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Archbishop Makarios of Australia: “In Cuba the good and noble seed of the Gospel has been sown and is bearing fruit”



“Orthodoxy for Cuba is not primarily a thing of the past, but it is primarily a thing of the future,” said His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, from the Church of Saint Nicholas in Havana, where he liturgised on Sunday, 26 January 2025, at the culmination of the official celebration of the twenty-year anniversary of the consecration and handover of the Church to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Archbishop, who represented His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Mother Church of Constantinople at the anniversary events, was joined in concelebration by the local Shepherd, His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos of Mexico, and Their Graces, Bishop Athenagoras of Myrina and Bishop Timotheos of Assos.

The presence of the President of Cuba, Mr. Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, who was accompanied by his wife and officials of the Cuban Government, was a distinct

honour. Addressing the President, Archbishop Makarios expressed the grateful thanks of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for the State's continuous care and respect for the Orthodox Church. "For us, this Church is a great blessing," he emphasised, adding: "The Orthodox Church will never forget this blessing, and our Ecumenical Patriarch always prays for the well-being of the Cuban people." The President of Cuba responded equally warmly, expressing his respect for the Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Also present was the Ambassador of Greece in Havana, His Excellency Mr. Theodoros Tsakiris.

Furthermore, the Archbishop of Australia, looking back on the historic event of the construction of the Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas, noted that this was made possible thanks to the ambitious vision of two great men, the late Fidel Castro, the historic leader of Cuba, an His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. "The personalities and prestige of the two leaders contributed decisively to achieving the impossible," he noted characteristically and then mentioned with words of gratitude all those who, visibly and invisibly, contributed to this cause: the late King Constantine and Eusebio Leal Spengler, His Eminence Metropolitan Athenagoras of Bizye, from Mexico, and the architects Nikolaos and Konstantinos Fournaris.



In conclusion, Archbishop Makarios emphasised that "in Cuba the good and noble seed of the Gospel has been sown and is bearing fruit" and expressed the high expectations of the Mother Church for the future. Furthermore, he conveyed to everyone the patriarchal blessings and, personally, expressed gratitude for the

heartfelt hospitality and love he received during his visit.

It is noted that during the Divine Liturgy, the Archbishop of Australia performed the ordination of the monk Makarios, from the Holy Monastery of Saint Spyridon, which is located on the outskirts of Havana, to the diaconate. “Today is doubly historic, because the first Cuban monk is being ordained,” he said in his introductory remarks and congratulated the local Shepherd, His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos of Mexico, and His Grace Auxiliary Bishop Athenagoras of Myrina, for the care they showed and the effort they made to establish the first Orthodox monastery in Cuba.

Then, addressing the ordinand, he first emphasised that from the moment he received his monastic tonsure from the Metropolitan of Mexico, he was essentially inscribed in the history of the local Church. Then, he urged him to have as a guide in his spiritual path the virtues and work of their common patron, Saint Makarios the Great, and advised him to love and respect his Shepherd and to work with obedience and self-sacrifice for the Church.



At the end of the ordination, the exclamation of “Worthy / Axios” resounded in the Church of Saint Nicholas, in the historic centre of Havana, and the new Deacon received the heartfelt wishes of the Archbishop, the other Hierarchs, the clergy and the faithful, among whom were his relatives and friends who followed the ordination with deep emotion.


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