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The Ecumenical Patriarch at the Holy Monastery of Panagia Pantanassa in Mangrove



“Monasticism is the fervent preacher and diligent messenger of the Kingdom of God, which should also be our primary concern,” emphasised His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew during his visit on the morning of Monday 7th October to the Holy Monastery of Panagia Pantanassa in the Mangrove area of New South Wales, near Sydney.

His All-Holiness was accompanied by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, and awaiting at the monastery were Their Eminences, Metropolitan Kyrillos of Imbros and Tenedos, Metropolitan Filotheos of Thessaloniki, Metropolitan Ezekiel of Dervis, Metropolitan Seraphim of Sevasteia, and Their Graces, Bishop Elpidios of Perth, Bishop Silouan of Adelaide, Bishop Kyriakos of Melbourne, Bishop Evmenios of Chora, Bishop Bartholomew of Brisbane, Bishop Iakovos of Miletoupolis, and Bishop Christodoulos of Magnesia, along with other members of the Patriarchal entourage and a large number of clergy from the Holy Archdiocese of Australia. Upon his arrival at the Holy Monastery, he received a warm welcome

from the Abbot, Archimandrite of the Ecumenical Throne, Fr Eusebios and his brotherhood as well as a multitude of pilgrims who had come to pay their respects and receive the Patriarch's blessing. Present were also the Ambassador of Greece to Australia, His Excellency Mr Stavros Venizelos, the Consul General of Greece in Sydney, Mr Yannis Mallikourtis, and Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

In welcoming the Ecumenical Patriarch, Abbot Fr Eusebios spoke with heartfelt filial words noting, among other things, that "your presence among us is a rare heavenly blessing that fills our hearts with indescribable joy and spiritual upliftment." He also expressed everyone's admiration for the international initiatives undertaken by His All-Holiness, which, as he highlighted, bring the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Orthodox faith to the global stage. He then spoke with gratitude towards the Mother Church for all its blessings to the Holy Archdiocese of Australia, including the decision to entrust its flock to His Eminence Archbishop Makarios. "His arrival has marked a new era for Orthodoxy in Australia, an era characterised by spiritual renewal, consensus, and unity," he noted. Concluding, Fr Eusebios shared his grateful feelings for the Founder and former Abbot of the Holy Monastery of Panagia Pantanassa, Elder Stephanos.



In his response, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, after expressing his pleasure with the flourishing of Orthodox Monasticism in distant Australia, concurred with the Abbot's words regarding Elder Stephanos' long and tireless service and, as an honorary recognition of this service and his devotion to

the Church, conferred upon him, in an atmosphere of emotion, the title of Archimandrite of the Ecumenical Throne. “As has already been stated, Monasticism is nothing other than the longing for the Kingdom,” noted His All-Holiness, continuing: “This longing was cultivated in the fathers with skill and care by the venerable former Abbot Stephanos, without neglecting his service to the Holy Archdiocese, as he was the inspirer and founder of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society and the Greek Welfare Centre, and in general, he was a valuable supporter of the Archdiocese in every good work, a close collaborator of the late Archbishop Ezekiel and subsequently of Archbishop Stylianos, thereby demonstrating that the monk lives outside the world but does not neglect the world and God’s people.”

At the end of the Doxology in honour of his welcome, His All-Holiness presented the brotherhood of the Holy Monastery with an oil lamp for the icon of Panagia Pantanassa as a memento of his visit and received from the Abbot an icon of Panagia Nikopoios, crafted at the monastery’s iconography workshop, which beautifully combines the Byzantine and indigenous Australian traditions.




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