

**Knights of Columbus Alberta-Northwest Territories
Formation Program-March-2021
Hope does not disappoint us. (Rom 5, 5)**

Opening Prayer

Lord, teach us to pray:
“Our Father...”

The Reading

(To be read by the Leader)

My dear Worthy Brothers in the Lord. I first wish to apologize for not getting a February Formation program out to you. It is a long story, and I am full of good excuses, none of which negate my monthly obligation to my Brothers. I want to speak about a timely topic, Vaccinations. I have heard from a number of Brothers, and some of the faithful in general, that they are concerned about receiving the vaccination for Covid-19. This, for a number of reasons but the area I will focus on will be the moral issue. The reality that some vaccines have been derived from what we know to be the tissue of aborted fetuses. My support material for this writing comes from the Catholic Bishops of Alberta whom I can assure you have done their homework regarding this issue.

So, the Question. Is it okay for a Catholic to be vaccinated against Covid-19? The short answer is “yes, it is.” We know that the death toll is over a million people world-wide. Millions more have been affected in a negative way whether it be spiritually, emotionally, physically, or economically. The moral issue at question with the Covid-19 vaccine stems from the fact that vaccine development and testing often “make use of cell lines derived from either the tissue of aborted fetuses, or destroyed human embryos.” This brings into focus the Churches absolute affirmative stand on the sanctity of life from conception until natural death. To summarize, the dilemma; on the one hand we know that vaccinations have and do save lives. On the other hand, arises the question; does receiving the vaccine make us complicit in the moral evil of abortion?

The reality of our society and medical research is that cell lines stemming from abortion are very widely used in the biopharmaceutical industry. The grim truth is that a vaccine that will be effective against the novel corona virus may not be available from other than vaccines derived from aborted fetal tissue. So, then the question; Is it morally permissible to receive a vaccine that has been produced unethically when an ethical alternative is not readily accessible?

The Church teaches that there are various degrees of cooperation in the evil that constitutes abortion. 1. The most serious affront of course is the actual abortion itself. 2. This is followed by the derivation of cell lines for research purposes. 3. The process of vaccine development using these cell lines. 4. The production of the vaccine and sale of the vaccine. 5. Finally, the use of the vaccine. My point in numbering these steps is to illustrate how far-removed reception of the vaccine is from the actual grave sin of the abortion. “With respect to someone simply receiving the vaccine, the degree of

connection with the original evil act is so remote that, when there also exists a proportionately grave reason for vaccination, such as the current urgent need to halt the covid-19 pandemic, then the Church assures us that it is morally permissible for Catholics to receive it for the good of personal and public health.” The Bishops remind us clearly that the advice to be vaccinated does not diminish the seriousness of the evil that is the source of cell lines that are used to develop some vaccines. Evil is evil for sure. By the grace of God in this situation, we find ourselves many degrees removed from the source of this evil, that being the sin of abortion itself.

The Reflection

(To be read by the Leader)

Brothers, we are all blessed with good minds, and the ability to become informed about different facets of life in general. We are all obligated to come to an informed conscience by the best means possible. Particularly when it comes to matters of faith. It is my considered opinion, that when it comes to matters of the Church, of morality, of good and evil, there is no more orthodox and accurate source of information than our Catholic Bishops. These shepherds have done their homework on this subject. There is so much at stake here when they speak with a united voice, you can be sure you are not receiving an opinion, but a pure well researched orthodox Catholic teaching. On November 23, the U.S. Bishops doctrine and pro-life committee issued the following statement. “Some are asserting that if a vaccine is connected in any way with tainted cell lines that it is immoral to be vaccinated with them. This is an inaccurate portrayal of Catholic moral teaching.” It is possible you may not agree with this permission and advice, but it will need to be for reasons other than moral concerns. The Holy Father has said get vaccinated. Brothers, for me, I do not think that I am more intelligent than the great and holy minds that are responsible for shepherding our Church in this modern-day world. We do have to trust in something. I place my trust in my God and my Church.

Hope does not disappoint us. (Rom 5, 5)

Meditation Period

(The Leader now invites the members to spend a few moments in silent reflection, as the above text is not meant to be a ready-made answer but a starter for personal reflection on the theme.)

Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

Let us pray:

“Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen