



January 22, 2021

**Statement Regarding Developments in Medicine:
COVID-19 Vaccines & Immunizations**

*Christ “came not to heal the healthy, but the sick; not to save the righteous, but sinners”
(Mark 2:17)*

As the world continues to battle COVID-19, we are ever grateful to the frontline workers – including medical professionals, emergency responders, and scientists – for their unwavering dedication to making the world a better place.

In light of the same, given our clergy and lay faithful are seeking archpastoral guidance regarding developments in medicine, such as COVID-19 vaccines and immunizations, we offer the following guidance:

Scripture encourages us to respect and protect the body as the temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19). At the same time, it discourages us from either tempting or testing the Lord (Matt. 4:7). And as your spiritual shepherds, we affirm and assure you that it is neither wrong nor sinful to seek medical attention and advice. In fact, we welcome interventions that provide us more time for spiritual renewal and repentance.

We therefore encourage all of you – the clergy and lay faithful of our Church – to consult your physicians in order to determine the appropriate course of action for you, just as you do for surgeries, medications, and vaccinations, in cancer treatments and other ailments. Indeed, while your own bishop, priest, or spiritual father remains prepared to assist you with spiritual matters, your personal doctor will guide your individual medical decisions.

We trust that whatever course of action you and your doctor decide upon will also benefit the rest of the community. If we work together – in a spirit of sincere compassion and care for one another – we will soon be able to gather together as a *full* community in our churches once again. We miss you very much and eagerly await the day when we can *all* exchange the kiss of peace in the Divine Liturgy!

Conveying our paternal blessings with love in the Lord,

Archbishop Elpidophoros, Chairman
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Metropolitan Joseph, Vice-Chairman
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

Archbishop Michael, Treasurer
Orthodox Church in America

Metropolitan Gregory, Secretary
American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the USA

Bishop Irinej
Serbian Orthodox Church in North, Central and South America

Metropolitan Nicolae
Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

Metropolitan Joseph
Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the USA, Canada, and Australia

Bishop Saba
Georgian Apostolic Orthodox Church in North America

Metropolitan Tikhon
Orthodox Church in America