

25 March 2022, Annunciation of the Lord

CONFIRMA! – STRENGTH! (Luke 22,32)

STATEMENT OF AUSTRIAN PRIESTS AND DEACONS

For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard, as the Acts of the Apostles say (Acts 4,20).

We are 120 Austrian priests and deacons who feel compelled to take up a position in the current crisis that takes into account both common sense and the impulses of the spirit. We will define our position below by discussing five points of importance in this context and provide source references for additional information.

We prepared this statement over the past few weeks. The fact that the so-called compulsory vaccination is currently suspended until June 2022 makes no difference in terms of its content and the continued existence of the compulsory vaccination law. We know and care about people who are still under massive pressure, who are facing the end of their education or career because of compulsory vaccination. And these people are not isolated cases.

We already submitted our statement to our bishops in February. We hope for a productive conversation.

1. Pastoral aspects

An estimated **two million Austrian citizens** have refused vaccination for well-considered reasons. It goes without saying that the church must stand up for these people, too, according to the words of St. Paul: *I have become all things to all people* (1 Cor 9:22b).

The **divisions** within society - which obviously exist - will not be resolved by labelling those who oppose vaccination as selfish idiots. We, the undersigned priests and deacons, know a number of people who feel abandoned by their church in the ongoing crisis. They are merely ordered to "*Get vaccinated!*", as though this were the answer to all their questions. Needless to say, *no questions whatsoever* are answered by such an imperative.

A climate of suspicion and denunciation has developed within a very short time, in which any well-considered opposition to compulsory vaccination is equated, against all reason, with a lack of solidarity; it is frightening to see that this kind of branding is practised even by the church.

In addition, the church is pushing for vaccinations throughout Austria. The fact that the Covid vaccines often have serious side effects is consistently ignored in the vaccination appeals. A search on the Internet, using the keyword "**vaccination side effects**", will reveal official sources that provide quite eye-opening information.ⁱ

This begs the question: does the church consider itself responsible also for the frightening number of cases of vaccine damage and death? We all know people **who are leaving the church** and who, when asked *why*, cite the church's corona policy as the reason for their decision to leave.

And finally: Thousands of livelihoods have already been destroyed by the disproportionate measures taken by the government. People (families, small, medium-sized as well as some large companies, employees, students, etc.) are facing **existential ruin**. There is also psychological pressure and bullying. All of this is part of the effort to force people to take the vaccines, with threats of losing their jobs or their education; the vexatious 3G regulations add a tremendous amount of pressure, rendering it almost impossible for people to live normal lives. For many, it is literally a question of **survival**. We should also remember the precarious situation of older people in nursing and retirement homes who are exposed to unreasonable **restrictions on visits**, the increased **suicide rate** and the increase in **psychiatric illnesses** confirmed by doctors, especially among children and adolescents. Then there are the cracks that cut across family ties and friendships.

The Church cannot remain silent in the face of this. It must be unequivocally on the side of the oppressed and the needy. The words of the Lord are perfectly clear: *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren,...* (Mt 25:40).

2. Ethics

It is obvious from the well-founded analyses of the *Lozier Institute*ⁱⁱ that all vaccines that are currently (or were) used in Austria are linked to **abortion** - they either contain fetal cell lines or were subjected to laboratory tests using fetal cell lines. In *Gaudium et Spes 51*, the Second Vatican Council called abortion a "despicable crime".

To counter the argument that persons using the vaccine may soothe their conscience by telling themselves that they are only participating in a remote involvement, we would like to point out that the pro-life movement, in line with St. John Paul II, has repeatedly emphasised that "anyone using these vaccines is benefiting from, and at least implicitly supporting, a structure of evil. The continued development of such cell lines and all other - and increasingly common - uses of human fetal tissue to date are proving him right."ⁱⁱⁱ

3. Moral aspects

In its Note on the Morality of the Use of some Vaccinations against Covid-19^{iv}, the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith mentions two prerequisites that are necessary for a moral justification of the use of a vaccine obtained in this way: on the

one hand (1) there must be a serious threat, on the other (2) there must be good reason to assume that the mRNA vaccines in question would significantly **reduce** this threat.

As of March 2022, can these premises, established in December 2020, be regarded as having been fulfilled by the vaccination campaigns?

