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Archbishop Makarios of Australia: “The aim of the Orthodox Church is to bring about a good transformation”



On the occasion of the great Feast Day of the Transfiguration of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia conducted a pastoral visit to the Holy Diocese of Chora, in Victoria, and, specifically, to the celebrating Parish of the Transfiguration of Our Lord in the suburb of Thomastown, Melbourne. On Monday evening, 5 August, His Eminence officiated at the Great Vespers Service, and was joined by Their Graces, Bishop Evmenios of Chora, Bishop Kyriakos of Melbourne and Bishop Themistocles of Nicopolis, from the Patriarchate of Alexandria, as well by a multitude of clergy from all over the State of Victoria. A multitude of devout Christians flocked to the Church of the Transfiguration of Our Lord, and among them was the Consul General of Greece in Melbourne, Mr. Emmanuel Kakavelakis.

At the end of the Vespers, Archbishop Makarios spoke to the congregation about the event of the revelation of the Divine Glory on Mount Tabor, having previously conveyed to the clergy and the faithful who were present, the wishes and blessings of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. Referring briefly to the

recent benevolent decisions of the Holy and Sacred Synod with regards to the Holy Archdiocese of Australia: the establishment of the Holy Eparchial Synod, the establishment of Dioceses named after Australian cities and the election of Regional Bishops (Chorepiskopoi), His Eminence expressed the gratitude of the local Church to His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, for His positive suggestions in this regard, for His blessing and general support.

On this occasion, Archbishop Makarios urged the Christ-loving people of the fifth continent to show their gratitude to the Ecumenical Patriarch by actively "attending" the reception and the events that will be held in his honour during his upcoming Apostolic Visit to Sydney and Melbourne from 4 to 19 October 2024. Also, His Eminence underlined that the purpose of the said decisions is to ensure the unity of the Orthodox Church in Australia. "Because the Church moves forward when we are all together, united. The Church moves forward with the "we", not with the "I", he emphasised, among other things, while wishing the Regional Bishops a blessed ministry and to continue serving in the spirit of unity, love and peace.



Further, focusing his attention on the event of the Transfiguration of the Saviour, the Archbishop observed, first of all, that the presence of the Prophets Moses and Elijah demonstrates that Christ "rules over both the living and the dead". "The Lord showed His disciples that He was not only the Master of life, but also the Master of death", he underlined, while pointing out: "It was also a testimony of Christ for what would follow in forty days, until His crucifixion. He wanted to tell the disciples not to be afraid of the events which were to follow, because they would lead to the

Resurrection.”

At this point, His Eminence discerned that the concept of transfiguration refers to that of transformation, which, however, is divided into good and bad transformation. Proclaiming that “The aim of the Orthodox Church is to bring about a good transformation” of the person and humanity, he presented two contrasting examples of transformation, one from a historical and another from a current event. Specifically, he referred to the first dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on such days (August 6 & 9) in 1945, and the recent unacceptable opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Paris, which altered the principles and values of the institution in question, offending among others Christianity and the Holy Gospel. “Let us not forget that the work of the devil is to distort, that is, to distort reality,” he concluded and added: “This is also a transfiguration. But it is a transfiguration which leads to decay and darkness. It does not lead to light and freedom as the transfiguration of Christ does.”



Concluding, Archbishop Makarios asked everyone to offer their witness with courage as Greeks and as Orthodox Christians. “Do not be afraid and do not be ashamed of who you are. And do not be afraid to denounce the negative elements of a particular situation,” he urged.









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