

Crucial period in Church-state relations in Greece coincides with Great Lent



The opening of Great Lent this year witnesses a period of major challenges in relations between the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Greece and the Greek state, as well as for Orthodoxy in general. The next two weeks are judged as crucial.

A second vote in Greece's Parliament to ratify a revision in Article 3 of the country's constitution comes on Thursday. The first vote was passed by a very slim majority. The current government wants to enshrine the state's neutrality to religion in the predominately Christian Orthodox nation, and alter decades-old Church-state relations.

An urgent session of the permanent Holy Synod will also take place next week, where hierarchs will finalize a Church of Greece response to the government's initiative to change the payroll regime for clerics in the country. The Holy Synod will also express a position on the recent granting of autocephaly by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Finally, three new Metropolitans will be elected, to take the place of three recently

deceased Church hierarchs.