Ad (1) The dreaded "serious threat" has not materialised - for which we thank the Lord. There is now a sizable number of medical experts who have analysed the incidence of disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, but have not identified any epidemic danger. On the contrary: it appears that an increase in the **vaccination rate** also increases the risk of infection.^v

Ad (2) In view of the plethora of available data, it is now an undisputed fact that the mRNA vaccines are *not a suitable means* for containing the serious pathogen, as demanded/desired by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. They do not prevent infection or transmission of the virus, and the vaccine manufacturers have never even claimed that they would do so. The only benefit of vaccination, consumers are told, is the likelihood of mitigating the severity of an infection, which is now being disputed by a growing number of hospital staff, since the intensive care units are increasingly treating severe cases among the fully vaccinated.^{vi}

And finally: even if the vaccines used were ethically justifiable, the individual's **reservation of conscience** should be respected and not overridden. The reservation of conscience is one of the non-negotiable values. Blessed Franz Jägerstätter is a striking role model in this regard.

4. Medical aspects

mRNA injections ("COVID-19 vaccines") are **gene therapy** measures; long-term studies concerning these substances are not available. The vaccines have only been declared "**conditionally approved**". The evidence of the problems caused by, and the short-term effectiveness of, these vaccines is now so overwhelming as to make the threatened so-called **compulsory vaccination** appear in a thoroughly questionable, not to say disastrous light. We would like, at this point, to cite two sources:

(a) For the vast majority of people (99.8% worldwide), SARS-CoV-2 is not a fatal disease. It typically causes mild to moderate symptoms. This means that the overwhelming majority of people are not at risk from COVID-19 and do not need to be vaccinated. Hundreds of medical professionals have already affirmed that about 99% of people are already protected against COVID-19 thanks to memory-type **antibody responses** and that most people now have immunity from exposure to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, so that this population would not derive any benefit at all from vaccination.^{vii}

(b) In the statement of the *Austrian Federal Ministry of Health* of 18 February 2022, issued in reply to a **request from the Austrian Constitutional Court**, it is now stated, among other things, that children and young people were never at risk, that one third of hospital patients listed as "corona patients" had not been hospitalised for the corona symptoms, but for other, unrelated health problems, and that the average age of people who died from the corona virus was 82.8 years.^{viii}

In addition, official **databases** are now beginning to show the full extent of the disastrous side effects of these vaccines; it is important to remember, in this context, that only a negligibly small number of the actual side effects are even reported - a fact that has also been emphasised by the ORF (the Austrian national public service broadcaster).^{ix}

We hereby provide just one example: as of 17 January 2022, the European database of reported suspected adverse drug reaction reports (EudraVigilance database) listed the following side effects recorded since the start of the vaccination campaign (with the growth rate since 10 January 2022 given in brackets):

Total: -> 1,387,759 cases (+33,259) -> 21,251 deaths (+279) -> 397,681 serious side effects reported (+11,281)

Children: -> 20,410 cases (+605) -> 109 deaths (+6) -> 8,236 serious side effects reported (+276)^x

We would also like to refer anyone claiming that there are no or only insufficient scientific studies on the fatal vaccination side effects of the COVID vaccine to the more than 1,000 studies already conducted on the subject.^{xi}

Is it not strange that since the beginning of the Covid crisis, critical expert voices have been systematically suppressed, disqualified, ridiculed, censored or immediately branded with the defamatory label "Covidiot" and that alternative treatment methods tried out by doctors were kept secret or - all too often - discredited by the media? And aren't the available data on the catastrophic side effects of the vaccines an unmistakable call for reflection and course correction?

5. Legal aspects

We want to touch on this aspect only briefly. A number of lawyers, both in Austria and in Germany, have pointed out that the so-called compulsory vaccination is **unconstitutional** because it violates human dignity and the fundamental right to life and physical integrity. It also disproportionately interferes with the fundamental right to religious liberty and freedom of conscience and constitutes a massive violation of the right of parents to educate their children as they see fit.^{xii}

Conclusions

In view of the above, we want to state, clearly and unmistakeably, that we are shepherds of the *whole* flock. The Catholic Church has the fundamental task of not only respecting the freedom of conscience of the individual, but of defending it, because "conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths" (*Gaudium et spes* 16).

In its Note quoted above, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith affirms the pre-eminence of conscience: "At the same time, it is obvious to practical reason that,

as a rule, **vaccination is not a moral obligation** and that it must therefore be voluntary" (no. 5).

