

## Unveiling of the Statue of Patriarch Bartholomew in the “Heart” of the Holy Diocese of Chora



A sculpture that will evoke memories of the Apostolic visit of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew—the simple, approachable, and friendly Patriarch—will henceforth stand proudly in the “heart” of the Holy Diocese of Chora, in the premises of the Holy Monastery of Our Lady “Axion Esti” in Northcote, Melbourne.

The concept behind the creation of this modest statue was vividly described by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia during the solemn unveiling ceremony, which took place on Tuesday, 15th October, in the presence of His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew. As the Archbishop explained, the memories of the historic Patriarchal visit “were meant to have a permanent reference point, one that would forever testify to both present and future generations that the Patriarch of the Nation came to our region and blessed the people of our Archdiocese. [...] We believe that art holds a unique power: to transcend what is heard and seen, to speak to us even when words no longer sound, to activate the eyes of our soul for

those things that the eyes of the body struggle to discern. Therefore, trusting in this very revealing power of art, we decided to dedicate a sculpture to the blessed visit of our Patriarch, one which we hope will render him for evermore and experientially present among us.”



In the statue, the Ecumenical Patriarch is depicted seated in an unpretentious posture with his hands resting gently on his knees and holding a book inscribed with “The Constitution of the Church” in both Greek and English. His face exudes serenity and calmness. The posture of his body conveys effortless familiarity, while his overall expression makes him appear approachable, as if inviting those passing by to pause for a moment, sit, and rest beside him. “The overall image of the statue, I believe, creates a sense of simplicity and humility—qualities that, by common agreement, adorn the personality of our Ecumenical Patriarch, making him so accessible and beloved by his spiritual children and all those who have had the fortune to know him up close,” noted Archbishop Makarios in describing the work. “This simple, approachable, and loving Patriarch, as we are experiencing him during these days here in Australia,” he emphasised, “he is the one that we wish to keep in our memory and the one we want to introduce to the younger and future generations. And it is no coincidence that this statue, which captures the revered figure of our Patriarch, is, I would say, so human—it has not been placed on a pedestal; you don’t need to lift your head to see it. The Patriarch is among us, and that is why his statue will stand in the ‘heart’ of the Cultural Centre of the Diocese of Chora, a place we envision becoming a hub of social and cultural life for our community, especially for our youth, in the near and distant future.”

In conclusion, His Eminence expressed heartfelt thanks to Mr Sam Jinks, the creator

of the statue and, addressing the Ecumenical Patriarch, he said with deep emotion: "As you understand, Your All-Holiness, we need your presence continuously and without interruption; we need that sense of warmth and affection that you exude. We need to feel you close to us, but above all, to ensure that this same feeling will also touch the hearts of our children and all future generations. We hope this humble work will serve that sacred expectation, inspiring our young people with your revered image, so they may face the challenges that our local Church will encounter in the future."

At the unveiling ceremony, in addition to the "host," His Grace Bishop Evmenios of Chora, the following members of the Patriarchal entourage were present: 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 the Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East His Holiness Mar Awa, 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, and the parents of Archbishop Makarios of Australia, Emmanuel and Fotini Griniezakis.





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