28/02/2025

Encyclical of Archbishop Makarios of Australia for Holy and Great Lent



His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, in his Encyclical for the beginning of Holy and Great Lent, emphasises that the call of our Church for this blessed period is repentance, which “points to a continual journey, a steady reorientation of our existence toward Christ.” “And when this reorientation exists,” His Eminence points out, “then experience true repentance, which does not lead to a mere sentimental or moralistic change. We experience the state of repentance that is neither superficial nor shallow, nor is it dominated by guilt and remorse. Rather, it redeems and liberates the human person, ultimately transforming their life.”

The following is the Encyclical of Archbishop Makarios of Australia:

MAKARIOS

by the mercy of God, Archbishop of the Most Holy Archdiocese of Australia, Primate and Exarch of All Oceania, to the God-loving Bishops, the gracious clergy, the monastic communities and to all the Christ-loving plenitude of the Orthodox Church in Australia, grace and peace from our Saviour Jesus; prayers, blessings, and

forgiveness.

God-loving Bishops and my beloved children,

By the Grace of God, we enter tomorrow into the arena of Great Lent, where, through the spiritual weapons of fasting, prayer, almsgiving, and the abundant opportunities for worship, our holy Church urges us to experience the state of repentance.

To repent means to change one's mind; but this does not simply imply altering the way we think or adopting a different mindset or a modern worldview. The God-bearing Fathers teach us that the mind of a person is something much deeper—it is the heart, the very centre of our existence. This is why the Lord Himself says, "For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come" (Mark 7:21). Repentance, therefore, signifies the transformation of the very core of our existence and the reorientation of our mind so that, as the Apostle Paul says, it may become the "mind of Christ" (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:16). This constitutes the true essence of repentance—not merely an external change or a transient moment of altered thought or of a concrete mindset. Repentance is an ongoing way of life.

The call of our Church, then, for Great Lent is repentance, which points to a continual journey, a steady reorientation of our existence toward Christ. And when this reorientation exists, we then experience true repentance, which does not lead to a mere sentimental or moralistic change. We experience the state of repentance that is neither superficial nor shallow, nor is it dominated by guilt and remorse. Rather, it redeems and liberates the human person, ultimately transforming their life.

With these simple yet heartfelt thoughts, I offer my paternal prayer that we may all experience this Great Lent as an event of repentance, and be found worthy to celebrate the radiant day of our Lord's Resurrection.

In Sydney, on Holy and Great Lent, in 2025
Prayerfully Yours,

† Archbishop Makarios of Australia
Primate and Exarch of All Oceania

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