And the text goes on to say that one may very well "reject, for reasons of conscience, vaccines that have been produced from cell lines derived from aborted fetuses".

We therefore oppose the illegal compulsory vaccination, with the aim of protecting the faithful entrusted to our care from encroachments by the state.

The language we use should be clear and unequivocal. The Covid crisis has pointed up, once again, how language is constantly used as a means of manipulation. For anyone not in denial as to the available sources of information, which deprive this measure of any justification, the so-called vaccination requirement is de facto a compulsory vaccination - so let us refer to it by its correct designation.

There is one last point we would like to make: we must not allow Austrian society to remain divided or continue to be divided. As pastors and spiritual directors, we must fight for unity in truth. Christ as the Saviour of all must shine forth. We take to heart the word of the Lord when He admonished Peter: *And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren!* (Luke 22:32)

Convert and strengthen: where we have been silent for too long, we ask for forgiveness. We want to fulfill our task of strengthening our brothers and sisters by issuing this statement.

We entrust all of us to Our Lady, the *virgo potens*, the *mighty Virgin*, as invoked in the Litany of Loreto, to help us pave the way for the truth with courage.

Praised be Jesus Christ!

Signatures

The names of all priests and deacons who signed this letter are on file at the offices of **notary Mag. Luger Roland, Pfarrg. 27, 4240 Freistadt**

ⁱ Concerning this point, see section 4., *Medical aspects*.

ⁱⁱ <https://lozierinstitute.org/update-covid-19-vaccine-candidates-and-abortion-derived-cell-lines/> (accessed 02/22/2022).

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://aerzte-fuer-das-leben.de/fachinformationen/schwangerschaftsabbruch-absorption/vaccines-and-abortion/15-12-21-covid-19-vaccines-and-fetal-cells/> (accessed 2022-02-22).

See also the specification by Prof. Dr. med. Paul Cullen, Ibid.: "The **HEK-293 cell line**, which is mainly used in the COVID-19 vaccines, is often claimed to be the result of a miscarriage, rather than an abortion. However, no cell line can be grown from such tissue. In fact, tissue that is intended for the development of a cell line must be 'fresh' (according to the technical term) and either processed immediately or cooled.

Incidentally, the number 293 indicates that it 293 attempts were required to establish such a cell line. It is therefore highly unlikely that only one abortion was 'needed' in the development of HEK-293.”

^{iv} https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20201221_nota-vaccini-anticovid_ge.html (02/22/2022)

^v “Data from 185 countries show that the most vaccinated populations have particularly high COVID-19 death rates. A study from the USA and Israel shows excess mortality after COVID vaccinations.” For the source of these data, with supporting documents, see footnote xii.

^{vi} In one video, among many others, a clinician in Antwerp states that: »Anyone who thinks that the intensive care units are full of unvaccinated people is wrong.«
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sahPiqbDEZ8> (accessed 02/22/2022).

^{vii} https://doctors4covidethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Vaccine-Risk-Benefit_updated-August-2021.pdf (accessed 02/22/2022).

^{viii} To view the document in its entirety, go to: <https://www.docdroid.net/ZlRoFcp/vfgh-pdf#page=3> (accessed 02/22/2022).

^{ix} See: <https://science.orf.at/stories/3206228/> (accessed 02/22/2022).

^x https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vYgYlgqh_sQ02TXe3ytOhOuYUMEUwxwC/view (accessed 02/22/2022). See also (as of 19 February 2022):
<https://impfnebenwirkungen.net/ema/tabellen/>

^{xi} See: <https://www.saveusnow.org.uk/covid-vaccine-scientific-proof-lethal/> (accessed 22.02.2022).

^{xii} See the detailed *Statement on the draft of a vaccination law from a fundamental rights perspective with special consideration of the Catholic point of view*, elaborated by Rechtsmanufaktur Suntinger, Carinthia:
<https://www.parlament.gv.at/PtWeb/api/s3serv/file/00e2080c-2bfe-41e3-a492-44a5b21ffa4c> (accessed 02/22/2022).

Incidentally, in its Resolution 2361 (2021), even the Council of Europe decided on 27 January 2021, among other things, that vaccination should not be mandatory and that nobody should be discriminated against for not being vaccinated: <https://www.afa-zone.at/allgemein/europarat-unterhlt-impfzwang-unddiscrimination/> (accessed 02/22/2022).