09/05/2024

Anniversary Tribute to His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia



It was on this day, exactly five years ago, that God our heavenly Father, spoke, through the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, revealing His will for our Church here in Australia. More specifically, it was on the 9th of May 2019 that His Eminence Archbishop Makarios was unanimously elected ‘Archbishop of Australia’, to continue the sacred ministry of Episcopal oversight for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia as the Church’s Primate, Chief Shepherd and Spiritual Father. Upon hearing the God-inspired decision of the Holy and Sacred Synod, we, the faithful were able to genuinely rejoice for such a consummate, compelling, and crucial gift of God’s grace upon us all.

From a theological perspective, the Orthodox Church claims that just as the Holy Spirit has continued, throughout the centuries, to make Christ present within the Church—more concretely, within every celebration of the Divine Eucharist—by changing the forms of 'bread' and wine' into the Body and Blood of Christ, so too, has the same Spirit of God continued to safeguard the unity and fellowship—κοινωνία—of the Church, and continued to give witness to the divinely revealed truths of God for the salvation of the world, through the office of the Bishop.

In the second century, St Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, taught that, at each Episcopal ordination, the Holy Spirit bestows upon the Bishop "a certain spiritual gift of truth [charisma veritatis certum]" which, through the uninterrupted succession of Apostolic ministry, safeguards the Church from all error and allows Her to "rightly explain the word of truth [ὀρθοτομοῦντα τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας]" (2Tim 2:15). In this way, through the exercise of the Bishop's ministry, each local Church—in our case, the Orthodox Church in Australia with Archbishop Makarios as her Leader in Christ—can rightly claim to be in continuity, to be integral and identical with the first Christian Church of the Apostles.

In a very real sense, the Bishop is a living witness of the true faith, a constant and ultimate measure or criterion of right belief guiding the Church from glory to glory. It is precisely by virtue of the fact that each Bishop's ministry and authority is a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church, that Orthodox theology teaches that it is essential and intrinsic to the Church. Indeed, the Bishop stands "in the place and type of Christ [εἰς τύπον καὶ τόπον Χριστοῦ]", to quote the words of St Ignatius of Antioch (2nd cent.), making Christ present, uniting the faithful, as the one Body, to Christ, the Head of the Church.

In so doing the Bishop is called by God Himself to work tirelessly and endlessly in sharing the Light "of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2Cor 4:6); being the Church's mouthpiece in expressing His truths to the world for each successive generation; and for ever reminding the faithful of the certainty that they are all loved by Someone whose love is without measure and beyond comprehension.

Fully aware of his high calling from God, Archbishop Makarios has remained vigilant and tireless in 'working' for our Church's advancement, and the promotion of Orthodoxy in the Antipodes. Indeed, so much has happened in the last five years under the leadership of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios that can only be explained as "grace upon grace [χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος]" (Jn 1:16) by God. Beyond the multitudinous ordinations which His Eminence has conducted—which exceed eighty

at present—thus giving new energy and vigour to the Church here in the Fifth Continent; beyond the refurbishment of the Cathedral in Sydney which has just commenced; the many consecrations of our Churches throughout all of Australia, there are at least two other exceptionally significant initiatives which are of historic importance:

1) this year, which marks the centenary anniversary since the Church's establishment, or 'birth' in 1924, under the Ecumenical Patriarchate, God's providence paved the way for our Church's 're-birth' this year through the establishment and institution of the Eparchial Synod for our Holy Archdiocese here in Australia. This would not have been possible without His Eminence's vision from the very first days of his arrival to Australia. The significance of this event, that His Eminence was able to bring to fruition after endless hours of deliberation, and preparation, cannot be overstated. It is this synodical institution which will safeguard our Church's perpetuity into the future on unassailably solid and adamantine foundations.

2) It has been no small feat that His Eminence has been able to secure the visit to Australia of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in October this year as the culminative event of our Church's centenary celebrations. With the visit of the Ecumenical Patriarch to Australia, His Eminence will have created stronger ties of unity and solidarity with the venerable Centre, thus upholding and promoting the God-mandated unity of the Church not only at a local but also at an international level as well.

Accordingly, beyond prayers of gratitude to God for guiding the Ecumenical Patriarchate in its election of our Archbishop, we also ask God that He will continue to fill our Archbishop with His light-filled presence, so that He might remain a shining light of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We pray that our Lord may grant to our Archbishop many years so that he may continue to give witness to the unity and coinherence of all things in our crucified and resurrected Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Above all, we pray that our Archbishop may continue to give witness to the one and all-important Truth that in Christ, death has been defeated and that Christ came, that the world "may never die [μὴ ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα]" (Jn 11:26), but rather "may have life and have it abundantly [ἵνα ζωὴν ἔχωσι καὶ περισσὸν ἔχωσιν]" (Jn 10:10).

From the Office of the Chancellor

In Sydney, on the 9th day of May, 2024

The Chancellor

Archimandrite of the Ecumenical Throne

† Christophoros Krikelis

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