17/10/2024

The Ecumenical Patriarch at St John’s College in Melbourne



On the morning of Tuesday, 15th October, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew visited the Greek Orthodox St John’s College in the suburb of Preston, Melbourne. This marked his second visit after 28 years, during which His All-Holiness had the opportunity to witness with heartfelt joy the significant progress of the educational institution of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia.

Upon arriving at the entrance of the College, the Patriarch was moved to see his face depicted on a large mural, while the students warmly welcomed him with drum rolls and traditional dances from his birthplace, Imbros. After touring the school facilities, he visited the renovated Sports and Arts Centre, where student works on the themes of the environment and migration were on display. Additionally, His All-Holiness unveiled a mosaic depicting the school’s patron, St John the Forerunner, as well as commemorative plaques in honour of his visit. He then took pride in listening to the school’s Byzantine Choir, which chanted ecclesiastical hymns, and watched a touching musical and theatrical performance

in which the children re-enacted aspects of the lives of their immigrant grandparents in the fifth continent.



In the Patriarch’s heartfelt address to the students, Principal Mr Andrew Ponsford, the teachers, and the rest of the school staff, His All-Holiness expressed his pride in the work being accomplished at the educational institution and the leaps of progress made in recent years. He also congratulated His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia for his tireless care, reminding everyone that from the very moment of his arrival in Australia in 2019, his paternal interest in St John’s College had been instrumental in ensuring its sustainability and its return to a path of growth and prosperity.

Emphasising that education is the cornerstone for the advancement of societies and cultures, His All-Holiness highlighted the need to cultivate the spirit of young people so that they may journey through life with values and integrity, not only to achieve personal well-being but also to contribute meaningfully to society. He addressed the student body with the Pauline exhortation: “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord” (Romans 12:9-11). In closing, the Ecumenical Patriarch urged all members of the St John’s school community to continue working together in unity and harmony, both among themselves and with their Shepherd.

For his part, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios expressed the hope that the visit of His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew to the educational institution would inspire its students to “walk toward the light of Christ with the same humility, wisdom, and love” embodied in the person of the Ecumenical Patriarch. Furthermore, he stressed the Church’s contribution to education throughout the times, especially during difficult and challenging years for the Greek nation. Regarding the Greek Orthodox schools of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia, he noted that they serve “the deep conviction that education requires not only the development of the intellect but also of the spirit.” “St John’s College,” he added, “strives to instil in its students a deep love for God, for the Church, and for the rich spiritual heritage handed down to us by our ancestors.”



Accompanying His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, in addition to the Archbishop of Australia, were members of the Patriarchal delegation: Their Eminences, Metropolitan Kyrillos of Imvros and Tenedos, and Metropolitan Filotheos of Thessaloniki, The Very Reverends, Grand Protosyncellus Archimandrite Gregory, and Grand Ecclesiarch Archimandrite Aetios, Director of the Personal Patriarchal 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 Didaskalos of the Nation Mr Konstantinos Delikostantis, Director of the First Patriarchal Office, and the Honourable Archon Didaskalos of the Church Mr Theodoros Yiangou, Professor of the Theological School at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the Honourable Mr Nicholas-George Papachristou, Director of the Patriarchal Press and Communication Office, and Mr Themistocles Karanikolas, from the Patriarchal staff as well as Their Eminences, Metropolitan Ezekiel of Dervis and Metropolitan Seraphim of Sevasteia, the Venerable God-loving Bishops of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia, the Greek Ambassador to Australia, Mr Stavros Venizelos, the High Commissioner of Cyprus, Mr Antonis Sammoutis, the Consuls General of Greece in Melbourne, Mr Emmanuel Kakavelakis and in Adelaide, Ms Alexandra Theodoropoulos, the Federal MP Ms Maria Vamvakinou, Archons of the Great Church of Christ, and the parents of Archbishop Makarios of Australia, Emmanuel and Fotini Griniezakis.


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His All-Holiness
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St John's
College
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