

## **Summary of Catholic Teaching on the Use of Vaccines Produced with Aborted Fetal Cell Lines**

In June 2005 the Vatican Pontifical Academy for Life issued a document *Moral Reflections on Vaccines Produced from Cells Derived from Aborted Human Foetuses*. The Academy's report on this issue was approved by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. *Moral Reflections on Vaccines* offers the following guidance:

- It is morally wrong to produce, market, and distribute vaccines derived from aborted fetal cell lines because this could encourage the performance of other voluntary abortions for the purpose of producing such vaccines.
- We have a duty to request and use alternative vaccines which were produced in a morally acceptable way, if such alternative vaccines exist.
- In the case of vaccines produced with aborted fetal cell lines for which no alternatives currently exist, it is morally permissible to use them "on a temporary basis" and "insomuch as is necessary" to ensure the health of individuals and the population as a whole.
- It is right to abstain from using vaccines produced with aborted fetal cell lines on condition that this can be done without causing children, and indirectly the population as a whole, to undergo significant risks to their health.
- We have a responsibility to "oppose by all means (in writing, through the 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, and requesting legal control of the pharmaceutical industry producers."

### ***What does the Church say about the use of the rubella vaccine specifically?***

1) The vaccine for rubella (a component in MMR) has been produced using an aborted fetal cell line and there is no alternative vaccine for this disease currently approved for use in the United States. Thus the third bullet point above is applicable to this case. A memorandum from the Committee on Doctrine of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops quotes (with approval) a statement from the National Catholic Bioethics Center: "The Pontifical Academy for Life rejects the claim that Catholics have a moral duty to refuse the rubella vaccine on the grounds of conscience and Catholic teaching. It encourages Catholic parents to vaccinate their children against rubella and other serious diseases despite the unfortunate origin of the cell lines used in the manufacture of the vaccines."

2) As with all vaccines produced with aborted fetal cell lines, we have a duty to lobby for the development of alternative vaccines produced in a morally acceptable way.