

## **Strict observance of health safety restrictions on Epiphany Day in Greece**



The water blessing ceremonies, traditionally carried out outdoors on Epiphany Day, were carried out indoors at all churches on Wednesday ensuring the diligent observance of all health safety restriction measures.

Moreover, there were no public litanies or processions.

The blessed water was given in small bottles both to the faithful who attended the ceremony in the church and to those who waited outside in a row keeping the necessary safety distances.

Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Hieronymos on Tuesday called on all Metropolitans, the heads of ecclesiastical districts, to help ensure the diligent, undeviating observance of all health safety restrictions during Epiphany Day church services on Wednesday.

Hieronimos conveyed his message to Metropolitans in an official synodical letter, according to Tuesday's press release by the Church of Greece's Standing Holy Synod.

Thus, the water blessing ceremonies were decided to be carried out indoors at churches.

Additionally, Hieronymos will not make use of the Holy Synod's special permission to transfer himself to any coastal area or sea waters for the purposes of performing such a religious ritual; the Holy Synod's press release continued to underline that

by this decision, Hieronymos wants “to give a good example.”

The Church of Greece’s statement stressed that “having a high sense of responsibility towards both God and people -since the start of the pandemic- it remains aligned with state institutions in the fight for the protection of public health, sets a positive example for the observance of health safety restrictions, and stands by the state’s efforts to reduce the pandemic’s impact on people’s lives.”

“A constant, open, and honest communication between Church and State is now necessary more than ever before, at the highest level, especially during this critical juncture,” it continued, and concluded that “the communication between the Prime Minister and the Archbishop can only be fruitful to the benefit of the nation.”

**Photo: Manolis Dimellas / Orthodoxia News Agency**

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