



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΦΡΑΓΚΙΣΚΟΥ

May 28, 2021

✠ Holy Martyr Euthchius, Bishop of Melitene

Dear Clergy and Faithful of the Southwest Vicariate,

***Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is Risen!***

In accordance with the state regulations in Arizona and Nevada, and the recent guidance from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), individuals who are fully vaccinated will no longer be required to wear face-coverings or comply with social distancing during worship services, sacraments and events at all Greek Orthodox churches in the Arizona and Nevada, which comprise the Southwest Vicariate in the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco. We will also no longer be requiring reservations for services. Our parishes will continue to have sanitation and safety measures in place. All other aspects of worship, parish gatherings and youth activities are to return to normal. Some parishes may continue to offer live-streaming services.

We must demonstrate respect and love as a Christian family to all our brothers and sisters in Christ, some of whom may wish to continue to wear masks during worship. There are still groups of people unable to be vaccinated (children under 12) as well as others who may have a condition or take medications that weaken the immune system and, even though vaccinated, may not be fully protected. Even after vaccination, some may need or merely wish to continue taking all precautions.

As Christians, we have an ethical obligation to protect the vulnerable. Those not fully vaccinated are recommended to continue to wear masks in order to protect themselves and others from potential exposure. While some organizations require proof of vaccination, others maintain an “honor system” policy, which will be our approach, as faith, trust, and love are guiding principles for us as Orthodox Christians.

We have navigated through the uncharted waters of the pandemic for 16 months, and I am profoundly grateful to our clergy and faithful in our entire Metropolis for their patience and cooperation with regard to the adherence of federal, state and local guidelines to ensure the health and safety of our congregations.

Praying that our Resurrected Lord may continue to grant us His Divine love and protection, as we continue to worship Him with one mind, one heart, and one voice, I remain,

With Love in the Risen Christ,

✠ Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco