Date

Company Name

Re: ***Current Employee Name***

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is…, and I am an **(position / title)**, of **(company name, location)**. This letter is to serve as my notice to **(company name)**. of my sincerely held religious belief preventing me from getting a COVID-19 vaccine and my request for an accommodation based on that religious belief. I am requesting an exemption to receiving the vaccine because of my sincerely held religious beliefs.

As a current employee of **(company name, date mandate was given, any other pertinent information regarding specifics of mandate)** sent a memo requiring office employees, including myself, to get a COVID-19 vaccine. These employees are required to get a COVID-19 vaccine by **(date if applicable)**.

**I. FACTUAL BACKGROUND**

**Receiving a COVID-19 vaccine would violate my sincerely held religious beliefs.** I subscribe to the Eastern Orthodox Christian faith. According to the unwavering, almost two-thousand-year-old tradition of my Church, abortion is an abominable act before God’s eyes that I cannot condone or partake of. Eastern Orthodox Christianity condemns the harvesting of biological materials from an individual without their informed consent.

Because all COVID-19 vaccines are produced using biological material and developed and/or tested using aborted fetal cells that date back to 1973 (the HEK-293 kidney cell line) and 1985 (the PER.C6 retinal cell line), as an Eastern Orthodox Christian, because of my sincere belief derived from my Church’s teaching on abortion, I cannot receive these COVID-19 vaccines. By taking these COVID-19 vaccines, I would be an accomplice to the original acts of abortion that enabled those vaccines in the first place, violating my sincerely held religious belief. ***Note: in the section titled, “appendix,” I have cited several biblical and canonical texts that reflect the Eastern Orthodox Christian position on abortion.***

Therefore, since receiving a COVID-19 vaccination would violate my sincerely held religious beliefs, I am requesting an accommodation from **(employer name)**, Inc. negating the COVID-19 vaccination requirement. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employers from discriminating against an employee because of that employee’s sincere religious beliefs. 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-2(a)(1). Title VII provides for religious accommodation claims in its definition of religion, which includes “all aspects of religious observance and practice, as well as belief, unless an employer demonstrates that he is unable to reasonably accommodate to an employee's . . . religious observance or practice without undue hardship on the conduct of the employer's business.”[[1]](#footnote-1) 42 U.S.C. § 2000e(j). Thus, whenever there is a conflict between employment requirements and an employee’s sincerely held religious beliefs, employers must seek to accommodate the employee’s belief as long as it does not pose an undue hardship on the employer. *Trans World Airlines, Inc. v. Hardison*, 432 U.S. 63, 75 (1977).

**II. CONCLUSION**

By law, **(employer name)**, must consider my request for reasonable accommodations for my religious beliefs. I do not deserve to be terminated because of my sincerely and deeply held religious beliefs, which are also held by tens of millions of others and respected in U.S. jurisprudence and recent Constitutional cases.

Finally, for a reference I suggest that a designated representative of **(company name)**, contact **(if you have a Priest who has agreed to support you, put his name, title and brief bio here, along with contact information for the company to reach him at, and finish with following statement – “who enthusiastically supports my stance on this issue as taught by the Holy Bible and the Eastern Orthodox Church. You may contact”)**

Respectfully,

Your name

number

**III. APPENDIX: PERTINENT BIBLICAL & CANONICAL TEXTS**

First, God is the author of life and He created us in His image for His Glory. The following Old Testament scriptures reveal this truth:

*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you”* **(Jeremiah 1:5)**

*“For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.”*

**(Psalms 139:13-16)**

Second, the Holy Canons of the Eastern Orthodox Church on abortion contain ecclesiastical rules according to Holy Apostles, the ancient Ecumenical Councils of the Church, and the testimony of revered theologians and bishops:

*“A woman that aborts deliberately is liable to trial as a murderess.”*

**(Canon 2 of St. Basil the Great’s 92 Canons)**

*“As for women who furnish drugs for the purpose of procuring abortion, and those who take fetus-killing poisons, they are made subject to the penalty prescribed for murderers.”*

**(Canon 91 of the 141 Canons of The Holy and Ecumenical Sixth Council)**

Thus, the Orthodox Church has taught from its beginning in the first century that human life begins at conception and that abortion of such innocent preborn human beings is murder in God’s eyes. Every single life is sacred and precious to God. Although some will argue that only two lives were killed to produce the most the currently available COVID-19 vaccines, one may not utilize aborted fetal cells or cell lines to advance medical research and to produce or test various vaccines, while justifying that process on the grounds that it may save so many more human lives. Even that good, desirable outcome is still ultimately connected to the heinous act of abortion.

Since the legalization of Roe vs. Wade in 1973, over 60 million abortions have occurred to date. The Sixth Commandment in the Old Testament of the Holy Bible clearly states, “Thou shalt not kill.” When murder of an innocent preborn human being takes place within one’s body, we greatly insult and offend God.

This verse in the New Testament of the Holy Bible also provides necessary guidance:

*“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.”*

**(1 Corinthians 3:16-17)**

1. Reed v. UAW, 564 F.3d 781, 785 (6th Cir. 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)