

Archbishop Makarios of Australia: “The people of our Archdiocese remember with reverence the presence of Elder Vasilios in Australia”



On Wednesday, 17 September, Elder Vasilios Gontikakis, former Abbot of the Monastery of Iviron (1990–2005) and the Monastery of Stavronikita (1968–1990), fell asleep in the Lord at the age of 90. The late elder was an emblematic contemporary figure of monasticism on Mount Athos, as well as an important theologian with an international presence and influence. In the past, he had also travelled to Australia. Indeed, in 1977, then serving as Abbot of the Monastery of Stavronikita, he visited the fifth continent together with Elder Paisios of Mount Athos, later canonised as a Saint of the Orthodox Church and Protector of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia.

His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, having been informed of the repose of Elder Vasilios, with whom he was bound by long-standing ties of spiritual friendship, also due to their common place of origin, issued the following statement:

The late Elder Vasilios was a fragrant blossom in the Garden of the Theotokos, attracting, refreshing, and sanctifying the souls of all who had the blessing to meet him and to hear his soul-profiting, God-inspired words. I glorify and give thanks to

God, Who granted me the grace to know him and to be spiritually united with him from my years as a student, to taste of the spiritual fragrance that he radiated, and to find rest in the simplicity, humility, wisdom, and love that he conveyed in every word and action. I also glorify the All-Good God for the fact that, on many occasions in the past, He guided the steps of the late Athonite Elder to Australia, granting our people the blessed opportunity of personal contact and spiritual fellowship with him. The Christ-loving faithful of our Archdiocese remember with reverence and profound gratitude the presence of Elder Vasilios in Australia

With the certainty that his blessed soul, as of today, rests in the dwellings of the righteous, I pray that his holy earthly life and his lofty theological word may continue to inspire the hearts of our devout Christians, guiding them toward virtue, truth, and salvation. May we have his blessing.”

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