



NATIONAL CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT

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Dear People of God,

WE ENTREAT YOU TO AVAIL YOURSELVES OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19

We, the members of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference and your Shepherds, send you prayerful greetings of the Season as we prepare spiritually and physically to celebrate the Paschal Mystery of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

With the arrival of the first consignment of 600,000 vaccines in our country and more expected later, we wish to encourage our priests, consecrated men and women and all Christ's faithful, and indeed every Ghanaian, to avail themselves of the opportunity to be vaccinated.

COVID-19 has come to stay with us and we do not have enough time to study and understand the virus because the longer we take to understand it and find ways to protect ourselves, the greater the opportunity that we give to the virus to further mutate/change to our disadvantage.

We have experienced success with vaccines in the past with diseases such as smallpox, measles, polio, influenza and other diseases and so we are convinced that vaccines could be the answer to the COVID-19 pandemic despite the concerns raised by anti-vaccine groups and other groups who advocate otherwise.

To be able to fight the pandemic and arrest further mutation of the virus, all countries must work together to manage the disease. In light of this, the World Health Organization (WHO) and other organizations and countries advocated risk pooling and opportunities for countries to use their local facilities to test and assess these vaccines for safety and efficacy. Manufacturers of these vaccines have also been compelled to make transparent and available real-time information and data about the manufacturing processes and products for public education and information.

The Conference is, therefore, convinced and confident that all national bodies set up to test, assess and monitor vaccines, drugs and other products for consumption have done due diligence and understand the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines and the implications of undertaking a nation-wide vaccination.

The Government of Ghana, in the first phase of vaccine administration, has prioritized health workers, the elderly (60years and above) and those with comorbid conditions as well as high ranking government and other officials. The Conference is convinced that if Government was unsure of the safety and efficacy of the vaccines, they would not have prioritized themselves and frontline health workers who are so much needed at this crucial time to receive the vaccines first.

Vaccination is an act of good neighbourliness which is a mark of good Christian principles. When one accepts the vaccine, one does not only protect oneself from getting the disease but one protects others too by stopping transmission.

BENEFITS OF COVID-19 VACCINE

1. It will reduce the COVID-19 disease and deaths among people.
2. It will improve psychological well-being of Ghanaians.
3. It will improve quality of life by removing disruptions in educational, social and economic activities.
4. It will improve international travels especially among countries that have received vaccination.

COVID-19 VACCINE MYTHS

1. Immunity from infection with COVID-19 and prevention are better options than receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. This is untrue. COVID-19 is deadly and killing a lot of people. It has caused over two million deaths globally and is still killing. Limiting immunity to previous infection and individual preventive practices will cause more deaths. Vaccination is currently the only way to reduce and possibly break global transmission.
2. Receiving COVID-19 vaccine can give you COVID-19 disease. It is an attempt to target selected populations with the infection. This is false. The vaccine cannot cause disease as it is not the virus. It is an mRNA which is a protein instructor that causes the body to produce proteins that resemble the virus, thereby raising the body's natural immunity against the virus when encountered. COVID-19 is widespread now and the vaccines have been used by many countries and so it is unlikely to be made to target selected populations.
3. The COVID-19 vaccine can cause infertility in people who receive it. This is not true. Neither the vaccine or any component of it is linked to or found to be associated with causing infertility. These rumours have been there since vaccine production began.
4. The COVID-19 vaccine has the potential of changing human DNA. This again is false. The COVID-19 vaccine is an mRNA vaccine. mRNA cannot change the DNA of human beings. The mRNA instructs the body to make proteins that look like the virus, so that our body's immune system will be activated to fight against the virus when it encounters it.
5. The COVID-19 vaccine is a mark of the beast (Rev. 13:16-17). There is no truth about this assertion because there is nothing demonic about the vaccine(s).

CONCLUSION

We have prayed to God over the past one year for a quick solution in getting a vaccine/medicine to combat the COVID-19 disease. Part of the common prayer reads: ”.....*we pray that an effective medicine to combat the sickness be speedily found*” (Ref. Prayer for end to Coronavirus outbreak.)

We should, therefore, see the arrival of the vaccine(s) as an answer to our prayer and avail ourselves of the opportunity to be vaccinated. It is our fervent prayer and hope that many of you will avail yourselves for this exercise since we cannot coerce anybody to do so.

May Mary our Mother of Perpetual Help and Health of the Sick continue to intercede for us.



MOST REV. PHILIP NAAMEH
METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP OF TAMALE &
PRESIDENT, GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2021