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Feast of the Holy Unmercenaries celebrated in Oakleigh, Melbourne



With reverence and solemnity, the Parish of Sts. Anargiri, Cosmas and Damian in Oakleigh joyfully celebrated the Feast of the Holy Wonderworking Unmercenary Physicians, Cosmas and Damian of Rome. His Grace Bishop Kyriakos of Melbourne presided over the festal services, beginning with Great Vespers on the evening of Monday, 30 June, followed by Matins and the Divine Liturgy on Tuesday, 1 July.

Faithful from across Melbourne gathered to honour the memory of these saintly healers who offered their medical gifts freely, in the name of Christ, refusing payment and giving glory to God alone. His Grace was joined in concelebration by a number of clergy from throughout the Holy Diocese of Melbourne, enriching the liturgical atmosphere with unity and pastoral warmth.

The services were further adorned by the Parish Byzantine Choir, led by Head

Chanter Mr. Kostadinos Damatopoulos, who was joined by enthusiastic and talented students from Oakleigh Grammar School, offering a beautiful and youthful expression of devotion through sacred hymnody.

At the conclusion of Great Vespers, His Grace conveyed the paternal blessing and heartfelt greetings of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, affirming the Archbishop's love and prayers for the faithful of Oakleigh and all those gathered in honour of the Holy Unmercenaries.

In his homily, delivered at the conclusion of Great Vespers, His Grace Bishop Kyriakos reflected deeply on the lives and witness of Sts. Cosmas and Damian, calling the faithful to a life of selfless love and service:

“The Holy Unmercenaries Cosmas and Damian remind us that healing does not begin with medicine—it begins with mercy. These saints did not treat bodies alone, but souls, with prayer, faith, and compassion. In a world of increasing transactional relationships, their lives stand as a powerful call to unconditional love in Christ.”



“They did not glorify themselves, nor did they build their names through fame or wealth. Their hands were instruments of Christ’s mercy; their hearts were temples of the Holy Spirit. In them, we see the unity of science and sanctity, action and prayer, healing and holiness.”

His Grace further encouraged the faithful to emulate the saints’ unselfish devotion to their fellow man:

“Let us ask ourselves—do we serve only when it is convenient? Do we give only when we expect a return? The saints challenge us to give freely, to love without condition, and to live as witnesses to the healing grace of Christ, the true Physician of our souls and bodies.”

The festal Divine Liturgy on Tuesday morning brought together parishioners, clergy, and youth in a prayerful spirit of thanksgiving. Following the Liturgy, His Grace warmly greeted the faithful and commended the clergy and volunteers of the parish for their labours in preparing a beautiful and spiritually uplifting feast.

In a particularly moving moment, His Grace Bishop Kyriakos gathered the students of Oakleigh Grammar and presented each one with a holy icon and a prayer rope, offering them a paternal word of encouragement and spiritual guidance. He exhorted them to remain steadfast in their Orthodox faith, saying:

“Never be ashamed of Christ. Love Him with all your heart. Be strong, be faithful, and do not be afraid to be different in a world that has forgotten God. You are called to be apostles in your schools, and even martyrs—not with blood, but with your witness and your love for the truth. You are the light of the world. Shine with the grace of the saints, just as Cosmas and Damian did.”



This spiritual charge left a lasting impression on the young students and their families, as His Grace inspired a new generation to walk the path of holiness and to live their faith with boldness and love.

The celebrations concluded with a festal luncheon in the parish hall, where the community gathered in fellowship and joy, reflecting the unity and spirit of love exemplified by the Holy Unmercenaries.

The Feast of Sts. Cosmas and Damian continues to inspire generations of Orthodox Christians with their lives of sacrificial love, and this year's celebration in Oakleigh stood as a powerful testament to their enduring example.

















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