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Ban on visits to churches in Moscow, Moscow Region extended indefinitely



The Moscow Patriarchate has again extended a ban on worshippers visiting churches in Moscow and the Moscow Region.

According to earlier reports, such a ban was initially imposed for the period of the Holy Week and Orthodox Easter as part of measures to limit the spread of the coronavirus infection. The measure was then extended through April 28, when Orthodox believers observe the Day of Remembrance for their deceased loved ones.

The patriarch’s order saying that clerics may be held to account for violations of measures to curb the spread of Covid-19 was published on the website of the Russian Orthodox Church on Monday. An appendix to this document mentions a circular letter of Metropolitan Dionisy, the patriarch’s first vicar for Moscow, “regarding the ban on citizens’ access to the territory of churches and other church premises from April 29, 2020 until further notice.”

Religious services will continue to be conducted behind closed doors, in the presence of only clerics, church staff, and volunteers whose presence is essential, including in order to arrange online broadcasts.

The decision to continue conducting religious services without worshippers was made in line with a relevant recommendation issued by Moscow’s chief public health official Yelena Andreyeva.

Source