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Archbishop Makarios of Australia: “Our schools are the most precious thing we have, because it is there that the future of the Diaspora is built”



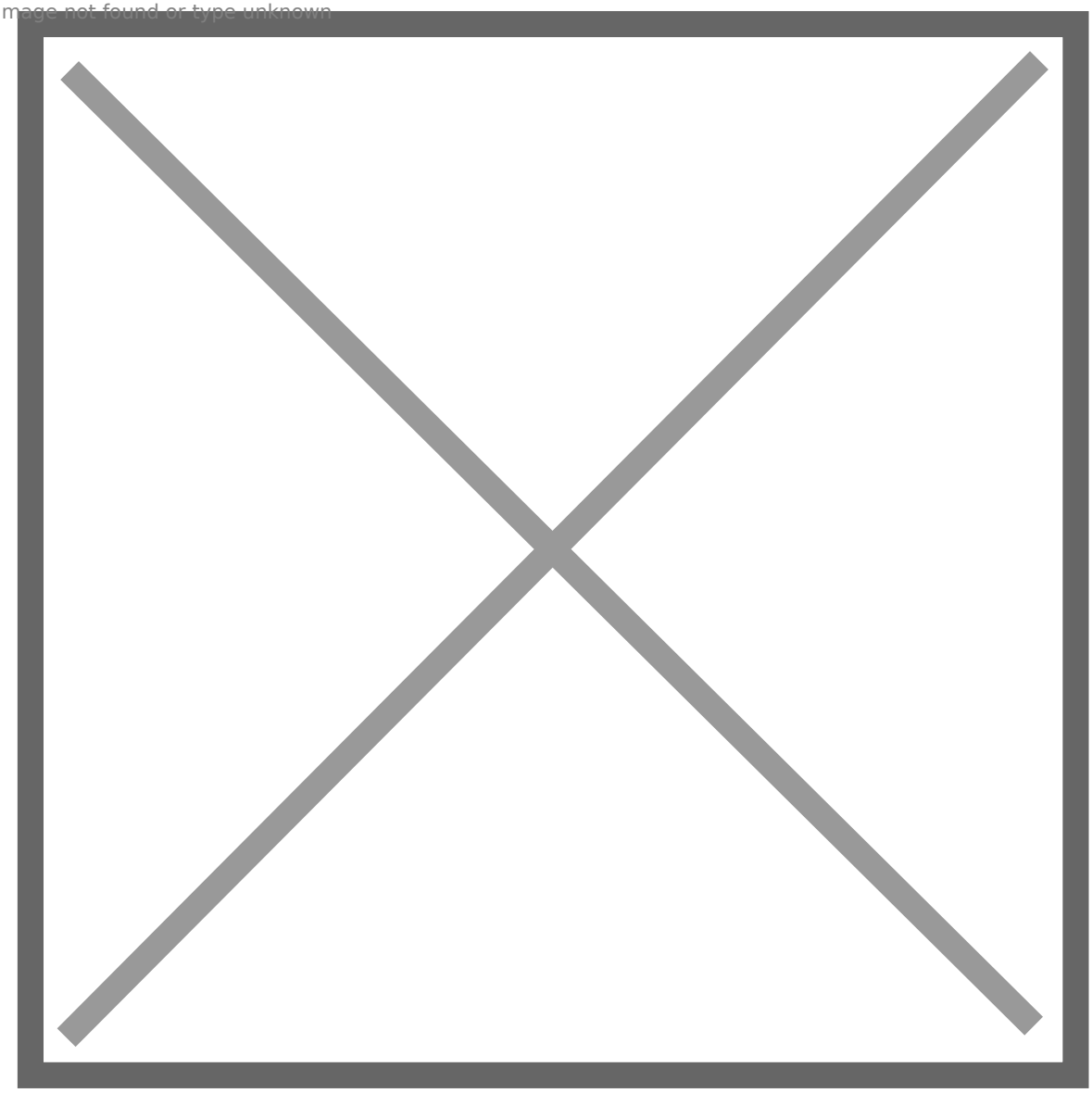
His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia received the heartfelt good wishes of hierarchs, clergy, and faithful from the “pre-eminently Greek” Melbourne and, more broadly, from the State of Victoria, during the official dinner held in honour of his name day on Saturday, 17 January, at the Pullman Melbourne Albert Park hotel ballroom. Although the hall was filled to capacity with hundreds of guests, among them representatives of Australia’s political sphere, the evening nonetheless retained the character of a warm, family gathering, marked by a prevailing spirit of brotherhood and unity.

