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“Is the Church worse than a supermarket and hair salon?” – Met. Hierotheos



“What is the Church? Is it a union? Is it a supermarket? Is it a hair salon after all? Is it worse than the supermarket and worse than the hair salon?” Metropolitan Hierotheos (Vlachos) of Nafpaktos, the spokesman for the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, asked with exasperation at the state’s announcement that the churches would not reopen for services in the near future.

“I look forward to a return not only to normality, but also to ecclesiasticalism,” the metropolitan said, commenting on the gradual lifting of the present restrictions for SKAI TV, reports the **Orthodoxia News Agency**.

“Since the problem is overcrowding, we will take all the necessary measures, we will do what they have instructed us to do,” Met. Hierotheos emphasized.

Government officials earlier announced that the request of Archbishop Ieronymos and the Eparchial Synod of Crete would not be satisfied at this time, but that the churches could be opened in the first round of the relaxation of restrictions only for

private prayers. The state could not say when the faithful would be allowed to return to the Divine services.

“What is the Church for them? What is the Church? Is it a union? Is it a supermarket?… Is it worse than the supermarket? Is it worse than the hair salon? What is the Church? Isn’t it a Divine organization that has a tradition of twenty centuries and was functioning even before the state?” Met. Hierotheos asked rhetorically.

He also confessed that felt a real sense of disappointment when he was informed of the state’s decision.

“Second, what is the Divine Liturgy, in the end? Is it just a gathering of a few people? Of course, we accept that. But isn’t it something higher? Is the Divine Liturgy folklore?” the Synodal spokesman continued.

He also wondered what the extent of power and authority should be.

The Church was willing to accept individual prayer for a while, and even at the holiest time of the Church year, “but if this continues, we must say that we are Orthodox Christians, not Protestants,” His Eminence said.

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