

Fourth Friday of the Xairetismoι (rejoincings) celebrated without worshippers in Orthodox churches around the world



Orthodox churches around the world would have been filled today with worshippers for the fourth consecutive Friday service of the xairetismoι, or rejoincings, which are conducted during the Great and Holy Lent. However, due to the lockdowns and restrictions on non-essential movement in numerous countries, including Greece, services are conducted without the faithful, and only broadcast from a handful of cathedrals.

In Greece, only cathedrals with live television and radio feeds are open, but only with the attending priest and a chanter.

The **Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, His Beatitude Ieronymos**, in fact, addressed a televised message to the flock on Friday afternoon. This development comes a day after the Holy Synod of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Greece disclosed a letter by the Archbishop to the country's education and religious affairs minister, requesting, among others, that the Divine Liturgy and other services resume in all cathedrals and chapels around the country, but without worshippers.

His Beatitude emphasized that holding church services will greatly facilitate the Orthodox Church's pastoral ministry, as the Church is obliged to offer prayer and supplication for the good health of the faithful and all humanity.

Ieronymos said chapels within hospitals and clinics around the country remain silent, while also requesting that the Divine Liturgy be celebrated at monasteries for the resident monks and nuns.

Another letter by the **Athens Archdiocese's first secretary, the Bishop of Oreii, His Grace Filotheos**, conveyed the Holy Synod's request to the ministry to include the reason of "personal prayer" among the current exclusions in the restriction on non-essential movement from one's residence – in place in Greece to reduce exposure to the Covid-19 virus.

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