



Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix

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My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ!

In the Book of Genesis, we read how God created man and woman in His own image and likeness (Gen. 1:27). In the Sacraments, given to us by Jesus Christ, Himself a Sacrament – an outward sign, instituted by God, to give grace – and most particularly through those of Initiation (Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist) we, who are made in the Divine Image, also become living temples of God. This gives each of us a dignity which no human being can grant or take from us, and which, because it is a gift of God, as is each human life, must be afforded the respect due its origin in and from God. This understanding provides the basis for this Eparchy's adoption and compliance with the Catholic Church's *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, which first appeared in 2002, and now in its most recent 2018 revised form.

In its formulation of the *Charter*, the Catholic Church in the United States recognized the necessity and sacred obligation of ensuring the protection of God's creation, most particularly children and youth, and now the disabled, the elderly, and other vulnerable children and adults among us, as well. In conformity with that understanding, Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix is committed fully to providing a safe environment for all individuals in our parishes and other facilities, in our worship and our many other sponsored activities, thus recognizing and respecting the dignity of each person and therefore doing what is necessary to insure that worship and eparchial activities are offered always in safe and vigilant environments.

Toward that end, this Eparchy continues to require a Charter-approved vetting process for its clergy, religious, compensated lay personnel, and volunteers, along with education and formation for these individuals in the Policies and Procedures that have been developed for the specific purpose of maintaining a Safe Environment for all eparchial functions. This education and formation additionally provides directives and guidance for the required implementation and continual practice of these *Policies and Procedures*, which are promulgated as eparchial policy by the Bishop of the Eparchy. Training, particularly awareness and reporting skills, is also offered to children and youth, to further assist in ensuring the maintenance of a Safe Environment.

We welcome the support of each individual in our Eparchy in our Safe Environment efforts and stand ready to assist, as may be necessary, those with questions or concerns. We are also grateful for the expertise of professionals in this field, both in the area of social sciences and services, and law enforcement, whose expertise and cooperation are always most welcome and appreciated in assuring that a most robust, vigorous, and effective Safe Environment program is provided in the Eparchy.

May God bless this good work and all those dedicated to its success.

Sincerely in Christ,

+John S. Pazak, C.Ss.R.

Most Reverend John S. Pazak, C.Ss.R.

Bishop of Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix