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**COVID-19 vaccines: US Bishops, “gravity of pandemic and lack of alternative vaccines” are “sufficiently serious” reasons to authorize them**

**(from New York) The “gravity” of the current pandemic and the “lack of availability of alternative vaccines” are “sufficiently serious” reasons to authorize the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. This was said by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, chairman of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Doctrine, and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann, chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Pro-Life Activities, in response to the authorization, by the US drug agency, of two vaccines made with cells taken from aborted fetal tissue. The use of such cells had raised moral concerns and sparked debate among US Catholics, leading to refusal to accept the vaccines. “Receiving one of the COVID-19 vaccines ought to be understood as an act of charity toward the other members of our community”, the Bishops pointed out. “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”, they stressed, on behalf of the US Bishops’ Conference. Mgr. Rhoades and Mgr. Naumann expressed concerns about the AstraZeneca vaccine, which they found to be “more morally compromised”, and concluded that the latter “should be avoided” if alternatives are available. However, should it turn out that avoiding it “may have serious consequences for one’s health and the health of others”, in such a case, “it would be permissible to accept the AstraZeneca vaccine”. In their long statement, the Bishops went on to explain that the cells used in the vaccines are from tissue samples taken from abortions carried out in the 1960s, which have since been replicated in laboratories all over the world. “It is important to note that the making of the rubella vaccine (or that of the new COVID- 19 vaccines) does not**

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**involve cells taken directly from the body of an aborted child. It is not as if the making of the vaccine required ever more cells from ever more abortions”. At the same time, the Bishops also warned against the risk that the making of the vaccine might ignore the ethical and moral issues related to abortion. “We should be on guard so that the new COVID-19 vaccines do not desensitize us or weaken our determination to oppose the evil of abortion itself and the subsequent use of fetal cells in research”, Bishop Rhoades and Archbishop Naumann concluded.**

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