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The Ecumenical Patriarch at the Parish-Community of Holy Archangels in Melbourne



On Saturday 12th October, His All-Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, completing the first stage of his Apostolic visit to Australia, departed from Sydney and flew to Melbourne, the capital of Victoria. His first stop, upon arrival to this "most Hellenic" Australian city was the Parish-Community of Holy Archangels in the suburb of Mentone. There, he was warmly received by numerous parishioners led by Parish priest, Father Panagiotis Zoumboulis and in the presence of His Eminence Metropolitan Myron of New Zealand, and the Consuls General of Greece in Melbourne, Mr Emmanuel Kakavelakis, and in Adelaide, Ms Alexandra Theodoropoulos. A significant presence was also that of His All-Holiness' compatriots, for many residents of Mentone are of Imbrian descent, and his brother, Mr Nikolaos Archontonis,

Filled with emotion, the Patriarch greeted and blessed the faithful who had gathered to welcome him and proudly watched the youth of the Parish-Community perform traditional Greek dances in his honour. In his brief speech, following the welcome by the parish priest, His All-Holiness first expressed his pleasure with the evident and significant progress achieved by the Holy Archdiocese of Australia since his last visit to the country. Referring to His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of

Australia, he spoke of a dynamic and active shepherd who “in just a few years has managed to leave his personal mark on the ecclesiastical matters of this great Eparchy of the venerable Ecumenical Throne.” Congratulating him on his achievements thus far, he noted that “we expect much more from Archbishop Makarios in the coming years” and emphasised the need for everyone in the local Church to support and rally behind him for its further advancement.

Subsequently, His All-Holiness expressed the love and pride of the Mother Church and his personal pride for the Orthodox faithful of the fifth continent. “You are geographically very far from our sacred centre, but very close to our hearts. And you always give us reasons for admiration and boasting in the Lord,” he noted characteristically.



He then highlighted the role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as the guardian of the Orthodox faith and canonical order, mentioning his tireless struggle for the unity of the Orthodox world against the phenomenon of nationalism and concluded his address by thanking the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr Anthony Albanese, who provided the Prime Ministerial aircraft for his and his entourage’s journey from Sydney to Melbourne. This was a noble gesture that, as the Ecumenical Patriarch discerned, firstly confirms the prestige of the institution of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. “The authorities of Australia, and personally Prime Minister Albanese,” he emphasised, “show respect for the institution of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, obviously knowing from history what it has contributed, not only to Orthodoxy and the Christian faith but to world culture as a whole.” Secondly, this noble gesture confirms Mr Albanese’s respect for and personal friendship with Archbishop Makarios. “For both of these reasons, we are proud and grateful to the Prime

Minister, who made this gesture to the Orthodox Church," noted His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew and added that similar feelings of respect and appreciation were expressed by all the representatives of the political and state leadership he met in Sydney, including the Governor-General of Australia and the Governor of New South Wales.

In his visit to the Parish-Community of The Archangels in Mentone, the Ecumenical Patriarch was accompanied by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, The Venerable God-loving Bishops of the local Church as well as members of the Patriarchal entourage including Their Eminences, Metropolitan Kyrillos of Imvros and Tenedos, and Metropolitan Filotheos of Thessaloniki, the Very Reverend Grand Protosyncellus Archimandrite Gregory, and the Grand Ecclesiarch Archimandrite Aetios, Director of the Patriarchal Private Office, the Reverend Patriarchal Deacon Evlogios, Codifier of the Holy and Sacred Synod, the Righteous Nun Iakovi, Abbess of the Holy Monastery of St John the Baptist in Akritochori, the Honourable Archon Teacher of the Nation Mr Konstantinos Delikostantis, Director of the First Patriarchal Office, and the Honourable Archon Teacher of the Church Mr Theodoros Yiangou, Professor at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and the Honourable Mr Nicholas-George Papachristou, Director of the Patriarchal Press and



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