



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Now that the "COVID vaccine" is available for almost everyone, I wanted to remind people about what the Church teaches about all of this. We had an insert a couple of months ago, but so much has happened since then.

First of all, even though all of the available treatments have some connection – even if remote – with abortion, the Church has clarified that it is **morally permissible** to get the COVID-19 vaccination. That being said, the Church has also said that it is **NOT morally obligatory** to be vaccinated.

Whether we are vaccinated or not, there are consequences that flow from our choices, and these must be weighed in the balance. Not getting vaccinated may mean certain restrictions within society, and the possibility of a higher rate of contagion. Those who are vaccinated may have to deal with unknown physical reactions, both now and possibly years down the road. With the high level of divisiveness of this issue in our country whether you are vaccinated or not, you risk virtue-signaling and the judgment and ire of those on the other side of the issue.

Whichever choice you make, though, there is a moral obligation to uphold the sacred dignity of every human life. This means that we have an obligation to protect those most vulnerable – standing up for the unborn, whose cell-lines have been used in the development and production and/or confirmatory lab tests; and protecting those who are sick, elderly, or immune-compromised in another way and so have a higher death rate from contracting COVID-19.

For some, the choice will be easy. For others, it may require much prayer and soul-searching. If you have not yet decided, I encourage you to discern this in the context of prayer. Ask God what He wants for your life. Given all of the particular situations of your life, where is God leading you. Maybe you could list out all of the positive and negative aspects of each choice and lay them before God with a firm "Jesus, I trust in You!"

Another major part of this is connected with something I mentioned last weekend – **Mercy First!** We are called NOT to look down on those around us for their choices, but to recognize that each person has to discern where God is leading him or her. We can certainly have conversations, share information and express opinions, but remember that we are called to love each other, even if we think others have chosen poorly. After all, God still loves us, even though we constantly sin against Him. He wants what is best for us, but does not shame us into it. Rather, He reaches out in love, trying to draw us away from our sin and back to His Heart.

I remind you that the Diocese of Manchester website has a number of resources about COVID-19 vaccines as well as template letters you can send to the various pharmaceutical companies, encouraging them to separate themselves from connection with abortion. You can find all of this information at [www.catholicnh.org/coronavirus](http://www.catholicnh.org/coronavirus).

Amidst all of this, I remind you that Jesus is in charge! He is the One who saves – not vaccines or masks or science. May we keep our eyes fixed on Him as we navigate these difficult waters.