04/05/2020

Churches, chapels open in Greece for personal worship



Churches and chapels in Greece on Monday opened for personal worship, weeks after strict coronavirus-related restrictions were first imposed. Numerous faithful were seen visiting churches beginning early in the morning, to light a candle and pray.
As repeatedly pledged by the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Greece, all public health precautions and guidelines will be followed, such as social distancing, the use of masks and gloves, and continuous disinfection of church interiors.

Photographs posted today on the pages of the Orthodoxia news agency show the faithful praying at the Athens Metropolitan Cathedral.

Church services and the Divine Liturgy will be conducted with the presence of worshipers as of Sunday, May 17.

Conversely, the semi-monastic community of Mount Athos in northern Greece remains closed to pilgrims.

An encyclical issued by the permanent Holy Synod of the Church of Greece details the public health measures that will be in place until May 16, including the opening

of cathedrals an hour after the holding of holy services, so that interiors may be properly ventilated.

Additionally, the ratio of worshipers to floor space in cathedrals will be one person per every 10 square meters, with the minimum distance between worshipers being one and a half meters.

The Church encyclical reminds that the precautions and guidelines apply to metropolitan cathedrals, parish cathedrals, pilgrimage sites, as well as cathedrals' side chapels, along with chapels within cemeteries, ecclesiastical institutes and hospitals.