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Archbishop Makarios of Australia: “Let us set spiritual goals that give meaning to our lives”

On Saturday, 1 February, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia officiated at the Great Vespers for the feast day of the Presentation of Our Lord at the Church of the Presentation in the Holy Diocese of Chora, in the suburb of Coburg, Melbourne. His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos of Ireland, and Their Graces, Bishop Evmenios of Chora and Bishop Kyriakos of Melbourne were present praying together, while among the numerous pious faithful who filled the celebrating church, were the new Consul General of Greece in Melbourne, Ms. Dimitra Georgantzoglou, and the Archons of the Holy Great Church of Christ.

At the end of the Service, the Archbishop spoke appropriately about the meaning of the Great Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, while he greeted with heartfelt words the presence of His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos of Ireland, as well as the

Consul General, Ms. Georgantzoglou. He then shared some thoughts and his intense concern regarding the disease of depression, which in our time has taken on nightmarish proportions and the relevant indicators are constantly worsening. Right from the beginning, His Eminence, presenting the teaching of Saint John of Damascus on the psychosomatic nature of humankind, emphasised that the treatment of depression also requires medical assistance, in addition to spiritual. “Both spiritual help is needed, and medical help is needed, and let’s not forget that God gave science to the world,” he pointed out, among other things.

Also, after describing how the modern way of life and the worldly goals that most people set, favour and facilitate the appearance of depression, he compared it with the example of the life of Saint Symeon the God-Receiver, who welcomed Christ in the Temple. He observed that during the event of the Presentation of the Lord, Saint Symeon felt absolute spiritual fulfillment, since “he had set beautiful goals in his life and not those false and temporary ones that people set.” “One of the ways that will help us overcome depression,” he emphasised, “is to set spiritual and ecclesial goals, and to have Christ before us.” He added that all our goals should aim at the heavenly Kingdom of God, a perspective that gives meaning to our lives.

Before the dismissal of the Service, Archbishop Makarios offered the Parish fragments of the holy relics of Saint Anna the Mother of the Most Holy Theotokos

and Saint Symeon the God-Receiver, gifts from the Athonite Hieromonk Fr. Antipas, Elder of the Iviron Cell of Saint Anna, while he did not fail to express his grateful thanks to the retiring Parish Priest Fr. Efstathios Papadopoulos, for his many years of God-pleasing ministry. Fr. Efstathios has submitted a request for retirement after more than 36 years of priestly career and service to the Church – a career inextricably linked to the life and progress of the Parish of the Presentation of Our Lord in Coburg. His Eminence thanked the Messinian clergyman for all that he has offered to the Parish of Coburg and to the Holy Archdiocese in general, while noting that his participation in the life of the local Church will remain active. His Eminence also extended his best wishes to the current Parish Priest, Fr. Leonidas Ioannou, thanking him for his ministry thus far and urging him to continue with the same zeal to promote the work of the Church, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

His Eminence was warmly addressed by both Fr. Efstathios and his successor, Fr. Leonidas, both expressing their love and respect and thanking him for his tireless care for the Christ-loving people of the fifth continent. “I wish from the bottom of my heart that God grants you health, strength and courage, so that you may continue the work you are doing,” Fr. Efstathios said, among other things, assuring that with all the strength he has, he will continue to support the work and vision of his Shepherd. “We thank you for what you have done, are doing and continue to do

for us,” noted Fr. Leonidas, who, on behalf of the entire Parish, offered the Archbishop, as commemorative gifts, an engolpion and a pectoral cross.

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