15/10/2024

The “heart” of Orthodoxy beats strongly in Hellenic Melbourne



On Sunday 13th October, the “heart” of Orthodoxy beat strongly in Hellenic Melbourne, the renowned city of Greeks in the fifth continent; the pride and joy of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia. Thousands of devout Orthodox Christians, of both Greek and other backgrounds, children, youth, middle-aged, and elderly, first, second, and third or more generation immigrants, some with bright smiles and others with tear-filled eyes from emotion, all gathered “together as one” for the Mystery of Mysteries, the historic Divine Liturgy presided over by the Patriarch of the Nation, the First of Orthodoxy and their spiritual father, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

The magnificent Eucharistic gathering, which marked the culmination of the centennial celebrations of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia, took place at the Margaret Court Arena, Melbourne Park. Concelebrating with the Ecumenical Patriarch were the Shepherd of the fifth continent, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, Their Eminences, Metropolitans Kyrillos of Imbros and Tenedos and Metropolitan Filotheos of Thessaloniki, members of the Patriarchal delegation; Their Eminences, Metropolitan Ezekiel of Dervis, Metropolitan Seraphim

of Sevasteia, and Metropolitan Myron of New Zealand; the Venerable God-loving Bishops of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia; joined by the members of the Patriarchal entourage, the Grand Protosyncellus of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Gregory, and the Grand Ecclesiarch and Director of the Personal Patriarchal Office, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Aetios, and the Reverend Patriarchal Deacon Evlogios, Codifier of the Holy and Sacred Synod; along with the Holy Clergy of the Metropolises of Melbourne and Chora.



Also present at this historic occasion for Orthodoxy and Hellenism in Australia were, among others, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, The Most Reverend Peter Comensoli, the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, The Most Reverend Philip Freier, the Ambassador of Greece to Australia, His Excellency Mr Stavros Venizelos, the High Commissioner of Cyprus, His Excellency Mr Antonis Sammoutis, the Consuls General of Greece in Melbourne, Mr Emmanuel Kakavelakis, and in Adelaide, Ms Alexandra Theodoropoulos, political representatives including Federal MP Ms Maria Vamvakinou and Victorian State MP Ms Kat Theophanous, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the President of the Greek Community of Melbourne, Mr Bill Papastergiadis, and others. Also present were the brother of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Mr Nikolaos Archontonis, and the parents of the Archbishop of Australia, Emmanuel and Fotini Griniezakis.

During his address before the Ecumenical Patriarch, Archbishop Makarios emphasised that Melbourne “rejoices and dances, and is adorned and beautified like a bride at the arrival of Your Venerable All-Holiness, for all, clergy and laity, awaited Your arrival with great anticipation and filial love.” He assured His All-Holiness that “although we are at the antipodes of the Earth, we feel in the depth

of our being the affection and care of our Father and Patriarch, and of the Ecumenical Patriarchate." He then gratefully recalled "the many who multifariously laboured in a multitude of ways before us and were literally spent for the establishment and growth of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia," starting with the late Patriarch Gregory VII, making extensive references to his departed predecessors, and highlighting with the conclusion that "it is exceptionally important to be aware of the legacy of those who have gone before us and to build on their foundations, for in this way the building remains unshaken."



The vast geographical distances between the Sacred Centre of Orthodoxy and the fifth continent "have not been able to create a gap or alienation between the Greeks here and their natural Mother," remarked an emotional Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in his response, highlighting the concluding remark of Archbishop Makarios in strengthening the heartfelt and spiritual relationship between them. He also reminded that the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople, since its founding, "has engaged in systematic missionary activity, with a deep awareness of its universal mission, as it is the guardian, bearer, and guarantor of the Roman tradition, of Romiosini, which in terms of both magnitude and quality is a reality that transcends nationality, place, and time, and one could almost say is mythical." This legacy of faith, "was preserved to their last breath by the blessed God-loving hierarchs who served in this Eparchy," he noted, briefly outlining the work of each of the late Shepherds of Australia, and concluded with a piece of paternal advice to the faithful of the local Church: "Hold fast and preserve the faith

and the Tradition of the Apostles, the Holy Fathers, the Martyrs, and the Saints, which the late Archbishops of this Holy Archdiocese preserved and handed down spotless and unblemished to the current, most worthy, and divinely-beloved Archbishop Makarios, so that you may pass it on intact and unsullied to future generations until the end of the ages and the Glorious Second Coming of the Lord."



It is worth noting that at the end of the Divine Liturgy, a memorial service was held for the blessed memory and eternal rest of the souls of: Patriarch Gregory, the late Archbishops Christophoros, Timotheos, Theophylactos, Ezekiel, and Stylianos, and all who served as hierarchs, priests, and deacons in the Holy Archdiocese of Australia, all former members of the Archdiocesan Council and the Clergy-Laity Congresses, and all Orthodox Greek immigrants piously resting in Australia.


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