## A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

**4 March 2021, 3:45 PM**

### Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine

Originally, it didn't seem necessary to make a statement about the Johnson and Johnson (Janssen) vaccine; any message would be essentially the same as what was said in December 2020 regarding the other vaccines.

However, some Catholics are a little confused about whether they may receive the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. So, some clarification is called for:

*If* Catholics are given a choice about which COVID vaccine to receive, they should choose the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines over the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. Why?

Because Johnson and Johnson used cell lines from the fetal tissue of an aborted baby in the *production* of its vaccine, whereas Pfizer and Moderna used them only for *lab testing*.

It's a subtle distinction. All three companies used those ethically compromised cell lines; it's just that the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, because they made only limited use, are further removed from the evil of abortion than is the Johnson and Johnson vaccine.

However, if Catholics are *not* given a choice about which vaccine to receive, it is morally acceptable for them to use the Johnson and Johnson vaccine against the serious health risk of the coronavirus.

In this regard, it appears that, at present, and for the foreseeable future, no one is being offered a choice of vaccines.

Besides, as stated above, right now there isn't a COVID vaccine available that didn't use those abortion-derived cell lines in design, development, production, and/or lab testing.

So, if Catholics have the opportunity to get vaccinated, and aren't given a choice of vaccines, they should gratefully receive whatever is available; the sooner, the better.

The common good of protecting the public health against a contagious and potentially deadly virus takes precedence over any reservations Catholics might have about being treated with any of the available vaccines.

Michael Jackels
Archbishop of Dubuque