



Diocese of Monterey

Office of the Bishop

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My brothers and sisters in Christ:

In my video message of February of 2021, I shared with you that the Holy See has made it clear that receiving the COVID-19 vaccine is morally acceptable. Likewise, the Holy See affirmed that all vaccines now available are morally permissible and can be used in good conscience. Pope Francis has highly encouraged the vaccination as an act of safeguarding one's own health as well as that of others – pointing us to the importance of the *common good*, such a key element of Catholic Social Teaching. Indeed, both Pope Francis and Pope Emeritus Benedict have received the vaccine as examples for us. The Bishops of California have also encouraged vaccination for the same reasons listed above.

For these reasons, I will not issue, and I have directed our clergy not to issue, any Letters of Religious exemption because it would contradict the clear objective teaching of the Catholic Church and the Holy See on this matter.

I want to take this opportunity to once more, encourage those who have not done so, and have no medical impediments to avoid it, to get vaccinated. Let us continue to pray that the Lord accompany us during these times of additional risk, help us to make the most responsible decisions in our conscience, and to pray as well, for greater unity in our Church and in society.

Wishing blessings for you and your families,

Most Reverend Daniel E. Garcia
Bishop of Monterey