

## Matić rapport: COMECE roept EU parlement op met verantwoordelijkheid te stemmen

*CEMECE, 17 juni 2021*

The Secretariat of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (CEMECE) released a position paper on the 'Matić Report' on Thursday 17 June 2021, ahead of its final submission to the upcoming EU Parliament Plenary session. The Catholic Church recognises the importance of protecting the health and rights of women and calls on all MEPs to take into account the sensitive and complexity of the issue at stake, which *"requires a lawful and ethical balancing of all rights involved"*.

In view of the final vote on the draft report on *"The situation of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the EU, in the framework of women's health"*, often referred to as the 'Matić Report', the Secretariat of COMECE releases a position paper highlighting the importance the Catholic Church gives to human health as *"an essential basis for a dignified life"*.

In the document, the Secretariat of COMECE welcomes *"the fundamental concern of the report to protect the health and rights of women"*, while expressing objections to several representations and arguments made in the draft resolution.

In violation of the subsidiarity principle, the draft resolution disregards the responsibility of the Member States to define their health policy and the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care. *"This is also and especially true in highly sensitive areas such as the regulations adopted by the Member States on the conditions for abortion"* - reads the statement.

The COMECE position paper notes with regret that *"the draft resolution is characterised by a one-sided perspective throughout, particularly on the issue of abortion, which does not take full account of the life situations of the persons concerned and of their corresponding human rights"*.

According to the COMECE Secretariat, the Matić Report also *"negates the fundamental right to conscientious objection, which is an emanation of freedom of conscience as foreseen by Article 10.1 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union"*.

The Catholic Church recognises the importance of protecting the health and rights of women and calls on all MEPs to take into account the sensitive and complexity of the issue at stake, *"which requires a lawful and ethical balancing of all rights involved"*.

In consideration of the above-mentioned elements and ahead of the June 2021 EP Plenary session, the COMECE Secretariat calls on all MEPs to duly consider the sensitivity and complexity of medical accompaniment, which requires a lawful and ethical balancing of all rights involved.



[Matić rapport](#)Download



[CEMECE position paper on Matić report](#)Download

## Vaticaanse diplomaat bij VN: “Een vaccin voor iedereen”

### Statement At The ECOSOC Special Ministerial Meeting “A Vaccine For All”

*By Msgr. Mirosław Wachowski, Under-Secretary for Relations with States*

Ecosoc Special Ministerial Meeting “A Vaccine for All”  
United Nations Headquarters, 16 APRIL 2021

Mr. President,

The COVID-19 pandemic has enveloped the entire world in a shared experience of illness, fear and loss and it has reminded us of our deep interconnectedness. We must work in fraternal solidarity to emerge from it together. Exercising that solidarity through universal access to vaccines, especially for those most in need, must be a priority.

Even as wealthy nations are now vaccinating their populations, many countries in the Global South have no vaccines at all. The Secretary-General’s recent assertion that 75% of all vaccines have been distributed in 10 countries, while 130 countries have zero vaccinations, is alarming. Due to poverty and fragile health infrastructures, billions of people live in what Pope Francis calls as a sort of “pharmaceutical marginality,” which is why he has said that “at an ethical level, if there is a possibility of curing a disease with a drug, it should be available to everyone, otherwise it creates injustice.”<sup>[1]</sup> [Pope Francis, Address to the Members of the Banco Farmaceutico Foundation, 19 September 2020.] The consequences of long delays in vaccination in the poorest countries means that there will be more needless deaths, as well as damage to healthcare, education, and poverty eradication efforts.

The international community must work together for the common good and find creative solutions. Enabling the production of vaccines in Africa, Asia, and Latin America through the sharing of patent information and through technical collaboration could accelerate the vaccination rate significantly while also building healthcare system capacity. Furthermore, it is crucial to provide them with the infrastructure to receive, store, transport and distribute vaccines across their territories. The Holy See welcomes the efforts undertaken through COVAX, which has begun delivering vaccines to developing countries and has pledged to meet at least twenty percent of the need. Pledges from governments and pharmaceutical companies to share vaccines with those most in need are also hopeful signs.

Furthermore, civil society organizations, and faith-based organizations in particular, play a key role in expanding the vaccinations. Supporting them and unleashing their full vitality can strengthen healthcare in the future.

