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Details of restrictions in Greece on places of worship, extended through to Holy Easter Week

The Greek government, as first reported by the Orthodoxia news agency, has extended temporary coronavirus-related restrictions on places of worship around the country until April 20. That date falls on Bright Monday, the day after Easter Sunday.

The Great and Holy Week for Easter (Pascha) in the predominately Christian Orthodox country is the peak of annual religious attendance, culminating on the evening of Good Saturday with the highly devotional and celebratory service of the Resurrection of our Lord.

Palm Sunday on the Orthodox calendar for 2020 falls on April 12, with Easter Sunday a week later on April 19.

The restrictions against the presence of worshippers and visitors apply to all faiths, confessions and dogmas, and cover all types of services, rituals and rites, regardless of the size and capacity of a place of worship.

Services, without the presence of worshippers, can be held in places of worship, with at most four people, such as priests and cantors, in attendance. As in previous weeks, this has translated into a priest and cantor celebrating a service in a cathedral without worshipers.

Services are also prohibited in chapels and sanctuaries within private properties and buildings.

Additionally, pilgrims and worshippers cannot visit monasteries, although services for a monastic community's resident monks and nuns is allowed.

No restrictions apply on live-streaming or broadcasting services from cathedrals, although a ceiling of four technicians within each site is foreseen.

Finally, in order to avoid the assembly of worshipers outside cathedrals and chapels, the use of loudspeakers has been prohibited.

Restrictions on visits of pilgrims to Mount Athos and other preventative measures at monasteries located on the semi-autonomous monastic community in northern Greece are also forthcoming by the Holy Mountain's civil governor, following a consultation with members of the Holy Community's rotating committee.