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Members of the Church of Greece’s Holy Synod express satisfaction with Greek PM’s words of appreciation for Church



Members of the Holy Synod of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Greece met in Athens on Thursday to consider the the Greek government’s easing of coronavirus restrictions. After the conclusion of the session, a press release issued by the Holy Synod said the Greek prime minister’s statements, a day earlier, generated hope within the Church’s ranks, while also expressing satisfaction with the premier’s statements of appreciation towards the Church of Greece, its clergy and the entire reverential flock for their efforts to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Hierarchs also emphasized that the Church of Greece is already processing the proposals recommended by a committee of experts, with decisions to be announced after another Holy Synod meeting next month.

Those proposals will be submitted to public health and state authorities, in order to

apply on May 17, when cathedral doors open to worshipers for the holding of services and the Divine Liturgy.

A spokesman of the permanent Holy Synod, the Metropolitan of Philippi, Neapolis and Thassos, His Eminence Stefanos, said the Church accepts the government's proposal and will exploit the period until May to take all necessary precautions.
Asked about a comment by the relevant education and religious affairs minister, namely, that the coronavirus is transmitted by saliva, His Eminence said:

"The Holy Communion is based on the Holy Canons of the Church. The sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is based on the Word of Christ … Ms. (Niki) Kerameos has already said, in fact, that she does not enter into matters of faith… we insist on our standing view: this cannot be a topic of discussion".

As previously reported, the Mitsotakis government, following recommendations and guidelines by the committee of experts, will lift a prohibition on worshipers entering places of worship, as of Monday. This means that personal worship will be restored.

Church-going by the faithful will resume as of Sunday, May 17, albeit with social distancing protocols and other public health precautions in place, something that the Church of Greece has not only accepted, but in fact, has committed to strictly applying.

Nevertheless, some Metropolitans in the country had expressed sharp reactions to what they perceive is an unfair and unduly strict stance vis-à-vis the Church and the flock.

In light of the latest decisions, caretakers of cathedrals and chapels around the east Mediterranean country have begun stepped up works to disinfect and clean churches' interiors.

Video posted today on the pages of the Orthodoxia News Agency shows cleaning efforts at the St. Filothei Cathedral, in the same-name north Athens district.

https://www.orthodoxianewsagency.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/video-cee99e5b02e902













Photos: Christos Mponis