In order to facilitate not only the local participation in vaccine development and distribution, but also to help developing countries recover from COVID-19, the question of their crippling debt burdens, worsened by the economic devastation caused by the pandemic, must be addressed. Debt forgiveness could free up funds that would allow such countries to improve healthcare systems and access to medical care, including in response to COVID-19.

Mr. President, we must act on the commitment to ensure equitable access to vaccines for all by working together in service of this common goal. Today’s meeting is an important step toward the concrete action needed to meet that urgent aim.

Thank you

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## **XIV Wereld Zeldzame Ziektendag: Solidariteit met iedere mens**

Brothers and sisters, today, February 28, 2021, is the XIV World Rare Disease Day. More than 6,000 diseases are classified as rare, of which 72% are of genetic origin and 70% begin in childhood [2: Cfr. Research published recently on “European Journal of Human Genetics”, author of the article EURORDIS-Rare Diseases Europe, Orphanet & Orphanet Ireland, “Estimating cumulative point prevalence of rare diseases: analysis of the Orphanet database”. The analysis is of rare genetic diseases and is therefore conservative as it does not include rare cancers, nor rare diseases caused by rare bacterial or viral infectious diseases or poisonings, in <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41431-019-0508-0>.].

People living with a rare disease are among the most vulnerable groups in society. Most of these diseases have no cure and are usually chronic, progressive, degenerative and disabling; they are heterogeneous, predominantly occur in children and require costly treatments.

Rare diseases are often neglected also because of insufficient medical knowledge, which makes it difficult to make a timely diagnosis, and consequently, it takes longer to recognise the disability and access the support that people with rare diseases need, not only with regard to health but also economic, educational and social necessities. All this prevents these dear brothers and sisters of ours from integrating into society, realising their potential, participating actively in family, work and social life, which is essential for the development of their personality, thus generating discrimination and loneliness.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of the difficult challenges these patients face every day, together with their families and carers. Limitations, delays and sometimes even interruption and denial of treatment, medication, diagnostic tests, rehabilitation therapies have had and continue to have serious repercussions on their psycho-physical health.

Often, as Pope Francis points out: “[To the most] vulnerable people are not always granted access to care, or in an equitable manner. This is the result of political decisions, resource management and greater or lesser commitment on the part of those holding positions of responsibility. Investing resources in the care and assistance of the sick is a priority linked to the fundamental principle that health is a primary common good”. [3: Francis, Message for the XXIX World Day of the Sick, 11 February 2021, n.3]

Policy-makers and institutions at various levels, national and international, are called upon to guarantee the right to health for the entire population, by promoting international cooperation, knowledge-sharing and more sustainable and resilient health systems that do not forget the needs of the most vulnerable and leave no one behind.

It is essential to promote a culture of care that is grounded in the promotion of the dignity of every human person, solidarity with the poor and the defenceless, the common good and the protection of creation [4: Cfr. Francis, Message for the LIV World Day of Peace, 1 January 2021]. Only by ensuring equitable and inclusive access to care and health care for the most vulnerable can we build a more humane society, where no one feels alone, abandoned or excluded. And it is precisely “starting from social love [that] it is possible to advance

towards a civilisation of love, to which all of us can feel called” [5: Francis, Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti, n. 183.].

Dear brothers and sisters, during this time of Lent, let us in our charity “speak words of reassurance and help others to realize that God loves them as sons and daughters” [6: Francis, Message for Lent 2021]. This is a time to cultivate hope and to love those who are suffering, abandoned and distressed.

With these words I conclude this brief Message and entrust to Mary, Mother of Mercy and Health of the Sick, all those affected by a rare disease, their families, those who care for them lovingly and all those who do their best to protect and recognise their right to care and to live a full life.

Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson  
Prefect

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## COMECE: COVID-19 vaccins voor iedereen

*COMECE, 23 february 2021*

The Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Union (COMECE) and Caritas Europa are urging the EU institutions to ensure vaccine access for all, promoting a *“widescale vaccination not only for Europe’s own safety and protection, but also for global public health as a public good”*.

