**Vaccination**

*An article by Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, in the 'Chicago Catholic', 5 May 2021*

While the growing availability of effective COVID-19 vaccines is a sign of hope, the pandemic is still far from over. The number of cases is growing globally, with India seeing more than 400,000 in just one day. As the virus mutates, the pandemic will continue to wreak havoc with mounting death tolls, financial ruin, social isolation and great suffering for the most vulnerable.

The Church is called to accompany humanity, as Pope Francis noted in his Sept. 30, 2020, weekly audience. We must bring “healing and salvation in the midst of sickness and death … tenderness in the midst of hatred … and ‘virilize’ love and ‘globalize’ hope in the light of faith.”

We must also bring truth and, as he urged in “Fratelli Tutti,” look upon this moment as a new opportunity to “rediscover once for all that we need one another, and that in this way our human family can experience a rebirth, with all its faces, all its hands and all its voices.”

Nothing less than the future of humanity is at stake, which is why the Holy Father insisted in January that “morally everyone must take the vaccine. It is the moral choice because it is about your life but also the lives of others.”

Because some within society — and even within the Church — have spread dangerous misinformation about the vaccines, the Vatican has published a document clarifying the vaccines’ safety, effectiveness and moral acceptability (see [www.humandevelopment.va](http://www.humandevelopment.va)). Here are some of the document’s more salient point:

* Vaccination is a simple, safe and effective way of protecting people against harmful diseases using the body’s natural defences to build resistance to dangerous infections. Vaccines are thoroughly tested and monitored to ensure they are safe.
* Vaccinations “can be used with a clear conscience and that the use of such vaccines does not signify some sort of cooperation with voluntary abortion.” In fact, the moral responsibility is to vaccinate in order to avoid serious health risks for children and the general population.
* Listen to the authoritative voice of the Church on moral issues. Contrary to statements made by some in the Church today, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, whose task is to promote and protect doctrine in matters of faith and morals, has made clear that in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, all vaccinations recognized as clinically safe and effective may be used.
* We need to trust science, not rumours and conspiracy theories: “Like the virus, misinformation can spread quickly. It is harmful and complicates pandemic response efforts. It is important to follow the advice of trusted sources, including local public health authorities and the websites of relevant regional and international organizations.”
* We all have a responsibility not to share unverified information that comes from dubious sources. As the Holy Father reminds us, “social aggression has found unparalleled room for expansion through computers and mobile devices,” which “has now given free rein to ideologies,” blocking “the kind of serene reflection that could lead us to a shared wisdom” and preventing us from penetrating “to the heart of matters, and to recognize what is essential to give meaning to our lives” (“Fratelli Tutti,” 44-45; 50). Yet we can together “seek the truth in dialogue,” through “the process of building fraternity be it local or universal … by spirits that are free and open to authentic encounters” (50).

This virus has left the human family vulnerable and wounded. This shared suffering teaches us that we must work together to bring this pandemic to an end. That means getting vaccinated as soon as possible — not only to protect ourselves, but also so that we do not pass on this virus to those who are more likely to die from it. It also means doing what we can to help others get vaccinated. And if you’ve already received the vaccine, consider helping neighbours who are struggling to navigate the appointment-making process, or who may need a ride.

This moment provides a new opportunity to “rediscover once for all that we need one another, and that in this way our human family can experience a rebirth, with all its faces, all its hands and all its voices,” as Pope Francis said. In other words, we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers. Getting vaccinated is an essential way to show it.