It is worth noting that, at the Archbishop’s request, the funds raised from the celebratory dinner will be allocated to the needs of St John’s College, Preston. In the course of his address, he referred to the tireless efforts of the Holy Archdiocese to strengthen and enhance both Greek and theological education in Australia. “Our schools are the most precious thing we have,” he stressed, “because it is there that the future of the Diaspora is built, where our language, our customs and traditions, and the heritage of our fathers are cultivated.”

Earlier, visibly moved, His Eminence thanked everyone for their presence, while at the same time glorifying God for all the gifts and blessings He bestows upon the Holy Archdiocese of Australia. “The glorification of God, in word and in deed, is the quintessence of our life within the Church; it is the foundation of our spiritual life and existence,” he emphasised, among other things.

He then observed that God works through people and therefore offered the exhortation: “May our hearts and our very being always be open and receptive to the presence of our neighbour.” Referring briefly to the most recent divine gifts received by the Holy Archdiocese of Australia, he first expressed his gratitude for the contribution of Their Graces Bishop Kyriakos of Melbourne and Bishop Evmenios of Chora. The two Bishops, he noted, “are truly a gift and a blessing of God for the State of Victoria, and indeed for all of Australia.”

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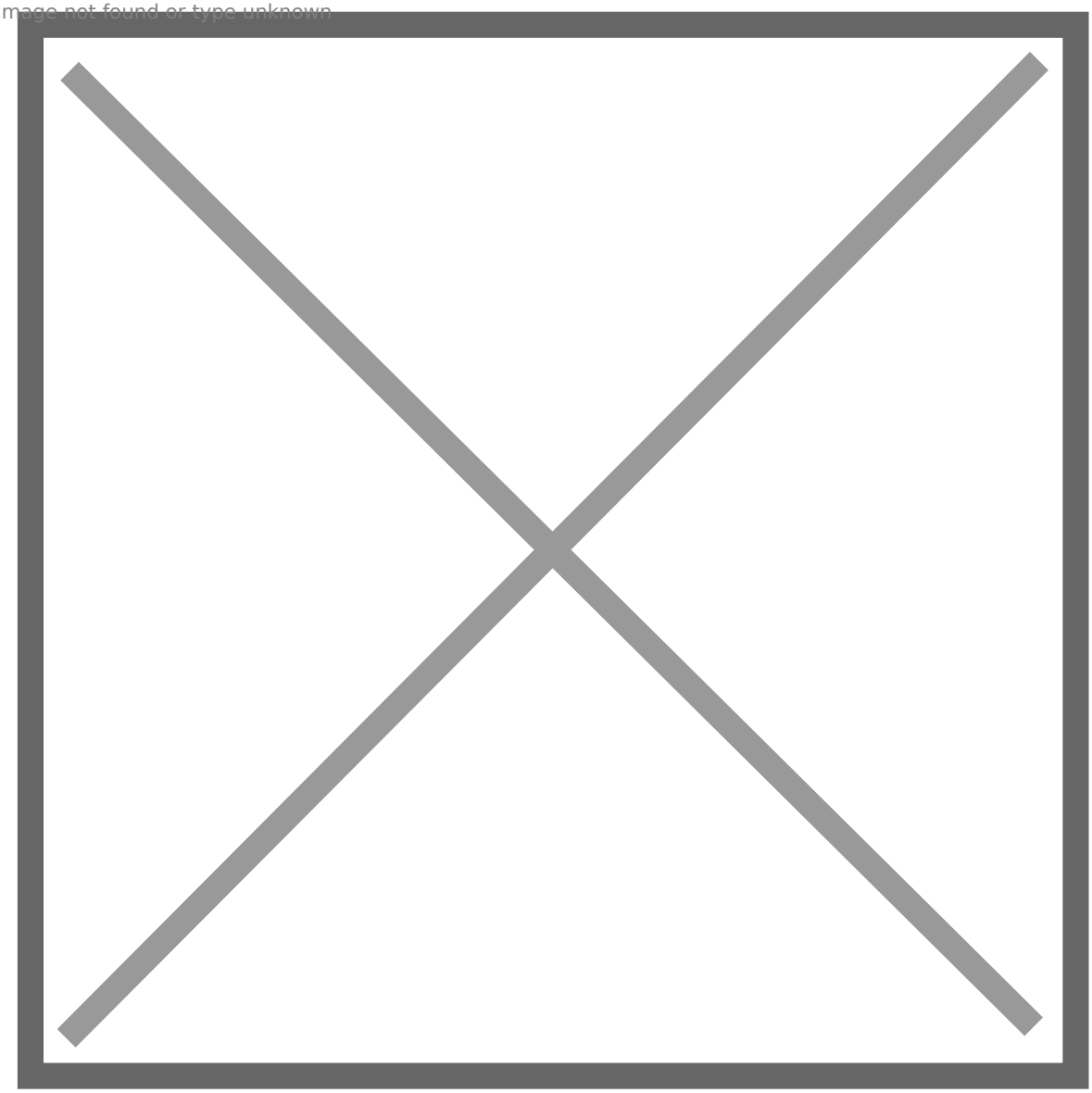
