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Archbishop Makarios of Australia: “The Ecumenical Patriarchate respects the individuality and identity of every populace”



On Saturday, 25 January 2025, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, officiated at the Vespers Service at the Church of Saint Nicholas in Havana, and was joined by His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos of Mexico, and Their Graces, Bishop Athenagoras of Myrina and Bishop Timotheos of Assos.

In front of a large congregation and in the presence of the representative of the Government of Cuba, Ms. Leira Sánchez Valdivia, His Eminence spoke with a focus on the 20th anniversary of the consecration of the Church of St. Nicholas, for the celebration of which he is visiting the Caribbean island country, representing His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Mother Church of Constantinople. In his introduction, Archbishop Makarios described the Orthodox Church erected in the historic centre of Havana, as “a symbol of the love and respect of the Cuban people and their emblematic leader, Fidel Castro, for the

Orthodox Church and our Ecumenical Patriarchate". It is recalled that the bestowal of the Church of St. Nicholas and its consecration took place during the historic visit of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Havana in 2004.

The Archbishop of Australia then briefly outlined the privilege and blessing that the Orthodox faithful of Cuba have of being spiritually part of the Great Church of Constantinople. "The Ecumenical Patriarchate is identified with the Orthodox Church and any Orthodox Christian, whether Russian, Serbian or Arab, cannot imagine the Orthodox Church without the existence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate," he emphasised. Focusing on the missionary activity of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, since the time of Saint John Chrysostom, he emphatically noted that "wherever it goes, it respects the individuality and identity of every populace." "It respects the language, customs and traditions of every country," he added, "and all it seeks is to enlighten people, so that they may have love, peace and unity among themselves, and share all good things with one another. To share material, but also spiritual goods."



At this point, noting that in modern times human isolation prevails and the greatest disease of the world is depression, Archbishop Makarios emphasised the need for our spiritual approach towards the face of our neighbour. "Today, the human person suffers because they do not find another person to open their heart to and express their pain," he noted and pointed out: "So when the Orthodox Church calls us to share everything, it means to share our time. To share our energy and

strength. It is very important that someone can offer a smile to their neighbour; this smile that costs nothing, but in the end is of great worth.”

Concluding his address, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia expressed his love for the people of Cuba, conveyed to everyone the wishes and blessing of the Ecumenical Patriarch, while wishing the local Shepherd, His Eminence



ing to the Patriarch


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