With the COVID-19 pandemic having already entered into its second year, COMECE and Caritas Europa praised the swift action of the EU Member States to mobilise economic resources to support the scientific community in developing COVID-19 vaccines, under the leadership of the EU institutions.

The European Union is called upon to quickly define in detail its Vaccine Strategy and to implement mass vaccinations campaigns *“not only for Europe’s own safety and protection, but also for [...] people living in poorer nations”*.

COMECE and Caritas Europa welcome the global COVAX facility, aiming to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines also in economically weaker regions. The Catholic Church in the EU also stresses the crucial role the European Union should play in emphasizing the moral urgency to make vaccines available and affordable for all according to the principles of solidarity, social justice and inclusiveness upon which the European Union is built.

While different tools to combat the pandemic are now available, *“organisational and logistical capabilities – reads the statement – must be developed to meet the demand for mass vaccination,”* and the new HERA incubator mechanism should identify and eliminate bottlenecks in vaccine production and adjust output to respond to the emergence of new virus variants.

In this historic moment, the EU institutions are called to *“offset the devastating impact of the crisis in terms of anxiety, emerging social inequalities, and the impoverishment of large segments of the world’s population”*, as well as to *“support its Member States to promote mass information and advocacy campaigns to overcome fears of vaccination and misinformation”*.



[Statement COMECE-Caritas Europa - Vaccine strategyDownload](#)

## Ouderdom: onze toekomst - Ouderen na de pandemie

De Pauselijke Academie voor het Leven reflecteert op ouderen na de pandemie.



[Ouderen na de pandemie PAV ENGDownload](#)

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## Jaarverslag Vaticaanse COVID-19 commissie: Bereid de toekomst voor

*Dicastery for promoting integral human development, februari 2021*

On 20 March 2020, Pope Francis asked the *Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development* (DPIHD) to create a *Commission*, in collaboration with other Dicasteries of the Roman Curia and other organizations, to express the Church's solicitude and care for the whole human family facing the COVID-19 pandemic, including analysis, reflection on the new socio-economic-cultural future, and the proposal of relevant approaches.

Accordingly, DPIHD has established a Vatican COVID-19 Commission to take up the Pope's concern through the activities of five Working Groups, which are: acting now for the future; looking to the future with creativity; communicating hope; seeking common dialogue and reflections; supporting to care.

The activities of these five working groups, which were presented to the Holy Father on 27 March 2020, will be coordinated by a *Directorate* reporting directly to the Holy Father. It will include the DPIHD's Prefect, Cardinal Peter Turkson; Secretary, Mons. Bruno-Marie Duffé; and Adjunct Secretary, Fr. Augusto Zampini.



[Vatican Covid-19 Commission Annual Report 2020](#)

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## Versla lepra

### **Message of the Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development for the 68th World Leprosy Day (31 January 2021)**

To the Presidents of Episcopal Conferences, to the Bishops responsible for Health Pastoral Care, to Men and Women Religious, to social, healthcare and pastoral workers, to volunteers and all persons of good will,

“Beat Leprosy”

World Leprosy Day 2021 is observed this January 31 with the overall goal: “Beat Leprosy.” This noble aim begins with the medical reality that leprosy is a curable disease; but beating leprosy involves more than a mere

medical struggle. It also seeks to eliminate the social stigma that accompanies this difficult illness and ultimately envisions the restoration of the human person in an integral way.

There is a compelling account of the healing of leprosy in the Gospel of St. Luke: Jesus is making his way to Jerusalem when he is suddenly met by ten persons suffering from that neglected tropical disease of the skin. They call out to him from a distance, seeking help and consolation in their affliction. He responds by curing them of their physical ailment. One of them, recognizing that he was healed and that his social condition had been restored, returns to Jesus and, drawing near, gives thanks. At the conclusion of that encounter Jesus responds, "Stand up and go, your faith has saved you" (LK 17:19).

The Latin word for salvation is *salus*, and it is the same word used for healing. When Christ brings healing to the man with leprosy in the Gospel, he applies the salve of human dignity in addition to the physical remedy. It becomes an event that touches the entire person and the effects are far reaching. When the Church speaks of God's generous offer of salvation, that gift is described as both universal and integral.[7: Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 38.] God desires to heal all people and the whole person. Integral health likewise encompasses the personal and social dimension; it includes the spiritual nature of the person as well as the physical.

