WITNESS TO JESUS

January 8, 2021

Dear Faithful of the Diocese of Honolulu,

Peace be with you, and happy new year!

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, this new year brings some hope in controlling the virus through vaccines. The State of Hawaii vaccination plan is being implemented at this time. You may have some moral or ethical concerns regarding the potential contents (compromised cell lines/fetal cells) of these vaccines in relation to our Catholic teaching and faith. Here is an excerpt from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) document, "MORAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE NEW COVID-19 VACCINES". The full text of the document can be found at <https://usccb.org/moral-considerations-covid-vaccines>.

The Holy See, through the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Pontifical Academy for Life, has offered guidance on the question of whether it is morally acceptable to receive a vaccine that has been created with the use of morally compromised cell lines. Both the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Pontifical Academy for Life emphasize the positive moral obligation to do good and in so doing to distance oneself as much as possible from the immoral act of another party such as abortion in order to avoid cooperation with someone else's evil actions and to avoid giving scandal, which could happen if one's own actions were perceived by other people to ignore or to minimize the evil of the action. Our love of neighbor should lead us to avoid giving scandal, but we cannot omit fulfilling serious obligations such as the prevention of deadly infection and the spread of contagion among those who are vulnerable just to avoid the appearance of scandal.

The Holy See points out that there are different degrees of responsibility in cooperating with the evil actions of others. With regard to people involved in the development and production of vaccines, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith explains that "in organizations where cell lines of illicit origin are being utilized, the responsibility of those who make the decision to use them is not the same as that of those who have no voice in such a decision." As for the moral responsibility of those who are merely the recipients of the vaccines, the Congregation affirms that a serious health danger could justify use of "a vaccine which was developed using cell lines of illicit origin, while keeping in mind that everyone has the duty to make known their disagreement and to ask that their healthcare system make other types of vaccines available."

During this global pandemic, we should continue to fulfill our obligation of charity to one another in preventing the spread of the disease. This includes following Center for Disease Control (CDC) and local government guidelines in masking, social distancing, gatherings, etc. and could include receiving a vaccine for the protection and dignity of the lives of those in our communities. The choice of whether to receive the vaccine rests with the individual or with parents/guardians of minors.

Please continue to pray with me for the containment of the COVID-19 virus, and that each of you, your families and your communities remain safe and healthy.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Larry Silva
Bishop of Honolulu