

## Message by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia for the 25th March Feast



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Orthodoxy and Hellenism, like two wings of the same body, journey together, united and inseparable, through the skies of our Nation's history. This unbreakable and continuous bond is emphatically reminded to us on this day, in which, as our great poet Kostis Palamas wrote, "two freedoms unite." Indeed, today we celebrate both the freedom of humanity from the bonds of sin and the freedom of our homeland from long years of slavery and tyranny.

The first freedom we owe to the mercy of our compassionate God and to the world-saving event of the Annunciation of the Ever-Virgin Mary. In our churches and hearts, the liberating words of the Archangel Gabriel resound: "Rejoice, highly favoured one... behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus." And the response of the Virgin Mary: "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." The event of the Annunciation marked the dawn of a new era for humankind; an era where darkness retreats and light spreads, where despair is replaced by the joy in Christ and the

hope of eternal life.

The second freedom that we commemorate and celebrate today came after the uprising of the enslaved Greeks in 1821. It was achieved thanks to the heroic struggles and sacrifices of our ancestors, who stood tall against a powerful empire. They knew they were outnumbered and lacked military resources, yet their hearts were seized by the desire for freedom. It was this longing for liberty, along with their unwavering faith that “with God nothing will be impossible,” that led to the achievement of the independence of our homeland.

We must never forget that all we are and all we have as younger generations, we owe to those virtuous and pious forebears, who were inspired by ideals and values and who trusted in the words of the Archangel that nothing is impossible for God! Let us draw lessons from their shining example as we navigate a world that often presents as freedom the separation from our Creator and the enslavement to human passions, material possessions, and worldly pleasures.

Many years to all! May they be years of true freedom and salvific years!

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