

October 9 / September 26, 2021

Repose of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian

To whom it may concern,

Historically, the Orthodox Church has never objected to vaccines that have been developed and manufactured ethically. A smallpox vaccine even played an important role in Fr. John Popov (отец Иван Попов), the future Saint Innocent of Alaska, gaining the trust of the Tlingit people of the Pacific Northwest Coast. However, recent saints and holy elders not yet officially recognized as saints warned the Orthodox faithful not to receive the Covid vaccine, which they foresaw before their repose. The instructions of these contemporary Church Fathers to refuse these vaccinations allow the Orthodox faithful to receive a religious exemption from these and future vaccinations.

It is the consensus of the Church Fathers that forms the teachings and practices of the Orthodox Church, as demonstrated in the Apostolic Canons, the Seven Ecumenical Councils, the Nine Provincial Councils, and other traditions and rules of the Orthodox Church. Contemporary Church Fathers, such as Saint Paisios of Mount Athos (†1994), Elder Justin Parvu of Romania (†2013), and Elder Savvas Achilleos of Athens (†2016) specifically warned the faithful not to receive a future “vaccination.” Other Church Fathers, such as Metropolitan Augustinos Kantiotes of Florina (†2010), gave supporting information confirming this. Disciples of these contemporary Fathers who have not yet reposed confirm that these warnings are in regards to the new vaccinations for Covid.

As a personal note, I was introduced to the wisdom of Saint Paisios of Mount Athos by one of Saint Paisios’ disciples, Schema-Hierodeacon Theophanes (Constantine). After more than 30 years on Mount Athos, he returned to Edmonton for two years before he reposed. Вечная память. As such, I have a personal obligation to confirm and disseminate Saint Paisios’ teachings on this issue, which can be found in *Spiritual Counsels of Saint Paisios*, Volume II: *Spiritual Awakening*.

Those following the consensus of the Church Fathers and would, therefore, qualify for a religious exemption from the Covid and future vaccinations would include all members of the Orthodox Church, catechumens in the process of being received into the Orthodox Church, and inquirers who have yet to make the decision to become catechumens.

Saint Paisios of Mount Athos, pray to God for us.

With love in Christ,



The Reverend Deacon John Grigaitis,
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