

The Holy Diocese of Chora: The fifth Lenten Vespers at the Church of Our Lady 'Axion Esti', Northcote



With particular reverence and spiritual piety, the Lenten Vespers of the Fourth Sunday of Lent took place on Sunday afternoon, 30 March, at the Archdiocesan Church of Our Lady 'Axion Esti', in Northcote, Melbourne, in the Holy Diocese of Chora.

The Service was presided over by His Grace Bishop Evmenios of Chora, representing His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, conveying to the congregation his paternal love and His Eminence's wishes for the remainder of Holy and Great Lent, Holy Week and Pascha.

During his sermon, His Grace, attesting to the speech of Archbishop Makarios on

the morning of the same day, at the Divine Liturgy, spoke about Saint John Climacus of Sinai, this great father of the Church, who is presented by the Church on the Fourth Sunday of Lent as a beacon of spiritual guidance. On the occasion of the Saint's monumental work, "The Ladder", he emphasised that the path towards God is not instantaneous but continuous and demanding; an ascent through thirty "steps" that symbolise virtues and struggles.



He placed particular emphasis on the first and last "steps" of the "Ladder": renunciation and love. Renunciation, as he noted, is the brave decision of the person to abandon passions and attachment to perishable things, making room in the heart for God. Love, on the other hand, is the culmination of the entire spiritual struggle – the virtue that completes and perfects humankind, as it leads us to union with God and authentic communion with our neighbour. His Grace urged the faithful not to fear the "steps" of the "Ladder", but to climb with humility, perseverance and hope, knowing that every effort, no matter how small it may seem, is embraced by God.