Health care services have advanced remarkably in addressing leprosy or Hansen's disease in recent decades. Multi-drug therapy has proven successful and effective in curing leprosy and has afforded much hope. Health care, in addition to treating the physical ailments of the person, must also consider the social and psychological dimensions. Integral health involves, "prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation for the better physical, psychological, social and spiritual balance and well-being of the person." [8: Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance for Health Care Workers, "New Charter for Health Care Workers," 3.]

The World Health Organization notes that stigma remains a challenge for early detection and successful completion of treatment for leprosy. "Many patients continue to experience social exclusion, depression and loss of income," they explain.[9: World Health Organization, "Global Leprosy Strategy 2016-2020," 5.] Promoting the inclusion of all persons in society and assuring integration in the community remain priorities. Additionally, financial support and opportunities to actively engage in the workplace and economic life are essential for people with leprosy and their families. "Every human being," insists Pope Francis, "has the right to live with dignity and to develop integrally; this fundamental right cannot be denied by any country. People have this right even if they are unproductive, or were born with or developed limitations." [10: Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, 107.]

Integral health is also an imperative for persons with leprosy with regard to their mental well-being, "since leprosy can be demonstrated to have a significant impact on social participation and mental health in addition to causing physical impairments." [11: PMW Somas, MW Waltz, WH van Brakel (2020), "The impact of leprosy on the mental wellbeing of leprosy-affected persons and their family members-a systematic review," *Global Mental Health* 7, e15, 1.] In a sense the person with leprosy suffers from the illness itself, and from the way he or she is received in the community. Lack of social adhesion can have a profoundly negative impact on self-esteem and a person's outlook on life, ultimately leaving the person vulnerable to mental illness. Pope Francis indicates that the human person is, by nature, open to relationships. "Implanted deep within us," he insists, "is the call to transcend ourselves through an encounter with others." [12: Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, 111.] The health care community in particular, and society as a whole, offer a tremendous service to the common good when they help facilitate this process of personal integration for those who suffer from leprosy and their families. Not everyone will have the skills or expertise to cure Hansen's disease physically, but everyone is capable of promoting that culture of encounter which brings about healing and the mental well-being of those affected by

this distressing illness.

In conclusion, I offer my sincere respect and gratitude to all who dedicate themselves to “beat leprosy” and offer healing and hope to those who suffer from Hansen’s disease. They show us, in very practical ways, that leprosy is curable, that human encounter can eliminate stigma, and that mental well-being is an essential part of integral health.

May the powerful intercession of Mary, health of the sick, lead us all more completely towards the healing touch of Jesus Christ.

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## Wie vertrouw je over de nieuwe coronavaccins?

*Katholiek Nieuwsblad, 22 januari 2021*

door dr. Anton ten Klooster, moraaltheoloog aan Tilburg University en priester van het aartsbisdom Utrecht

Binnen en buiten de Kerk heerst wantrouwen ten opzichte van de nieuwe coronavaccins. Kritische vragen stellen is terecht, maar er zijn goede (katholieke) redenen om je toch te laten vaccineren.

Het toedienen van de eerste vaccins markeert het begin van een nieuwe fase van de corona-pandemie. Velen hopen en verwachten dat het het begin van het einde van de beperkende maatregelen is. Daarvoor is een bepaalde vaccinatiegraad nodig; een dusdanig groot deel van de bevolking is gevaccineerd dat het virus zich moeilijker of zelfs helemaal niet kan verspreiden. Voor die vaccinatiegraad moeten mensen vertrouwen hebben in de werking van het vaccin en bereid zijn het te ontvangen. Deze zaken staan echter onder druk door zowel onduidelijkheid als desinformatie.

Voorop staat dat de vraag van wel of niet vaccineren iedereen persoonlijk raakt. Het is een handeling die ingrijpt in het eigen lichaam, om dit tegen ziekte te beschermen. Wie voor vaccinatie kiest, zal dus terecht willen weten of het veilig is. De werkzaamheid en veiligheid van de vaccins die nu in West-Europa toegediend worden, zijn onderzocht volgens de geldende wetenschappelijke standaarden. Toch blijven er vergezochte theorieën rondgaan over mogelijke genetische manipulatie door een vaccin en onbewezen bijwerkingen.

