



# DIOCESE OF SAN BERNARDINO

## OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Peace and well-being to you and your families. As we begin this new year 2022, please join me in hope and gratitude to God almighty for all the blessings received last year. At the same time, we implore God's providence and blessings upon us as we journey into the New Year.

Like you, after almost two years of challenges with the pandemic, I have very much looked forward to a return to "normal." But instead, we find ourselves in the midst of another COVID spike, due to the Omicron variant. We are weary and tired of the many difficult impacts of this virus; its threat to our health, its impact on our work, our daily routine and our children's education. Still, we must resist the temptation to despair, indifference, or carelessness. God continues to walk with us through this darkness and if we keep the light of hope in our hearts and minds, we will recognize His loving presence.

In these days, it is very important for us all to continue to practice the good habits we have learned during the pandemic – washing our hands frequently, wearing a mask indoors and staying home and away from others if we feel symptoms. If you have not been vaccinated yet, you can still do it anytime. An important fact that has emerged during this surge is that those who are fully vaccinated are experiencing less symptoms when they are infected. Those who are hospitalized are primarily those who are not vaccinated. Finally, with the increase in COVID cases and the normal flu season occurring, it is very important that if we feel sick, we get tested as soon as possible. Look for the many testing sites and resources in your community.

How do we continue to respond to this as people of faith? With trust in our God, and with a spirit of diligence and compassion for the health and wellbeing of our brothers and sisters around us. Our churches remain open, and we can gather together at the table of the Lord to receive the Bread of Life, which sustains us and brings us to a greater communion with God and one another.

Let us pray especially for those who are seriously ill and for the health care workers and service providers who tend to their needs every day.

The "normal" that we have been waiting for, is not here yet, so we remain ever faithful and self-giving in the way that we live each day, trusting in God's providence and mercy. You remain in my heart and prayers. Let's continue to pray for one another.

May Almighty God always bless you and keep you.

In Christ's Love,

Bishop Alberto Rojas