

Vatican Official Clarifies Stand On Vaccines From Fetal Tissue

VATICAN, July 26, 2005 (CWNews.com

/LifeSiteNews.com) - Although the Pontifical Academy for Life has strongly condemned the development of vaccines from fetal tissues, the president of that Academy notes that parents may still be justified in having their children inoculated with such vaccines.

Bishop Elio Sgreccia, in a July 23 interview with Vatican Radio, clarified the position taken by the Pontifical Academy for Life, in response to an inquiry from an American pro-life group. The bishop said that pharmaceutical manufacturers have a grave moral obligation to provide vaccines that do not use fetal tissues. But parents whose children may risk serious disease without inoculation may still choose vaccination, he said.

Bishop Sgreccia said that the Vatican had sent a two-part message to the American pro-life group. "On the one hand," he said, "in a particular context such as that in the United States, it is licit to use these vaccines, because there are no others actually available." The bishop explained that parents have a serious obligation to protect their children from disease whenever possible, and in doing so they are not signaling their approval for abortion.

On the other hand, Bishop Sgreccia continued, drug manufacturers have the choice to provide vaccines that do not use fetal tissue, so their continued use of the "tainted" vaccines does involve formal cooperation in abortion. He said that government should press the pharmaceutical companies to make other vaccines available, using morally licit means such as the use of animal tissue, and Catholic families should join actively in that pressure campaign.

In a paper published in *Medicina e Morale*, a journal published by Rome's University of the Sacred Heart, the Pontifical Academy had argued that parents might have the right to refuse vaccinations. The paper argued even more strongly that parents have an obligation—and government an even stronger obligation—to press for the development of vaccines that are not developed from fetal tissues.

The Vatican document—which was made public last week by the American group, Children of God for Life—said that different actors have different degrees of moral involvement in the use of fetal tissues. While drug manufacturers are "culpable of cooperation" in abortion, the parents who are under pressure to use vaccines have only a "very remote material cooperation" in the immoral act, the paper argues.

Even if they do accept vaccination for their children, the Vatican statement argued, parents remain obligated to press for the ethical development of other vaccines.

The statement from the Pontifical Academy for Life was approved by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

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Vatican Condemns Vaccines Made with Tissue Obtained by Abortion

LARGO, FL, July 18, 2005 (LifeSiteNews.com) - The Pontifical Academy for Life under the direction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has issued an "approved" study regarding vaccines derived from aborted fetal cell lines. The study was undertaken in response to a US group called Children of God for Life, which has for years fought for the creation of ethical vaccines which are not 'tainted' by abortion.

In the document published in *Medicina e Morale* by the Center for Bioethics of Catholic University in Rome and titled, *Moral Reflections On Vaccines Prepared From Cells Derived From Aborted Human Foetuses*, Vatican officials put the burden of guilt 100% on the pharmaceutical industry, comparing their moral complicity to that of the abortionists themselves.

The 8-page document, which has been anxiously awaited for several years by pro-life parents and physicians nationwide states that, doctors and families "have a duty to take recourse to alternatives, putting pressure on political authorities and health systems... They should use conscientious objection and oppose by all means" in writing, through various associations, mass media, etc. - the vaccines which do not yet have morally acceptable alternatives, creating pressure so that alternative vaccines are prepared, which are not connected with the abortion of a human foetus..."

The document, which can be viewed in full at <http://www.cogforlife.org/vaticanresponse.htm> also supports parents who refuse to use the vaccines, citing that those who have been forced to vaccinate experience "a moral coercion of the conscience ... an unjust alternative choice which must be eliminated as soon as possible."

Debi Vinnedge, Executive Director of Children of God for Life Executive Director, who has battled this issue for years and received the document and letter directly from Bishop Elio Sgreccia, President of the Pontifical Academy for Life.

"We brought the matter to Canon lawyers at the St. Joseph Foundation prior to sending an appeal on to the Vatican," Vinnedge said. "There is a serious problem when parents are denied the right to abstain from these vaccines in accord with State law, simply because there was nothing from the Vatican directly addressing it."

Vinnedge says the Vatican document, which calls for "rigorous legal control of the pharmaceutical industry producers" should also spur action on their Fair Labeling and Informed Consent Act, introduced to members of Congress earlier this year. The legislation requires that pharmaceutical companies give full disclosure whenever aborted fetal or embryonic cell lines are used in their products.

Dr Steven White, President of the Catholic Medical Association agreed. "We must demand that the pharmaceutical industry provide accurate information on the origin of all vaccines so that we are able to make informed decisions in accord with our moral conscience - and we must mobilize to support development of ethical alternatives," he said.