### Wantrouwen

De bron van dit probleem is een wantrouwen naar officiële instanties, dat gevoed wordt door de onzekere omstandigheden en de snelheid waarmee het vaccin ontwikkeld is. Maar juist die snelheid is ook een hoopvol teken van wat de mensheid kan bereiken als ze zich voluit en gezamenlijk inzet voor het oplossen van problemen. Uiteindelijk rest dan de vraag: wie vertrouw je? Zelf kies ik ervoor mijn vertrouwen te stellen in ethici met medische kennis, zoals bijvoorbeeld verenigd in de Katholieke Stichting Medische Ethiek ([medische-ethiek.nl](http://medische-ethiek.nl)). Zij betogen met kennis van zaken dat vaccinatie verantwoord, veilig en aanbevelenswaardig is. Terecht stellen we kritische vragen over zoiets belangrijks als het ontwikkelen en toedienen van een vaccin. Maar we mogen ook kritisch zijn bij de weging van de betrouwbaarheid van beschikbare informatie.

Terecht krijgt het gebruik van cellijnen van geaborteerde menselijke foetussen in de ontwikkeling van vaccins veel aandacht. Het leergezag wijst dit gebruik af. Tegelijk heeft het consequent betoogd dat het gebruik van deze vaccins in ernstige omstandigheden te rechtvaardigen is. De Congregatie voor de Geloofsleer bevestigde kort voor Kerstmis dat we ons in zulke omstandigheden bevinden. Toch blijft een aantal katholieken, met name in de VS, betogen dat het ontvangen van zo’n vaccin moreel onaanvaardbaar is. Zij verwerpen daarmee

impliciet (en soms ook expliciet) de stelling-name van het leergezag. Ook hier komt de kwestie van vertrouwen terug: paus Franciscus en bisschoppen wereldwijd – een enkele uitzondering daargelaten – houden eensgezind voor dat vaccinatie aanvaardbaar en aanbevelenswaardig is. Zo helpen zij ons bij het vormen van ons geweten. De Kerk heeft door de eeuwen heen de eensgezindheid over een leer ook gezien als een teken van de leiding van de Heilige Geest, ook hierop mogen we vertrouwen.

*Het katholieke leergezag houdt eensgezind voor dat vaccinatie aanvaardbaar en aanbevelenswaardig is*

Vaccinatie afwijzen lijkt een manier om jezelf te vrijwaren van vermeende risico's, moreel of medisch. Dit gaat echter voorbij aan het sociale aspect een vaccinatieprogramma beoogt niet alleen de bescherming van het individu, maar daardoor ook het beschermen van de samenleving als geheel, in het bijzonder diegenen die het kwetsbaarst zijn voor het coronavirus. Een afgewogen gewetensbeslissing dient ook dit mee te wegen.

Het spreekt voor zich dat daarbij de belangen van de ene groep niet opgeofferd mogen worden voor die van een andere. Dat is ook niet aan de orde: vaccinatie beschermt het individu en de gemeenschap. Wie denkt zelf weinig te vrezen te hebben van een eventuele corona-infectie, doet er goed aan om uit solidariteit voor vaccinatie te kiezen. Juist vanwege de grote belangen moet de overheid zorgvuldig communiceren over de werking van vaccins, mogelijke bijwerkingen, en ingaan op de zorgen van burgers. Waar zij dit nalaat, moet zij kritisch bevraagd worden, in het bijzonder door experts. Tegelijk mogen we als gelovige mensen en betrokken burgers laten zien dat we geen individualisten zijn, maar deel willen uitmaken van een solidaire en gezonde samenleving.

*Overgenomen met toestemming van [Katholiek Nieuwsblad](#).*

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## **Eerlijke en rechtvaardige vaccinatiestrategie als stap in de heling van de wereld**

### **A Fair and Just Vaccines Approach as Step Towards Healing the World**

*Vatican COVID-19 Commission and Pontifical Academy for Life, december 29th, 2020*

Vatican COVID-19 Commission and Pontifical Academy for Life Calls for Fair and Just Vaccines Approach as Step Towards Healing the World

Vatican lays out principles and values for vaccine adoption, providing a clear moral roadmap for world leaders and everyday citizens

The Vatican COVID-19 Commission and Pontifical Academy for Life issue 20-point joint paper confirming moral responsibility of taking COVID-19 vaccines, building off guidance from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued 21 December.