His Eminence also praised the role of the clergy and, in particular, the laity, who sacrifice part of their precious time and assist the local Church on a voluntary basis. Indeed, as an expression of the Holy Archdiocese's gratitude, he proceeded to confer the medal of the Order of the Christ-loving upon thirty-nine individuals who have distinguished themselves through their service.

Furthermore, Archbishop Makarios referred to the projects currently being implemented and those planned by the local Church and, in closing, conveyed to all the Patriarchal good wishes and blessing of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. "It is now self-evident to all of us," he remarked, "that whatever takes place in the Holy Archdiocese of Australia bears the blessing and approval of our Patriarch, his seal, I would say, and for this reason we move towards the future with firm and steady steps, because we are covered by his protective shadow. We owe him everything and shall be grateful to him forever."

In one of the most moving moments of the evening, His Grace Bishop Prodromos of Toliara and Southern Madagascar delivered a warm fraternal address to His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia and, with the aid of audiovisual material, presented the God-pleasing missionary work being carried out in his diocese with the decisive support of the Orthodox Church in Australia. As a token of gratitude, His Grace bestowed upon the Archbishop the Highest Distinction of the Holy Diocese of Toliara and Southern Madagascar and presented him with an icon of the Holy and Glorious Equal-to-the-Apostles Saints Constantine and Helen.

The festive event was further enriched by hymns, songs, and traditional dances from Macedonia, thanks to the participation of a student choir, the choir of the School of Byzantine Music, and the Florina Dance Ensemble "Aristotelis."

