

August 18, 2021

In unison with the Holy See and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the Archdiocese of Philadelphia strongly recommends that all members of the Catholic community should receive the COVID-19 vaccine unless a medical reason prevents them from doing so. That recommendation is based on the facts that the COVID-19 vaccines and their development have been determined morally acceptable and that we all share a common ethical responsibility to the well-being of our fellow human beings.

As the USCCB noted in its document on Moral Considerations Regarding the New COVID-19 Vaccines, "Receiving one of the COVID-19 vaccines ought to be understood as an act of charity toward the other members of our community. In this way, being vaccinated safely against COVID-19 should be considered an act of love of our neighbor and part of our moral responsibility for the common good." In writing on behalf of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith last December, Cardinal Ladaria stated, "*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.*" As such, neither the Archdiocese nor its parishes are able to provide support, written or otherwise, for individuals seeking an exemption from the vaccine on religious grounds.

Individuals may wish to pursue an exemption from vaccination based on their own reasons of conscience. In such cases, the burden to support such a request is not one for the local Church or its presbyterate to validate and we are not able to provide support for exemption requests on that basis.