



March 12, 2021

Dear Monsignor, Father and Deacon:

I am heartened by recent news that supplies of COVID-19 vaccines will increase significantly in the coming months. Several of you have inquired as to how your parish or Catholic institution might help in the vaccine distribution. The Chancery has been in touch with the Erie County Department of Health, as well as other health experts in the region. Since this is happening so quickly, there is no one coordinated effort to organize vaccination locations, recruit volunteers, etc. Each county, hospital, pharmacy, etc. seems largely to be developing their own distribution plans. The Catholic Church always seeks to promote the common welfare, and we certainly wish to do so in this time of crisis. Attached to this letter is a variety of information from health care agencies and ecclesiastical authorities on the national and international level. I wish to make these available to you so that you can determine if or how to participate in this public health need in the months ahead.

Parishes and Catholic institutions in the Diocese of Erie are encouraged to participate in vaccination, testing, promotion or other appropriate COVID-related needs. I know that many of you are already doing so. If you are asked to participate, know that you are free to do so. You may also reach out to local health agencies and offer assistance. Please know that you are also free to decide not to participate if, for example, your facility is not suitable, or safety or security is a concern. Please contact local agencies and authorities directly. The Chancery does not have formal contacts with health agencies.

We pray and hope that the worst of this pandemic is behind us. It is our civic duty to assist in promoting public health whenever we can. Thank you for all that you are already doing for God's people during this difficult time.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Lawrence T. Persico*

The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL
Bishop of Erie