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MEDIA RELEASE

BISHOP MANDATES VACCINE FOR CHURCH AGENCIES

Catholic Bishop of Townsville Most Rev. Tim Harris has mandated all Townsville Diocese agency employees and volunteers (excluding staff of Townsville Catholic Education schools and colleges) be vaccinated by December 17.

“The safety and protection of our parishioners, employees and volunteers continues to be a high priority. We’ve seen witness to this over the past 18 months through the challenging protocols each parish and agency has had to adhere to in order to ensure safe places of employment and places of worship for our community.” he said.

With the Queensland borders set to open in December and the expected increase in numbers of COVID-19 infections across Queensland, the Diocese felt that it was appropriate for the protection for staff and the community that the Diocese take this approach.

Bishop Tim said, “while our Churches will remain open to both the vaccinated and un-vaccinated under the Queensland government protocols, it is important that we are seen as being on the front foot in protecting our staff and volunteers as well as those who come into our Churches and those who require the support of our agencies.”

“We have over 5 million people who have lost their lives around the world because of this virus. The hysteria by those against vaccination is endangering lives and this must be condemned. All the best medical advice says “get vaccinated,” this is what I have encouraged during the pandemic and that is what this policy is all about” he said.

Bishop Tim has encouraged the entire community to get vaccinated for the sake of each other especially the vulnerable in the community.

He said, “we should not forget as well that we have indigenous communities on our doorstep, we need to get vaccinated for them too.”

“We do it as an act of love as Pope Francis says. We do it because it is the right thing to do. The conspiracy theories must stop.”

This policy covers all agencies under the control of the Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the Diocese of Townsville and include Priests, Parishes, Centacare North Queensland, Saints Catholic College, Mary MacKillop Childcare North Queensland, North West Indigenous Catholic Social Services and Townsville Catholic Education (not including staff at schools and colleges).

For further information please contact Mr Neil Helmore, Townsville Diocesan Media Communications Officer, on 0427 047 162 or email nhelmore@tsv.catholic.org.au

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