[DATE]

[ADDRESSEE]

My name is ???????????? and I am [STATE POSITION OR COLLEGE STATUS & LOCATION], which has mandated the COVID-19 vaccine as a condition of employment [OR CONTINUED ENROLLMENT]. I am faithful Orthodox Christian and an active member of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR).

According to the unwavering, almost two-thousand tradition of my Church, abortion is an abominable act before God’s eyes. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 vaccines were 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). In the one-page Enclosure (or appendix) to this request I have cited several biblical and canonical texts that reflect the Orthodox Christian position on abortion. In accordance with my faith and the tenets of the Orthodox Church, I am requesting a religious exemption from the all the current COVID-19 vaccines, which would violate my body as a temple of the living God and make me an accomplice to the original acts of abortion that enabled those vaccines in the first place

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.

If you would like to discuss my religious and moral objection to the current COVID-19 vaccines in further detail, please feel free to contact me at any time. My email address is ???????????? and my telephone phone number is ?????????.

Thank you for taking the time to read and to consider my religious exemption request.

Sincerely,

NAME

[TITLE, if appropriate]

Encl. Pertinent Biblical and Canonical Texts

Appendix: Pertinent Biblical and 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 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)**