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Bishop of Parramatta

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Pastoral letter to the faithful of the Diocese of Parramatta on the COVID-19 vaccination

Dear brothers and sisters,

As the COVID-19 Delta variant is spreading through Australia, particularly in Western Sydney, with deadly consequences, I am writing to reiterate the importance of vaccination as a means to protect yourselves and others.

It is overwhelmingly evident that the virus is spreading largely among the unvaccinated population. Hence, being fully vaccinated is an important step in not only keeping us safe but also our families and others in the broader community safe, and enabling us to get back to some sort of normality.

I understand some people have concerns about the ethical origins of some vaccines. The Catholic Church, through the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has declared that even the use of such vaccines *does not constitute formal cooperation with abortion*. Therefore, all vaccines which are recognised as clinically safe and effective may be taken by Catholics in good conscience.

Pope Francis himself has encouraged Catholics to take the vaccine saying in an interview earlier this year, “I believe that morally everyone must take the vaccine. It is the moral choice because it is about your life but also the lives of others.”

Indeed, Pope Francis, Pope Benedict XVI and many cardinals and bishops have already received their COVID-19 vaccines. For my part, I am fully vaccinated since the end of July.

I call on you to heed this clear and strong message from the Pope. I also alert you to the anti-vaccination movement and those who spread misinformation on social media, and regrettably even some clergy.

Their opposition to vaccines and public health orders is not in accordance with the Catholic Church.

The pandemic has caused much uncertainty, pain and suffering to the whole world. Let us pray, however, that it can be an opportunity for renewal and transformation for the human family.

May we grow in the spirit of solidarity and compassion for all who are vulnerable, here and beyond. May we emerge out of this crisis a better people for a better world.

The Diocese and partners are working with health authorities in facilitating the vaccine rollout to members of the community in more vulnerable areas. Let us do our part for the common good and work together to end the pandemic.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read "Vincent Long Van Nguyen", with a small cross symbol to the left.

Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv
Bishop of Parramatta

Given at Parramatta on 6 August 2021
The Feast of The Transfiguration of the Lord