



# Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix

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## MEMO

**To:** Clergy and Faithful of the Eparchy of Phoenix

**From:** Most Reverend Thomas J. Olmsted, D.D., J.C.D., Apostolic Administrator *sede plena*

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**Cc:** Bishop John S. Pazak, C.Ss.R.

**Date:** April 12, 2021

**Subject:** COVID GUIDELINES

In response to the many Executive Orders from various Governors throughout our Eparchy, the following guidelines and directives will be followed:

The spirit of hospitality and welcome should be the guiding rule while at the same time recognizing the need at all divine worship services and parish events for:

- physical distancing
- use of facial coverings
- proper hygiene and hand washing

The CDC, the medical communities of the various Counties and the Cities within our jurisdiction and the Church support these scientific-based practices as the best way to protect our community. (When available, we encourage you to receive the COVID-19 vaccine as another means to protect your neighbors, your family and yourself).

Due to the release of aerosols while we sing; WE WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THESE PRACTICES DURING DIVINE LITURGIES for a while longer. Please do your best to be accommodating, kind, and understanding.

As we continue to celebrate our Lord, Jesus Christ's, Glorious Resurrection, please keep in mind that we have not granted a dispensation from Sunday Divine Liturgy and Holy Days of Precept. This remains in place.

I understand that those who are vulnerable or who care for others with underlying chronic health conditions may need to stay home. For these situations, no dispensation is required, and I ask that those of you in these situations please contact your local Parish office, so that the Clergy may make a sacramental visit to you. In addition, those who are not feeling well are asked to remain at home. For the time being, I continue to encourage you to watch our Divine Liturgies via livestream where offered (please visit your parish website). If your parish does not offer live streaming you may visit the St. Stephen Cathedral website or that of another parish that live streams.

For our salvation, we need to participate in Christ's life-saving actions. Therefore, we must make every effort possible to come to the house of God, to give Him thanksgiving, worship, and adoration, and ultimately receive his life-giving Body and Blood. Parish pastors are to ensure that individual non re-useable wooden spoons are used for distribution of the Eucharist. After use they are to be appropriately burned. For everyone's safety we will continue to distance the church pews and where possible accommodate overflow.

If you arrive at your parish for Divine Liturgy and no room is available in the narthex, nave or in additional worship space, please consider viewing the livestream on your personal mobile device in the safety of your car and come into the Church during the reception of Holy Communion.

Have a blessed Paschal season and know that I pray for all of you.