



DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Office of the Bishop

September 12, 2021

Dear Faithful,

I have heard from several pastors who have explained their experiences of helping families deal with the anguish and loss of loved ones from COVID – both those unvaccinated and those who were vaccinated.

I encourage everyone to get the COVID vaccination. As our Holy Father, who has received the vaccine himself, has said – it is an act of love – for those around us. It is truly a matter of concern for those who respect life.

Unfortunately, the matter of vaccinations has become a political issue. This should not be – we do not politicize other vaccines that protect us, especially our children, from diseases that can be thwarted. We should give praise to God that we have been able to find solutions to so many diseases – and we should avail ourselves to take advantage of this gift from God – a gift we asked for in all parishes to pray for once the pandemic first took root.

This is not a time for political partisanship – it is a time for all of the faithful to step up in love for our own families – to step up for life – as Christ himself suggests in the Gospel – even the unknown stranger whom the Lord reminds us is our neighbor.

I echo Pope Francis in his exhortation that we pursue vaccinations. I encourage, whenever possible, our parishes to host opportunities for the faithful to be immunized.

Sincerely yours,

+ J. J. Estévez

Most Reverend Felipe J. Estévez, S.T.D.
Bishop of St. Augustine