



WILLIAM T. MCGRATTAN

BISHOP *of* CALGARY

September 22, 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 being reported each day has significantly increased in our province. This brings to the forefront of our consciousness the need to safeguard the common good, and in charity to promote the safety of others by protecting our individual health and that of society. In some provinces, the sectors of healthcare, education and social services, public agencies and corporations have begun to announce mandatory vaccination as requirement for their employees and the public. This has resulted in the Diocese and the parishes receiving from members of the faithful the request for letters of exemption from the mandatory vaccination based on the grounds of religious belief.

While the Diocese respects the freedom of a person's individual conscience as the Church teaches, the Church and her ministers cannot objectively attest to or endorse a person's process of discernment in coming to their decision of conscience. Therefore, the Diocese and the parishes will not be issuing any letters of exemption from vaccination.

The clergy has been strongly encouraged instead to accompany and assist those requesting such letters to know and understand the teachings of the Church on vaccination during this pandemic through statements released by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB), and the pastoral letter provided by the Bishop of Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

As stated by my brother Bishops and in communion with the Holy Father, it is morally permissible to receive a vaccine approved for use in Canada against COVID-19, and while there are many possible reasons for one to struggle in their conscience with such a vaccine being mandatory, the Diocese will not take the position or role of endorsing an individual's conscience and decision.

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CALGARY

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If vaccination will be mandated, there must also be on the part of legitimate authorities, the necessary provisions of reasonable accommodation which respects and promotes the dignity of the individual conscience and the decision of conscientious objection. However, those who choose not to be vaccinated for whatever reason must do their utmost to ensure that they take all precautionary measures possible to avoid places and circumstances where they and others would be most vulnerable. They must also follow the health and safety measures not only to prevent contracting the virus for themselves but also preventing others from becoming sick. This is everyone's moral responsibility.

Much prayer is needed in this time, in this polarized society, for those who have suffered so much and for those who continue to suffer from the reality of the pandemic. As Christians and people of goodwill, we must grow in our love and concern for others and use the gift of our freedom responsibly to help others especially those who are in most need.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



+William T. McGrattan
Bishop of Calgary

Note from Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

<https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CDF-Note-on-COVID-19-vaccines.pdf>

Note from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

<https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CLARIFICATION-CCCB-Statement-on-COVID-19-Vaccine-Choice-9-March-2021-EN.pdf>

The Statement of the Catholic Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories

https://mcusercontent.com/b94c6c43263afb74033548543/files/e954e256-4a36-4044-95fd-685de8fd01bf/2020_11_30_Letter_to_the_faithful_on_Vaccines.pdf