

## **Archbishop Makarios of Australia liturgised at the Church of Panagia Soumela, in the Holy Diocese of Chora**



On the fourth Sunday of Lent, 30 March, the day in which the Church honours the memory of Saint John Climacus of Sinai, the author of ‘the Ladder”, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia liturgised at the Church of Panagia Soumela, in Keilor East, Melbourne, in the Holy Diocese of Chora. Joining his Eminence in concelebration were Their Graces, Bishop Evmenios of Chora and Bishop Kyriakos of Melbourne, while among the large congregation was the Consul General of Greece in Melbourne, Ms. Dimitra Georgantzoglou.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, before the sermon, the Archbishop expressed his great joy and emotion for the fact that he visited and officiated at the beautiful Church dedicated to the Panagia of Pontus and which is a point of reference for Pontian Hellenism in Victoria and Australia in general. His Eminence spoke with admiration of the culture that has developed over the centuries in the blessed land

of Pontus, while noting, among other things, that this place “is fragrant with the relics of the saints and the blood of the martyrs that has been shed on its soil”.

Then, His Eminence briefly presented the life of Saint John Climacus of Sinai and particularly focused on his writings, a prime example of which is the famous “Ladder of Divine Ascent”. He explained that this particular work is divided into thirty chapters – the “Discourses” – which present the virtues in a step-by-step manner, which elevate the spiritually of whoever follows them, with the ultimate destination being the Kingdom of God. He urged everyone to seek out and study the “Ladder”, which is spiritually beneficial particularly for the period of Holy and Great Lent.



He made special mention of the first and thirtieth “steps” of the ladder of virtues. Analysing the Discourse on Renunciation, he emphasised that a prerequisite for our spiritual progress is our liberation from passions and worldly bonds. He pointed out that spiritual life cannot go hand in hand with worldly attachments. “If we decide to live a spiritual life,” he noted, “then we must clarify where we belong and what we want to achieve in our lives. We must clarify within ourselves what we are and not create in our minds the Orthodoxy that suits us, where we keep what we like and ignore what we don’t like.”

Regarding the Discourse on Love, the thirtieth and final “step” of the ladder of Saint John of Sinai, the Archbishop emphasised that love constitutes the crown of

virtues, is synonymous with God and a necessary condition for our spiritual perfection.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, the forty-day Memorial Service of the late Nikolaos Krikelis was held, father the Parish Priest of the Church of Panagia Soumela, Protopresbyter Fr. Iordanis Krikelis, and grandfather of the Chancellor of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia, Archimandrite of the Ecumenical Throne Christophoros Krikelis. The fact that the service was held in the presence of the late Nikolaos Krikelis, His















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