



Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix

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Glory to Jesus Christ!

30 June 2021

Dear Fathers, Deacons, Monastics, and Faithful of our Eparchy,

The first half of the year 2021 has been completed, and it appears that, by the grace of God, the worst of the pandemic might be behind us. We therefore we look forward to the future with hope, grounded in our faith, as we move into the second half of this year and beyond. In that spirit, I wish to share with you some upcoming events for which I invite your prayers and participation.

The first of these is a reminder that we will soon be celebrating the 40th anniversary of our Eparchy. It was created (as the Eparchy of Van Nuys) by papal decree on December 3, 1981 and was canonically inaugurated on March 2, 1982. The Lord has blessed us during these years and continues to call us to share our Byzantine faith and traditions in the thirteen western-most states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. More information about how we are planning to celebrate this milestone, in thanksgiving to God, will be forthcoming in the months ahead.

Another important event, which will involve our efforts over the next two years, and which I believe will have some good and lasting effects, occurred on May 21st of this year when Pope Francis announced the preliminary steps which will lead to the convocation of the *XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod in Rome* to take place there in October, 2023. The theme of this Synod is: *A Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission*. As part of this Synod, and as we embark on our 40th eparchial anniversary, an eparchial synod will first occur, as will also be the case in other eparchies, that includes the clergy and faithful of the entire eparchy. It will commence with an opening ceremony in Rome on the weekend of October 10th; and then begin in local eparchies on October 17th. Prior to that, in September, we will be getting the preparatory document to discuss throughout our Eparchy. Let us pray to the Holy Spirit that this task truly energizes all of us in the service of the Kingdom of God and that our participation will bear much lasting fruit for the salvation of souls.

Finally, I offer a most grateful 'thank you' to all who have contributed to the 2021 Eparchial Appeal, and those who are, or will still be contributing. These are gifts for the continuation of the good work entrusted to the eparchy, and we give praise and thanksgiving to our Lord for these resources which remind us of the charity of God toward His people, which provides the basis, and right spirit in which these gifts are given, received, and used, as Sacred Scripture relates: "For every good gift is from above coming down from you, the Father of lights, and we give glory, thanksgiving, and worship to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." (James 1:17). In this same spirit, be assured of my prayers, pastoral concern, and the invocation of God's blessings for each of you.

Sincerely yours, in the Blessed Trinity,

+ *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