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Archbishop Makarios of Australia: “The Cross, the instrument of our redemption and the gateway to eternal life”



In the context of the celebration of the Great Feast of Epiphany, on Sunday, 12 January 2025, the annual ceremony of the Blessing of the Waters and the Immersion of the Holy Cross at the coastal location of Carss Bush Park took place with particular splendour and with the widespread participation of the Sydney Greek community.

His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, who was joined by Their Graces, Bishop Iakovos of Miletoupolis and Bishop Christodoulos of Magnesia, Chief Secretary of the Holy Eparchial Synod, as well as by all the clergy of the city of Sydney, blessed the waters of the Pacific Ocean and threw the Holy Cross into the sea, in which more than 120 young believers dived in order to retrieve the Cross. The Cross was retrieved by the young Dionysios Petri, who received the Archbishop's paternal blessing, as did the other swimmers.

The ceremony was attended by thousands of faithful from all the Parishes and Communities of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia in Sydney, as well as the Deputy High Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus in Australia, Mr. Nikolaos Varellas, as a representative of the High Commissioner, His Excellency Mr. Antonios Sammoutis, the Consul General of Greece in Sydney, Mr. Ioannis Mallikourtis, the Minister for Multiculturalism, Sport, Small Business and Property in New South Wales, The Hon. Stephen Kamper, MP, the Minister for Industrial Relations and Health & Safety at Work for New South Wales, The Hon. Sophie Cotsis, MP, the Councillor of Georges River Council, Cr. Sam Stratikopoulos, and many Presidents and representatives of the Greek community organisations and institutions.



After the ceremony, everyone took part in the Epiphany Greek Festival, an event – an institution of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia, which included a rich cultural program, focusing on Greek tradition, and exquisite traditional food. The

coordination of the event was undertaken by the Lawyer Mr. Stan Kondilios, Archon of the Great Church of Christ, member of the Order of Christ the Saviour, while at the beginning of the official program, greetings were delivered by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia and the other officials.

His Eminence, referring in introduction to the meaning of the feast of the Epiphany, emphasised that it is a call to all to be spiritually renewed. “It is a challenge that is placed before us, to reject sin, to walk in virtue and to allow every aspect of our existence to be sanctified by the presence of God,” he noted, among other things.

Then, referring to the ceremony of immersion of the Holy Cross into the waters which had just taken place, His Eminence recalled the central importance of the Cross in the Orthodox faith, noting that “it is the ultimate symbol of Christ’s love and sacrifice, the instrument of our redemption and the gateway to eternal life.” “By immersing the Cross in the waters,” he added, “we proclaim Christ’s victory over sin and death and affirm not only His sovereignty over all creation, but we also affirm our commitment to endure our individual crosses and follow the Lord with faith and courage.” “Let us strive to make every aspect of our lives a reflection of His holiness, so that we may become vessels of His love and instruments of His peace,” the Archbishop urged paternally, before concluding his address with heartfelt wishes to all those present and with warm thanks to the members of the organising committee and all the contributors and supporters of the organisation of the glorious celebration of the Epiphany at Carss Bush Park.


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