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Archbishop Makarios of Australia: “Repentance is the ‘key’ to the Kingdom of God”



On the Sunday after the feast of Epiphany, 12 January 2025, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, liturgised at the Church of the Resurrection of Christ, in the suburb of Kogarah, Sydney, and was joined in concelebration by Their Graces, Bishop Iakovos of Miletoupolis and Bishop Christodoulos of Magnesia, Chief Secretary of the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Holy Archdiocese and Proistamenos of the Parish in Kogarah. A large number of devout believers attended the Divine Liturgy, including the Consul General of Greece in Sydney, Mr. Ioannis Mallikourtis.

Analysing the Gospel passage of the day, from the Gospel of Matthew (Matt. 4:12-17), the Archbishop recalled that the first public sermon of our Lord Jesus Christ, after his baptism, contained the exhortation to repentance and therefore was identified with the core of the sermon of Saint John the Forerunner and Baptist. Referring to the many virtues of Saint John, His Eminence focused particularly on the fact that he was a mighty preacher. “Herod imprisoned him, but he did not stop preaching even in prison,” he observed and added: “And there, the prisoners listened to him with great joy and peace. They found rest in their souls from what Saint John was saying. Even Herod would go down to the dungeons of the prisons and listen to his sermon “with great pleasure,” as the Gospel says.”

Pointing out, then, that Christ, embracing the preaching of Saint John, repeated in His first sermon the exhortation: “Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” His Eminence emphasised that “repentance is the “key” to the Kingdom of God.” He acknowledged that all people fall into sins, that is, into mistakes and “failures,” as was the original meaning of the word, but what is required by the Church is to recognise them and repent, that is, to change their way of thinking. “What the Church wants from us, if we fall into sin, is not to remain in this state, but to rise up and ask for God’s mercy,” he emphasised. “The devil’s anguish,” he continued, “is not so much whether humankind will sin, but whether he will repent. He struggles, after the person has fallen into sin, to shut them up in darkness, to make them despair, to lose their courage, their hope and their joy, and ultimately their destination, which is the Kingdom of Heaven. That is why Christ comes and repeats the preaching of Saint John the Baptist, calling us to repentance.”

In conclusion, Archbishop Makarios extended heartfelt paternal wishes, on the occasion of the beginning of the new year 2025, to all members of the Parish of the Resurrection of Christ and the other faithful who attended the Divine Liturgy.

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