

THE CATHOLIC POSITION ON COVID-19 VACCINES 10 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*Prepared by Rev Fr Dr Clarence Devadass
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**Based on the Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia
on COVID-19, VACCINES AND IMMUNISATION
Dated 4 February 2021**

Q1: What is the position of the Catholic Church in relation to vaccinations in general?

Catholic teaching protects the good of every life and the health of all and teaches that one must not do harm to another. Therefore, the Catholic position is that vaccination is a moral good and the moral principle with regard to vaccinations is that it “*depends not only on the duty to protect one's own health, but also on the duty to pursue the common good.*”

Q2. What does the Church say about vaccines derived “immorally”?

The process of developing vaccines should always respect the human dignity of all persons, including the unborn. The Church advocates the protection and sanctity of human life at all stages. Deliberately destroying innocent human life in order to safeguard other lives is ethically wrong.

Q3: Is the Covid-19 vaccine being derived from aborted foetuses?

Foetal cell lines are biological products developed from the cells extracted from the foetus. They are not the same as cells or tissue taken directly from the foetus. It has been noted that in order to determine the efficacy of some vaccines, it has been tested against foetal cell lines but they only function as a kind of ‘biological soil’ . In no way do these vaccines have any incipient or foetal tissue in the development stage.

Q4. Is it morally permissible for ordinary people to use vaccines that make use of foetal cell lines for research?

Yes. For serious or grave reasons, one may be vaccinated even if the vaccine was derived from or tested on foetal cell lines. Based on the Catholic moral *principles of cooperation*, our connection with the past wrongdoing is both remote and distant.

Q5. By taking vaccines that make use of foetal cell lines, does it amount to a legitimisation of abortion?

No. 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 foetuses. Therefore it is not a legitimisation of abortion. Abortion is a grave sin.

Q6. What about the use of the new COVID-19 vaccines?

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.

Q7. Is it a sin to accept a vaccine that was either developed or researched using foetal cell-lines?

No. Based on the Catholic moral *principles of cooperation*, the Church teaches that for ordinary citizens, who have no direct say in how vaccines are produced, our connection with the past wrongdoing is so remotely distant. Therefore, it is morally acceptable to use a vaccine either developed or researched using foetal cell-lines when there is a grave reason, and no other alternatives are available.

Q8. Do I have the right not to be vaccinated on the grounds of “conscience”?

Yes. However, the assumption here is that the conscience has been fully formed and informed. In times of doubt, turn to the *Magisterium* (the teaching office of the Catholic Church) for clarity on difficult questions.

Q9. Can I still contribute to the common good if I am unable to receive the vaccination for medical or personal reasons?

Yes. You must do your utmost to avoid, by other prophylactic means (e.g. masks, face shields, social distancing, etc) and appropriate behaviour, becoming vehicles for the transmission of the infectious agent to others, especially the vulnerable.

Q10. What does Catholic Social Teaching say about COVID-19 vaccines?

The Catholic Social Teaching calls on those in authority to not only ensure that rigorous education and outreach campaigns to address vaccine hesitancy, but also to ensure accessibility especially to the most vulnerable in society, accountability and transparency so as to prevent commercial exploitation of the situation, effectivity and safety for the protection of all, and common good to help rebuild lives and that of the nation.

**For more detailed reading, please refer to the CBCM Pastoral Letter (4 Feb 2021).*

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天主教就冠病疫苗的立场之 10 个常问问题

资料由吉隆坡总教区天主教研究中心主任克拉伦斯德瓦达斯神父准备
依据马来西亚天主教主教团于 2 月 4 日针对冠病疫苗及接种发出的信函

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问题 1：关于疫苗接种，天主教会的立场是什么？

答：天主教教义教导要保护每个人的美好生命和健康，同时勿伤害他人。因此，天主教会的立场是，接种在道德上是好的，且是基于接种不止是保障个人的健康，也是基于公共的利益。

问题 2：就疫苗衍生不道德的说词，教会有什么说法？

答：在疫苗开发的过程是必须时刻尊重所有人的尊严，包括胎儿。教育倡导人类的生命在所有阶段都应受到保护及是神圣的。破坏无辜的生命以保障其他人的生命，在道德上是错误的。

问题 3：冠病疫苗是否使用流产胎儿的细胞系？

答：胎儿细胞系是从胎儿细胞中提取的生物产物。这与直接取自胎儿的细胞或组织有所不同。须注意的是，为了确认一些疫苗的功效，已针对胎儿细胞进行系进行测试，其作用犹如“生物土壤”。这些疫苗在发展阶段绝不会有任何初期或胎儿组织。

问题 4：在道德上是否允许一般人使用以利用初生胎儿细胞系进行接种的疫苗？

答：是的。由于严重或严重的原因，有关人士可接种，即使疫苗是从胎儿细胞系上测试而来，。基于天主教的合作道德原则，过去的错误行为已是遥不可及。

问题 5：接种含有流产胎儿细胞系的疫苗，是否等同于合法化堕胎？

答：不是的。此疫苗的合法使用不应及不可被诠释为道德上认同使用堕胎之胎儿的细胞系。因此，这不是合法化堕胎。堕胎是严重的罪。

问题 6：那么新冠病疫苗的使用又是如何？

答：在临床上公认安全及有效的疫苗皆可被使用，前提是使用这类疫苗不能被视为是建立堕胎是为了取得细胞株以作为生产疫苗的正式合作关系。

问题 7：接受使用胎儿细胞系研发的疫苗是否是罪？

答：不是的。依据天主教的道德合作原则，教会教导我们，在疫苗生产上没有直接发言权的普通公民，我们与过去错误的联结是遥远的。因此，在严重的因素下，使用以流产胎儿研发的疫苗在道德上是可以被接受的，而且是没有其他可选择的。

问题 8：我是否有有权基于“良知”而不接种疫苗？

答：是的。然而，这里的假设，“良知”是完全建立及被告知。在怀疑的时候，寻求训导（教会的指导中心）以釐清难题。

问题 9：如果由于医疗或个人因素无法接种疫苗，我还能基于共同利益，作出贡献吗？

答：是的。（例如，口罩、面罩及保持人身距离等）及以适当的行为，避免自己成为病毒的传输工具并传染给他人，尤其是弱势群体。

问题 10：天主教的教导对疫苗的看法是什么？

答：天主教的社会教育呼吁当权者不但要确保进行严谨的教育和宣导运动，以解决对疫苗的疑虑，同时要确保任何当前的商业开发是负责任及透明化，能有效及安全保护所有人，以保障所有人，尤其是社会上的弱势群体，以协助重建生活及国家。

注：详细的阅读可参考马来西亚天主教主教团牧函（2021 年 2 月 4 日）