

New Greek govt Cabinet members sworn-in with religious oath; Church adamant on opening Epiphany service to worshippers - (VIDEO)



The swearing-in of the new members of the Greek Cabinet took place on Tuesday, before president of the republic Katerina Sakellaropoulou. A modest government reshuffle was announced the previous day, with four ministers changing portfolios and with the addition of several deputy ministers.

The religious oath was administered by the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, His Beatitude Ieronymos, during a closely watched ceremony, as only hours earlier the Holy Synod of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Greece stated that it would not abide by a government order – unexpectedly announced last Friday – ordering Wednesday’s Epiphany services to be held without the presence of worshippers.

The feast of the Epiphany, known in Orthodoxy as the Theophany of our Lord Savior Jesus Christ, coming on the 12th day after Christmas, is one of the most important

dates on the ecclesiastical calendar.

Strict public assembly measures and precautions were in place during Tuesday's ceremony, and those taking the oath were given rapid tests for the Covid-19 virus before entering the presidential mansion.

The announcement by the Holy Synod, taken after an extraordinary session on Monday chaired by Archbishop Ieronymos, generated [a sharp reaction on the part of the Mitsotakis government later in the evening.](#)

A statement warned that no one in the country is allowed to only follow portions of the law, or to abide by laws one agrees with. The government also called on the Church to realize how critical the situation is, at present, with the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

At the same time, however, the Holy Synod's spokesman, Metropolitan Athinagoras, appeared optimistic that a resolution will be found. His Eminence added that "...we have complied with the government's decisions up to now, because public health is paramount. The flock understood this and complied with the measures. I am optimistic for a resolution."

Encyclical issued by Church for Epiphany services

An encyclical approved and issued by members of the permanent Holy Synod of the Church of Greece on Monday announced that the Church will seek recourse to Greece's highest administrative court in order to rescind the government's order regarding Church-going on the Epiphany, which falls on Wednesday, Jan. 6.

The encyclical also reminds hierarchs and clerics over the measures that must be followed during services, such as a maximum number of worshippers inside cathedrals, based on the size of the buildings, and distancing between each of the worshippers. The same regime was in place and followed during the great church services on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

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