

## Statement of Conscience To Awaken Conscience

“Abortion has become the greatest destroyer of peace, because it destroys two lives, the life of the child and the conscience of the mother.”

*Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1988)*

“She is the human and sacred image; all around her the social fabric shall sway and split and fall; the pillars of society shall be shaken, and the roofs of ages come rushing down, and not one hair of her head shall be harmed.”

*G.K. Chesterton, What’s Wrong with the World*

We the undersigned, men and women in solidarity with the weakest among us, wish to respond publicly to what appears to be a growing consensus among Catholic ethicists that vaccines derived from aborted fetal tissue are not only morally permissible (licit), but also (*nearly*) *morally obligatory* for the sake of the common good. Examples include, among others, this [statement organized by EPPC](#), the steady position of the [Catholic Health Association](#) (CHA), and a [December statement of the USCCB](#) which says that receiving the (abortion-tainted) COVID-19 vaccine “should be considered...part of our moral responsibility for the common good.” These statements are troubling to us, and seem to run afoul of our rights of conscience to refuse such vaccines, clearly defended by the Church, in [Dignitas Personae](#) (CDF 2008) and [Note on the morality of using some Covid-19 vaccines](#) (CDF 2020). We now fear the circling of the wagons around abortion-tainted vaccines, advanced by powerful voices which seem ready to silence our moral intuitions.

We resist this “consensus” being foisted upon us as morally repugnant: we do not wish to benefit from abortion. We deplore the lack of moral imagination displayed by public health officials, politicians, and all those who disregard the natural disgust felt by persons who wish to remain separate from the crime of abortion in every way possible. And we lament a “soulless scientism” that fails to account for the unique dignity of the human person and the role of suffering in human life.

We are puzzled and pained by the lack of reasonable skepticism which pro-life persons ought to show for the scientific-industrial complex (SIC). A distortion of medical and scientific standards so often accompanies questionable ethical practices, and a “science” which denies life inevitably takes life. Consequently, there are many reasons why a person may feel duty-bound to avoid these vaccines besides religious conviction, such as the experimental nature of them (FDA “emergency use”) and the unknown effects, especially on children and pregnant women.

We hereby urge, by our witness and testimony, that people who agree with us—and also those who disagree but who admire our stance, and who wish to defend our right to hold it—join together to claim the freedom in conscience to refuse vaccines derived from aborted fetal cell lines.

“There is a grave responsibility to use alternative vaccines and to make a conscientious objection with regard to those which have moral problems,” wrote the Pontifical Academy for Life in 2005, in guidance confirmed by

the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; abortion-tainted vaccines create a "context of moral coercion of the conscience of parents, who are forced to choose to act against their conscience." Indeed, many of us have spent decades trying to resist the abortion-tainted varicella and MMR vaccines, which were produced in the same compromised way, meeting resistance everywhere, being 'fired' by our physicians, and opposed even by leaders of our own churches. Many Catholic schools even *require* students to obtain the morally objectionable vaccines in order to attend.

These failures make us now question whether earlier capitulations (on the grounds that there was 'no alternative') were the right courses of action. The threats grow by the moment. Even now, there is pending legislation which would allow children the right to consent to vaccines *without parental knowledge*. Such a policy has implications far beyond the present crisis. We wish to call attention to the unintended consequences of a 'soft opposition' of words and not of deeds. Coercion in these and other matters hostile to life is coming.

We are told there is nearly ubiquitous use of HEK-293 cells in the scientific and medical industry. If this is so, we take it to be evidence of structures of sin surrounding abortion. We invite (and call upon our lawmakers to require) all product manufacturers to reveal publicly and label their use of these cells, so that we can go forward avoiding such products. More has been done to resist animal cruelty and the use of genetically modified organisms than to resist the benefiting from the murder of a child. (The very same papers which report tests of vaccines using HEK-293 cells take pains in their disclosures to say that no animals were mistreated in the course of their research!) We lament that we have been led to use compromised products and medicines in the past without knowledge. Let all that has been hidden be brought into the light.

We find insufficient the accounts of moralists who lean on casuistical distinctions, originally designed to analyze private action in a Christian society, when we are crushed by a public edifice determined to protect the so-called 'right to abortion', and determined in addition to benefit from its byproducts in many ways beyond the current (and previous) vaccines. We know that trafficking in aborted fetal body parts exists and amounts to an industry. The acceptance of the use of tissues derived in the past does have implications for incentivizing this industry. While no attention is given to the truth about human life in the public square, and while academia, the media, and elite institutions remain in the grips of a "culture of death," we believe a more radical public witness is needed today.

We remember the holy mother in 2 Maccabees, a type of Our Lady, who urged her sons to resist violating God's law even if it meant their death, saying, "Therefore the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of man and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again, since you now forget yourselves for the sake of his laws." We expect great public good to arise if her example of witness to higher goods and God's sovereignty inspires our actions today. The march of science, the treatments it pursues, the political incentives it responds to, none of them are immune from moral witness. Without our courage we fear that pinches of incense will continue to be extracted from us, rendering us insensitive to what should cause our indignation, sorrow, and determination to change.

The abortions from which the cell lines are derived are said to be so "remote" as to be like roads constructed by slave laborers hundreds of years ago. Surely remoteness is a judgment in conscience. How "remote" is a cell

line connected by continuous life with the murdered child? How “remotely” long ago is the abortion of a child who would be only 50 years old today? It is urged, as if it mattered, that the abortions were not carried out *in order to* create the cell lines—and yet the tissue of the aborted child (which no lab scientist had authority to use) did not miraculously give rise to cell lines but instead was manipulated deliberately, precisely in order to create the cell lines. Therefore, the use of these cell lines exactly corresponds to and complements the depraved intention to create them.

“Protect unborn man from born man!” St. John Paul II exhorted us. We live in a world divided into a Way of Life and a Way of Death. The Way of Death is this: born man subordinates unborn man to himself, for his own advantage. The Way of Life is this: born man unwaveringly and resolutely protects unborn man, even to his own disadvantage. To which culture do we wish to belong? With which do we identify? “What does it profit a man to gain his life but lose his soul?”

We therefore urge our ethicists to resist a premature “consensus” about abortion-tainted SARS-CoV-2 vaccines. We insist on our freedom of conscience in this matter, to witness to life as we judge we are being called to do. We also urge a reconsideration of earlier “consensus” views about previous abortion-tainted vaccines. And we urge a public reckoning as regards every secret use of these cells derived from an abortion.

We reiterate in closing: even if, as a matter of general principles, it is not always morally illicit to use such abortion-tainted vaccines temporarily, in extreme necessity, and even then under strenuous protest, the use of such vaccines must never be advanced as mandatory, or as a universal duty. Because some of us in conscience believe that we are called to refuse to take them.

St. Gianna Beretta Molla, pray for us!

Signed by,

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