



Office of the Bishop

DIOCESE OF DALLAS

March 5, 2021

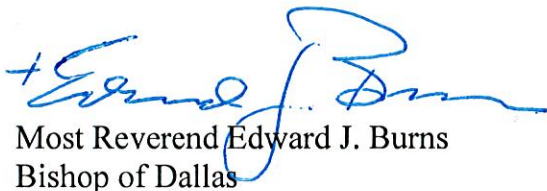
Statement of Bishop Edward J. Burns on the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine

The USCCB released a statement on March 2, 2021 concerning the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in order to draw attention to the immoral use of abortion-derived cell lines in the development of COVID-19 vaccines and to guide the faithful concerning reception of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in particular.

It is important to emphasize what the USCCB's statement does say and what it does not say. It does say that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine raises additional moral concerns over the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, as those vaccines utilize abortion-derived cells only at the testing stage, while the Johnson & Johnson vaccine utilizes abortion-derived cell lines at all stages: design, manufacturing and testing. For this reason, the USCCB calls on the faithful to consider seeking out the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines over the Johnson & Johnson vaccine when a choice is available to them.

What it **does not** say is that receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is morally impermissible or that we must categorically avoid this vaccine. The USCCB identifies Catholic moral teaching on this issue: "The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has judged that 'when ethically irreproachable Covid-19 vaccines are not available ... it is morally acceptable to receive Covid-19 vaccines that have used cell lines from aborted fetuses in their research and production process.'" The Church fully understands that during this pandemic where there is limited access to vaccines, people are placed in a situation where they do not have any choice concerning what vaccine they receive.

Therefore, I concur with the USCCB's judgment and reiterate what the USCCB has said: "While we should continue to insist that pharmaceutical companies stop using abortion-derived cell lines, given the world-wide suffering that this pandemic is causing, we affirm again that being vaccinated can be an act of charity that serves the common good."



Most Reverend Edward J. Burns
Bishop of Dallas



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Bishop Edward J. Burns issues response to Governor Abbott's decision


All of us have been impacted by COVID-19. It has tested our faith and caused tremendous hardships and loss. Though these have been difficult times, we must remain hopeful and vigilant.

The governor's recent decision to remove the mask mandate and open up the state has created concern as to how our churches and schools will respond to the announcement. After consultation with priest representatives, health experts and a review of the most current COVID statistics, at this time I have asked our pastors to continue to adhere to the current protocols we have in place. This includes the dispensation of the Sunday Mass obligation, social distancing and modest church capacity limits. We also expect the Catholic faithful in the Diocese of Dallas to continue to wear masks out of charity and concern for all those around them. I plan to regularly revisit this question as this issue develops, always with an eye on medical statistics, hope for the future and the needs of the faithful in view.

In his announcement on March 2, Governor Abbott said that while the state mandates are no longer in place he urged Texans to continue to exercise "personal vigilance" in navigating the pandemic and that entities can "limit capacity or implement additional safety protocols." He even encouraged Texans to continue to wear their masks.

Our Catholic Schools Office has led the way in researching, consulting and implementing COVID protocols to keep our students, teachers and families in school and safe. Superintendent Dr. Matt Vereecke has already announced that the existing safety measures will remain in place at all diocesan schools through the end of this school year.

I join you in suffering from COVID fatigue. But hope shines brighter than ever with vaccines becoming more available in our communities. Regarding vaccines, I also felt it was important to make a comment on the newly available Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Please see that statement on our website at <https://www.cathdal.org/vaccine>. As I have said before, I am very grateful to serve as your Bishop. As your shepherd, I will always do whatever I can to protect my flock. Please join me in praying for an end to this horrific pandemic that has claimed countless lives. May our Heavenly Father grant us patience and understanding as we all work together to help bring an end to the spread of this deadly virus and the tremendous suffering it has caused.



Most Reverend Edward J. Burns
Bishop of Dallas