The paper states there is a moral responsibility to accept the vaccine, not just for individual personal health but to protect the health of all. The Vatican Commission and Pontifical Academy of Life reminds world leaders that vaccines were developed as a public good and must be provided to all fairly and equitably, prioritizing those most in need.

It calls on world leaders to resist the temptation to participate in “vaccine nationalism”, urging nation states and companies to cooperate – not compete – with each other.

Cardinal Turkson, head of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development (DPIHD), who leads the Commission said, “we are grateful to the scientific community for developing the vaccine in record time; it is now up to us to ensure it becomes available for all, especially the most vulnerable. It is a matter of justice. We need to show once and for all that we are one human family.”

“The interconnectedness that binds humanity has been revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, President of the Pontifical Academy of Life. “Together with the Commission, we are working with many partners to reveal lessons the human family can learn and to develop an ethics of risk and solidarity to protect the most vulnerable of society.”

“We are at a turning point in the COVID-19 pandemic and have an opportunity to start to define the world we want to see post-pandemic,” says Mons. Bruno-Marie Duffe, Secretary of the DPIHD. “The way in which vaccines are deployed – where, to whom, and for how much – is the first step for global leaders to take in committing to fairness and justice as the principles for building a better post- COVID world,” stresses Father Augusto Zampini, Adjunct Secretary of DPIHD.

### **About the Vatican Commission on COVID-19**

- The Vatican’s COVID-19 Commission was established by Pope Francis in March 2020 to respond to the global devastation caused by the pandemic. As we respond and move through recovery, we must ensure the cures for the immediate crises are stepping-stones to a more just, inclusive and integrated set of systems, responding to global crises as a global family.
- Housed within the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development (DPIHD) and led by Cardinal Peter Turkson, the Commission is a new model of working for the Vatican that places high priority on inter-dicasterial collaboration and deep engagement with external partners and local Church to inform global policy and practice toward a new model of global development that better serves the most vulnerable among people and planet.
- The work of the Commission is coordinated by a Directorate reporting directly to the Holy Father and includes the DPIHD’s Prefect, Cardinal Peter Turkson, Secretary, Msgr. Bruno-Marie Duffé, and Adjunct Secretary, Fr. Augusto Zampini.



[COVID-19 vaccination VC and PAVDownload](#)

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## **Notitie over ethische aspecten van het gebruik van enkele anti-COVID-19 vaccins**

### **Note on the morality of using some anti-Covid-19 vaccines**

*Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 21 december 2020*

The question of the use of vaccines, in general, is often at the center of controversy in the forum of public opinion. In recent months, this Congregation has received several requests for guidance regarding the use of vaccines against the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes Covid-19, which, in the course of research and production,

employed cell lines drawn from tissue obtained from two abortions that occurred in the last century. At the same time, diverse and sometimes conflicting pronouncements in the mass media by bishops, Catholic associations, and experts have raised questions about the morality of the use of these vaccines.

There is already an important pronouncement of the Pontifical Academy for Life on this issue, entitled "Moral reflections on vaccines prepared from cells derived from aborted human fetuses" (5 June 2005). Further, this Congregation expressed itself on the matter with the Instruction *Dignitas Personae* (September 8, 2008, cf. nn. 34 and 35). In 2017, the Pontifical Academy for Life returned to the topic with a Note. These documents already offer some general directive criteria.

Since the first vaccines against Covid-19 are already available for distribution and administration in various countries, this Congregation desires to offer some indications for clarification of this matter. We do not intend to judge the safety and efficacy of these vaccines, although ethically relevant and necessary, as this evaluation is the responsibility of biomedical researchers and drug agencies. Here, our objective is only to consider the moral aspects of the use of the vaccines against Covid-19 that have been developed from cell lines derived from tissues obtained from two fetuses that were not spontaneously aborted.