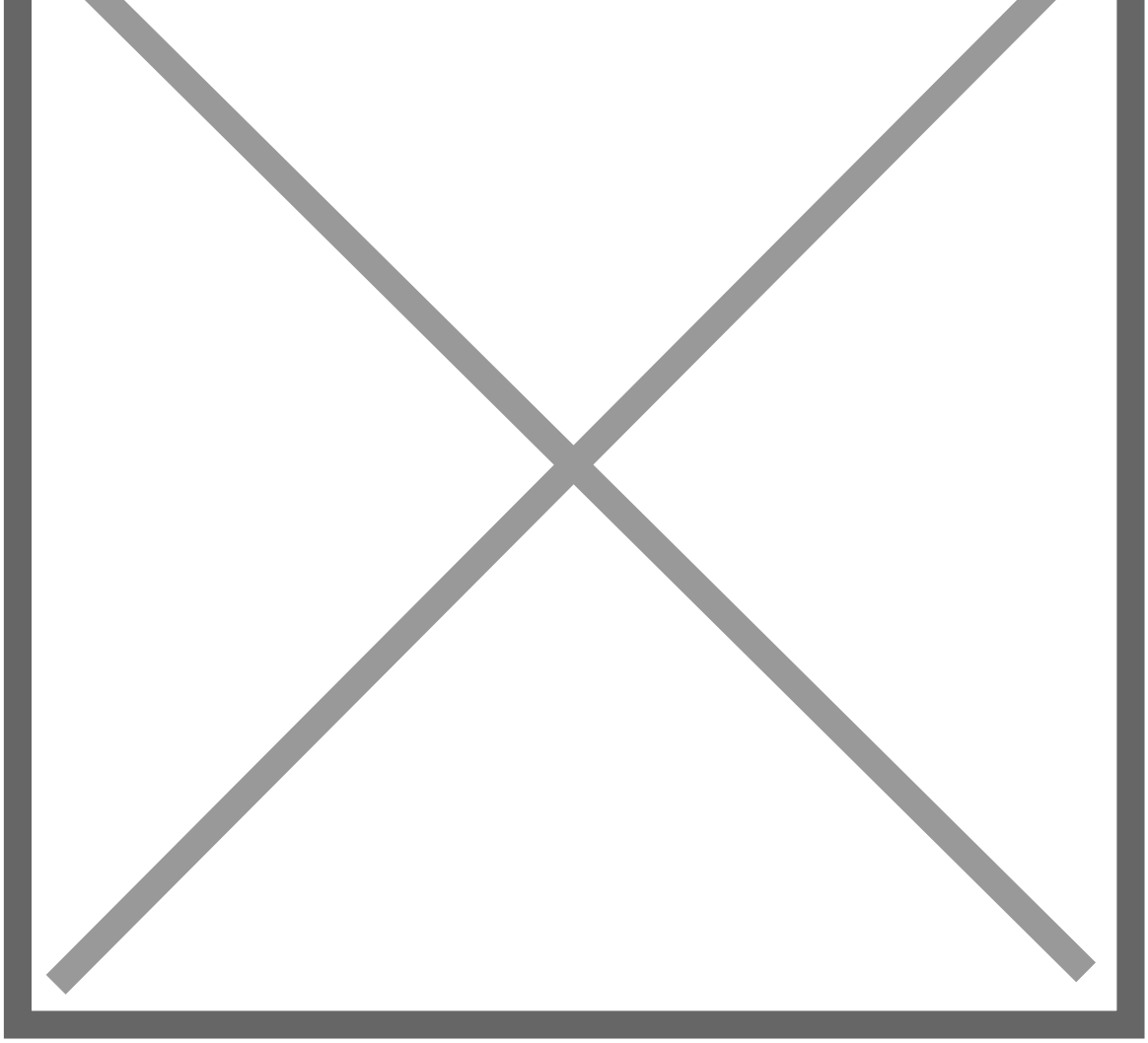
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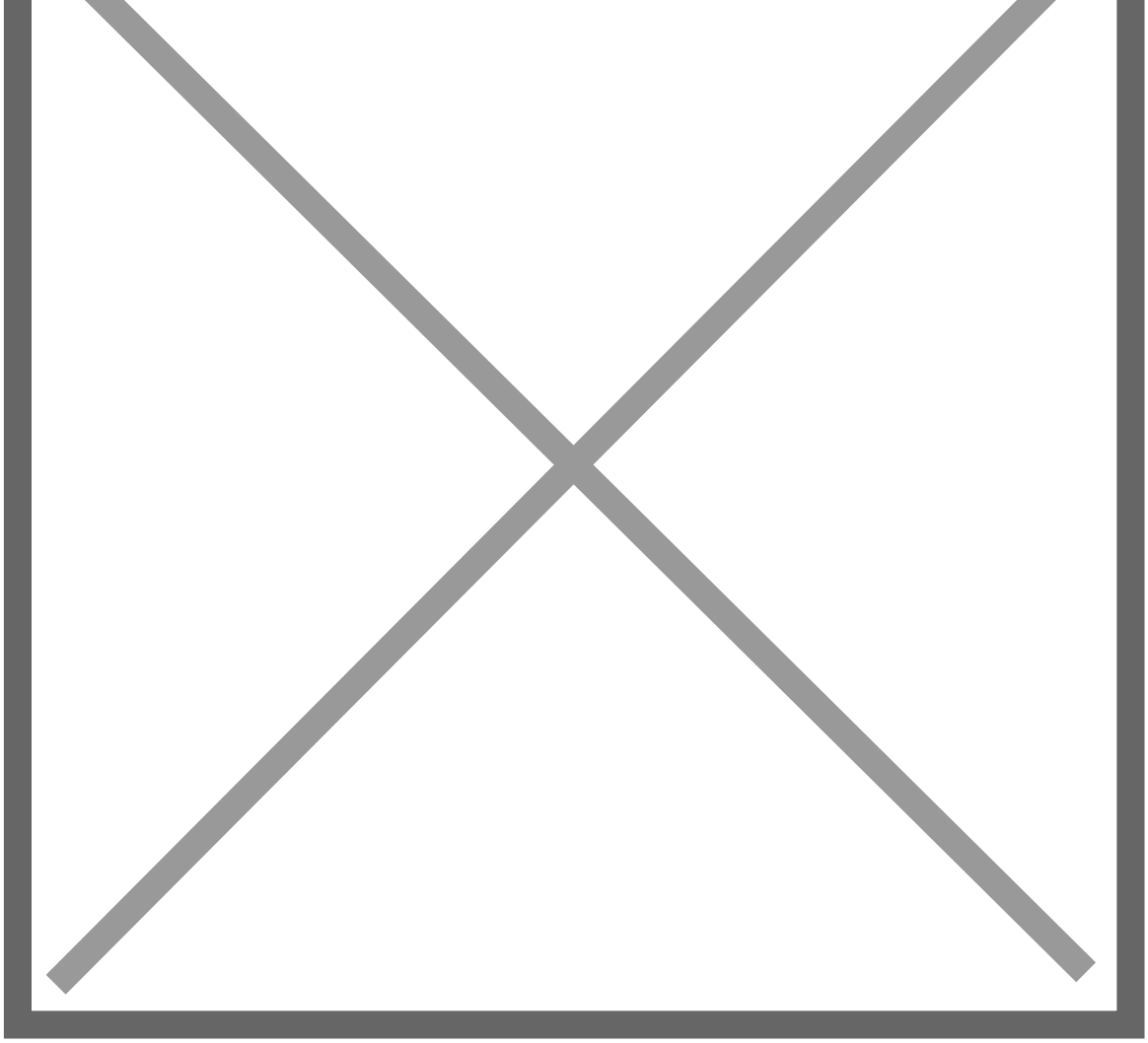


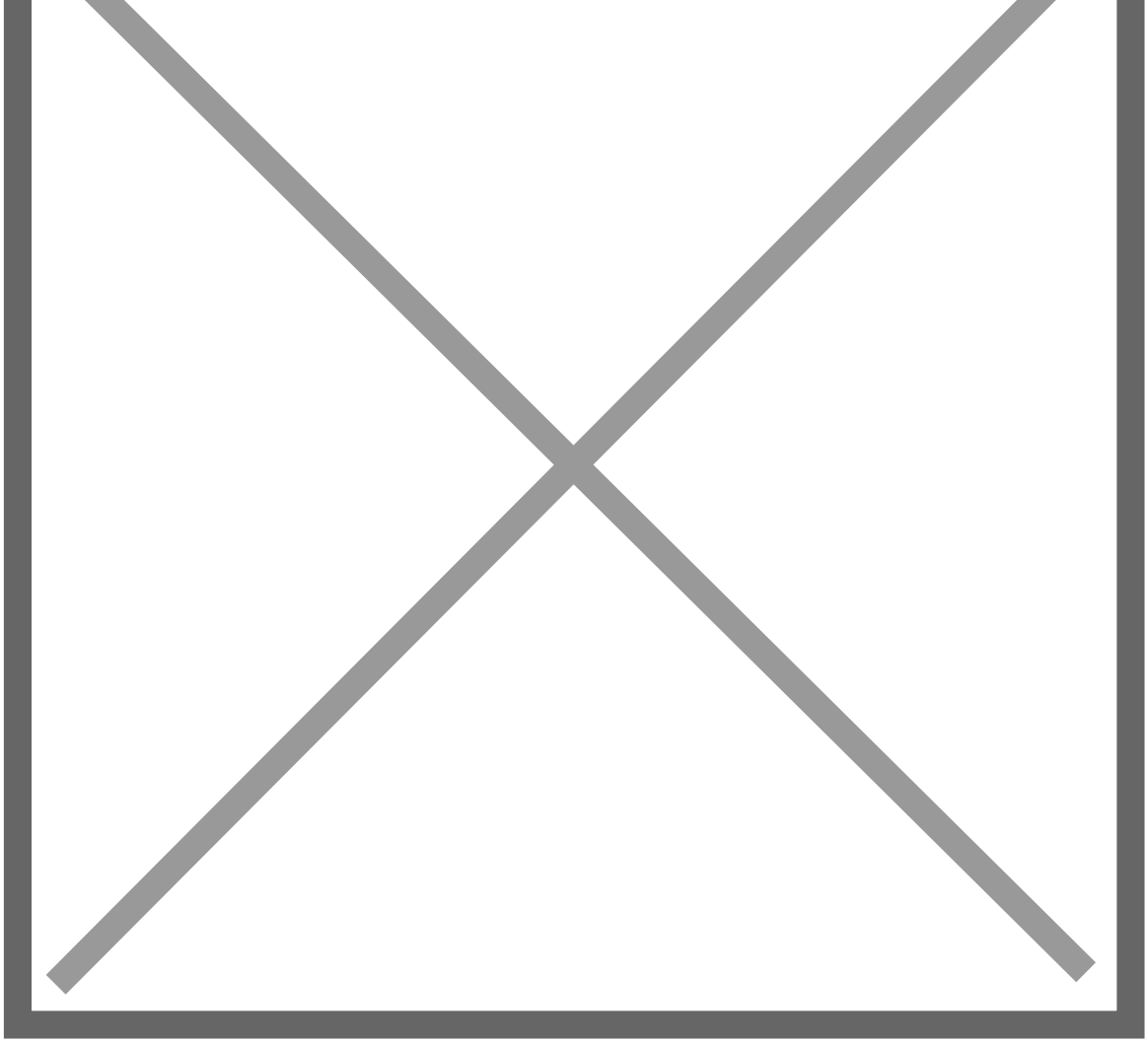
Among those present at the official dinner in honour of the name day of Archbishop Makarios of Australia were: His Eminence Metropolitan Ezekiel of Dervis; the aforementioned Bishops; the High Commissioner of Cyprus to Australia, His Excellency Mr Antonios Sammoutis; the Consul General of Greece in Melbourne, Ms Dimitra Georgantzoglou; Archons of the Holy and Great Church of Christ; State MP Mr David Davis, Shadow Minister for Energy and Resources and Shadow Minister for Economic Transparency and Fiscal Reconstruction, representing Ms Jess Wilson, Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament of Victoria; and the brother of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Mr Nikolaos Archontonis, together with his wife, Aikaterini.

