

## **Reception in Honour of the Patriarch by the Governor and the Premier of Victoria**



On Tuesday 15th October, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, accompanied by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, met with the Governor of the State of Victoria, the representative of the Royal Crown, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner. The meeting was conducted in a warm atmosphere, and topics of mutual interest were discussed, with a focus on the Greek Orthodox presence in Victoria.

Following the meeting, an official reception was hosted in a hall of the Governor's residence by Governor Gardner together with the Premier of the State, the Honourable Jacinta Allan. Present at the reception were members of the Patriarchal entourage namely:

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, representatives of other Christian churches, 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, Archons of the Great Church of Christ, representatives of federal and state-level political spheres, and representatives of Greek community organisations.

The Governor and Premier of Victoria welcomed the Ecumenical Patriarch with warm words, while His All-Holiness expressed heartfelt thanks for the hospitality and the reception held in his honour. The central theme of the Patriarch's speech was the role of the Church in modern society. "Some people believe that religion should remain private, away from public life," the Patriarch observed, before firmly stating, "The Church has a moral obligation to speak out on issues that shape our world—especially those that affect human dignity and justice."

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He then described the crises facing the modern world—environmental, economic, and humanitarian—all of which "are tied to a common thread: the erosion of human dignity." "We see this clearly," he noted, "in the devastating conflicts that continue to plague our world, such as the war in Ukraine and the ongoing violence in the Middle East. These conflicts have caused immense human suffering,

displacement, and a refugee crisis on a scale not seen since World War II. The Church cannot and will not remain silent in the face of such profound injustice.”

Regarding the ecological crisis, he emphasised that “our planet is facing unprecedented challenges, and it is clear that solutions to these problems must involve more than scientific and technological innovation.” “They require a radical transformation in how we live and relate to the world around us,” he added.

His All-Holiness also stressed that the human person is more than just an economic entity, a mere “homo oeconomicus,” pointing out that “in response to consumerism, the Church calls for a deeper reflection on the nature of human existence.” At the same time, he underscored the Church’s critical role in cultivating a culture of solidarity. “We are called to be a voice for the voiceless,” he remarked, “to stand alongside the oppressed and marginalised.” Lastly, he highlighted the Church’s vital role in addressing the growing crisis of isolation and loneliness in our society. “In an age of unprecedented technological advancement, we are more connected than ever, yet many people feel increasingly isolated and disconnected from their communities,” he observed.

The Patriarch’s speech concluded with a call for unity and cooperation for the common good, as “the challenges we face—whether related to war, poverty, or the community











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