1. As the Instruction *Dignitas Personae* states, in cases where cells from aborted fetuses are employed to create cell lines for use in scientific research, "there exist differing degrees of responsibility" [13: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction *Dignitas Personae* (8<sup>th</sup> December 2008), n. 35; AAS (100), 884.] of cooperation in evil. For example, "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". [14: *Ibid*, 885.]

2. In this sense, when ethically irreproachable Covid-19 vaccines are not available (e.g. in countries where vaccines without ethical problems are not made available to physicians and patients, or where their distribution is more difficult due to special storage and transport conditions, or when various types of vaccines are distributed in the same country but health authorities do not allow citizens to choose the vaccine with which to be inoculated) *it is morally acceptable to receive Covid-19 vaccines that have used cell lines from aborted fetuses in their research and production process*.

3. The fundamental reason for considering the use of these vaccines morally licit is that the kind of cooperation in evil (*passive material cooperation*) in the procured abortion from which these cell lines originate is, on the part of those making use of the resulting vaccines, *remote*. The moral duty to avoid such passive material cooperation is not obligatory if there is a grave danger, such as the otherwise uncontainable spread of a serious pathological agent [15: Cfr. Pontifical Academy for Life, "Moral reflections on vaccines prepared from cells derived from aborted human foetuses", 5<sup>th</sup> June 2005.]—in this case, the pandemic spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes Covid-19. It must therefore be considered that, in such a case, all vaccinations recognized as clinically safe and effective can be used in good conscience with *the certain knowledge that the use of such vaccines does not constitute formal cooperation with the abortion* from which the cells used in production of the vaccines derive. It should be emphasized, however, that the morally licit use of these types of vaccines, in the particular conditions that make it so, does not in itself constitute a legitimation, even indirect, of the practice of abortion, and necessarily assumes the opposition to this practice by those who make use of these vaccines.

4. In fact, the licit use of such vaccines does not and should not in any way imply that there is a moral endorsement of the use of cell lines proceeding from aborted fetuses. [16: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruct. *Dignitas Personae*, n. 35: "When the illicit action is endorsed by the laws which regulate healthcare and scientific research, it is necessary to distance oneself from the evil aspects of that system in order not to give the impression of a certain toleration or tacit acceptance of actions which are gravely unjust.

Any appearance of acceptance would in fact contribute to the growing indifference to, if not the approval of, such actions in certain medical and political circles”.] Both pharmaceutical companies and governmental health agencies are therefore encouraged *to produce, approve, distribute and offer ethically acceptable vaccines that do not create problems of conscience* for either health care providers or the people to be vaccinated.

5. At the same time, practical reason makes evident that vaccination is not, as a rule, a moral obligation and that, therefore, it must be voluntary. In any case, from the ethical point of view, *the morality of vaccination depends not only on the duty to protect one’s own health, but also on the duty to pursue the common good*. In the absence of other means to stop or even prevent the epidemic, the common good may recommend vaccination, especially to protect the weakest and most exposed. Those who, however, for reasons of conscience, refuse vaccines produced with cell lines from aborted fetuses, must do their utmost to avoid, by other prophylactic means and appropriate behavior, becoming vehicles for the transmission of the infectious agent. In particular, they must avoid any risk to the health of those who cannot be vaccinated for medical or other reasons, and who are the most vulnerable.

6. Finally, there is also a moral imperative for the pharmaceutical industry, governments and international organizations *to ensure that vaccines, which are effective and safe from a medical point of view, as well as ethically acceptable, are also accessible to the poorest countries in a manner that is not costly for them*. The lack of access to vaccines, otherwise, would become another sign of discrimination and injustice that condemns poor countries to continue living in health, economic and social poverty. [17: Cfr. Francis, *Address to the members of the “Banco Farmaceutico” foundation*, 19 September 2020.]

*The Sovereign Pontiff Francis, at the Audience granted to the undersigned Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, on 17 December 2020, examined the present Note and ordered its publication.*

Rome, from the Offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, on 21 December 2020, Liturgical Memorial of Saint Peter Canisius.

Luis F. Card. Ladaria, S.I.  
*Prefect*

+ S.E. Mons. Giacomo Morandi  
*Titular Archbishop of Cerveteri*  
*Secretary*