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Jenny Mikakos pleads with Archbishop Makarios to protect Australia's Greek community



Victoria's Health Minister Jenny Mikakos sent a letter to Archbishop Makarios prior to the Archbishop's communique on Monday night which told congregations that it is acceptable to take the sacrament of Holy Communion despite the coronavirus pandemic. "I responsibly assure every faithful person that up until now in the history of our Church there have never been any cases where an epidemic of infectious disease has been transmitted through Holy Communion," wrote Archbishop Makarios.

Ms Mikakos sent a message with her concerns, however a National Cabinet meeting on Wednesday morning bans gatherings of more than 500 people, now 100 people – a measure which is not optional, even for churches.

Below is Jenny Mikakos letter to His Eminence:

Dear Your Eminence,

I refer to recent media reports that the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia will be continuing to offer Holy Communion to parishioners.

As you are aware, the World Health Organisation has declared a global pandemic of Covid-19.

In Victoria, we are taking a number of extreme measures to protect the community, including the cancellation of all mass gatherings greater than 500 people.

These measures have been agreed to by the National Cabinet, comprising the Prime Minister and all State and Territory Premiers, and based on the advice of all jurisdictions' Chief Health Officers.

I wish to draw to your attention that people who are elderly or with underlying medical conditions are at greatest risk of Covid-19. There have been reports of high mortality rates in Northern Italy amongst this cohort.

I am very concerned about the health and wellbeing of Victoria's Greek community if church services continue in the same manner over the next few months.

I understand the Catholic Church and other faith groups have similarly taken measures to reduce the transmission of the virus, including the restriction of large church gatherings and stopping communion from being provided.

I plead with you to put such measures in place for Australia's Greek community as well.

Church services could continue through radio and/or television broadcasts, or smaller services and Holy Communion be available only to the parish priest presiding over the service on behalf of all parishioners.

I understand the Church's position that Holy Communion is sacred, but a spoon is not. Covid-19 is a highly transmissible virus and to continue without any changes will put the lives of our elderly parishioners at great risk.

I would be happy to organise a briefing for you with Victoria's Chief

> Health Officer, Professor Brett Sutton, if you require any further information.
>
> Yours sincerely,
>
> Jenny Mikakos
>
> Victoria’s Health Minister

— Source: neoskosmos.com