



For all things give thanks.

1 THESS 5:18

Pastoral letter from Bishop Brian Mascord to the faithful of the Diocese of Wollongong regarding the COVID-19 vaccinations

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ

During this time of uncertainty, I wanted to write a short note to encourage you as to how we might respond to the present situation through the use of vaccines.

This week, I will be having my second dose of the vaccine. I was guided by sound medical advice regarding the safety and efficacy of the vaccines and also the teachings of our Church. Everyone has a responsibility to properly care for their own health. It is also our responsibility to care for the wider community.

Our Catholic Social Teaching is an expression of the teaching of the Gospel in our contemporary world. The Second Vatican Council teaches that the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of this age are shared by all followers of Christ. At the heart of this teaching is our call to be connected to others and care for them in accordance with St Paul's teaching about our 'faith working through love' (Gal 5:6).

Recently Pope Francis described being vaccinated as an act of love:

"Being vaccinated with vaccines authorised by the competent authorities is an act of love. And contributing to ensure the majority of people are vaccinated is an act of love. Love for oneself, love for one's family and friends, love for all people. Love

is also social and political, there is social love and political love; it is universal, always overflowing with small gestures of personal charity capable of transforming and improving societies.

Vaccination is a simple but profound way of promoting the common good and caring for each other, especially the most vulnerable. I pray to God that everyone may contribute their own small grain of sand, their own small gesture of love; no matter how small, love is always great."

I do recognise that some have reservations in getting vaccinated. If you do have any concerns about receiving a vaccination, I encourage you to consult with a trusted physician so you can make a properly informed decision.

Please know that I hold you all in my daily prayer and I look forward to the day that we are all able to be together again to celebrate the sacraments.

Yours in Christ

Most Rev Brian G Mascord DD

BISHOP OF WOLLONGONG

Given at Wollongong on 8 September 2021

The Feast of The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

MOST REV BRIAN G MASCORD DD
BISHOP OF WOLLONGONG

Xavier Centre, 38 Harbour Street (PO BOX 1239), Wollongong NSW 2500 Australia
T +61 2 4222 2402 • F +61 2 4222 2419 • bishop@dow.org.au • dow.org.au