



25 February 2021

Dear sisters and brothers,

The first vaccinations against COVID-19 have been given in our diocese. Some of the most vulnerable people in our diocese have received their first dose of the vaccine. This is welcome news as they are significantly protected from the worst effects of the virus and as it is the first step to being able to lower and then remove our COVID-19 regulations across the nation and within the diocese.

The Catholic bishops of Australia have endorsed the offering of the vaccine to all who can safely receive it. I will be receiving the vaccination when it is my turn to do so and encourage you to do the same.

I will also respect the decisions of individuals who, for medical, safety or moral reasons, are not ready to receive a vaccination at this time and, again, invite you to do the same.

There is likely to be little choice as to which vaccine will be available to individuals this year. I am assured that this means that we can receive any one of the three vaccines to be made available, without moral complicity in the processes of its development. If no other vaccine is available, the morally serious objective of protecting lives makes accepting one of these vaccines permissible and is, I think, on balance a good thing to do. Those who still have ethical concerns can read the statement issued by the Vatican or speak to their priest.

While we rejoice in the vaccine becoming available to us, let us also look for opportunities to encourage our government to support its provision to poorer countries.

In Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate

Most Rev Mark Edwards OMI

Most Rev Mark Edwards OMI, Bishop of Wagga Wagga

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