

Church of Greece Holy Synod to Greek govt: We will keep cathedrals open to worshipers during feast of Epiphany on Wed.



Members of the Holy Synod of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Greece convened during an extraordinary session on Monday, under the chairmanship of Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, His Beatitude Ieronymos, with the hierarchs later issuing a stern rebuke to last week's disappointing decision by the Greek government to ban the presence of worshippers for Wednesday's Feast of the Theophany — also known as the Epiphany, one of the most significant feast days on the Orthodox Christian calendar.

[The stricter public assembly measures, announced last Saturday](#) and extending to Jan. 11, are ostensibly part of efforts to prevent exposure to the Covid-

19 virus.

The announcement by the Holy Synod referred to “abrupt decisions” by the Greek government, adding that the Church of Greece does not consent to those edicts and insists on churches and chapels remaining open to worshipers for the feast of the Theophany for the annual Sanctification of the Waters service.

The Holy Synod announced that it will send a letter of protest to the Greek government, stressing that dialogue is the only means to resolve issues affecting Church-state relations, and relations with other religious denominations.

In a statement afterwards, the Metropolitan of Ilion, Acharnon and Petroupoli, His Eminence Athinagoras, told reporters that “...we will open the churches. The government can do as it wishes.”

Athinagoras, who is the press spokesman for the Holy Synod, said the government had not previously briefed the Church over its decision to keep worshipers away from the Epiphany services.

Photo: Christos Mponis