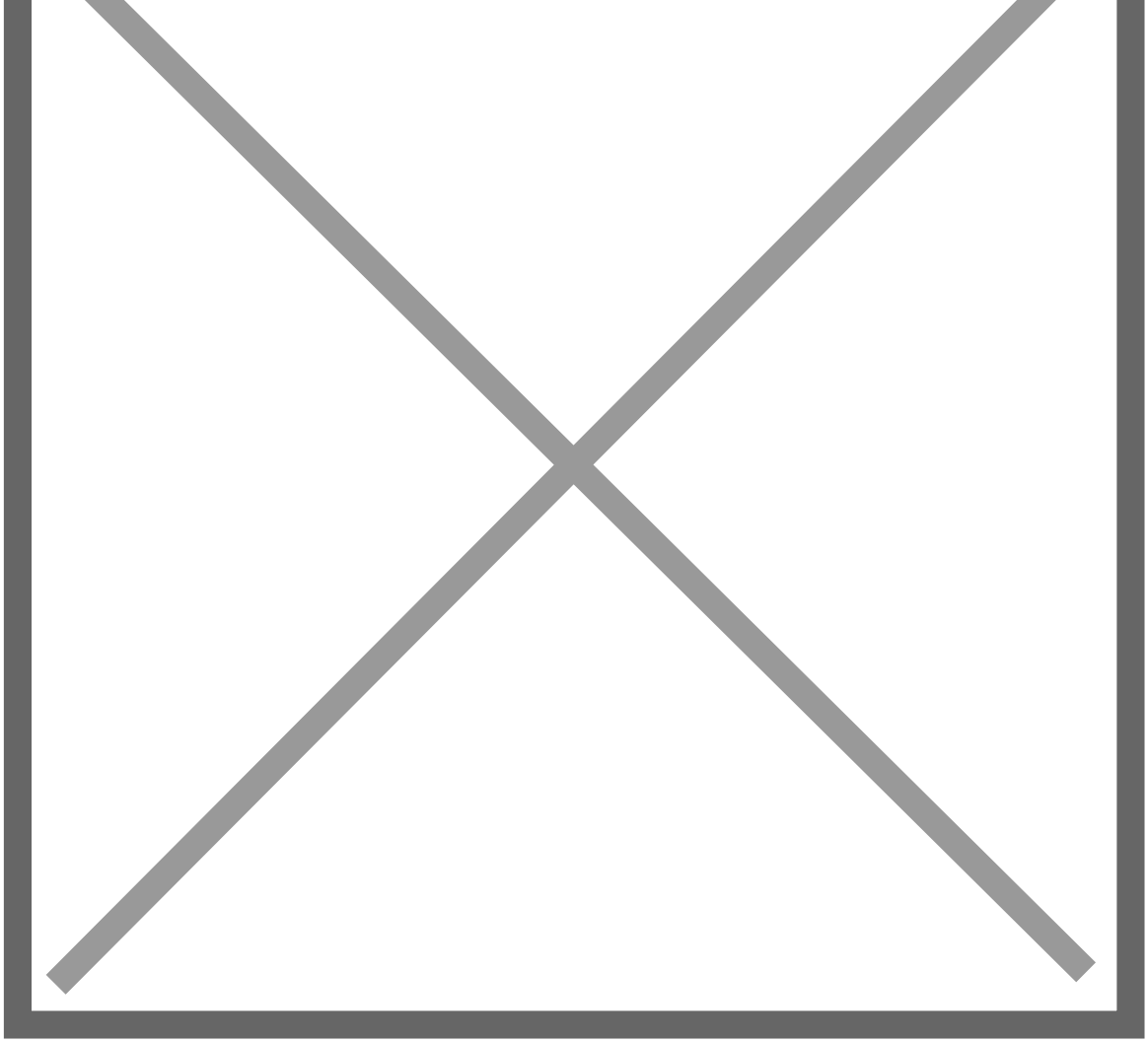
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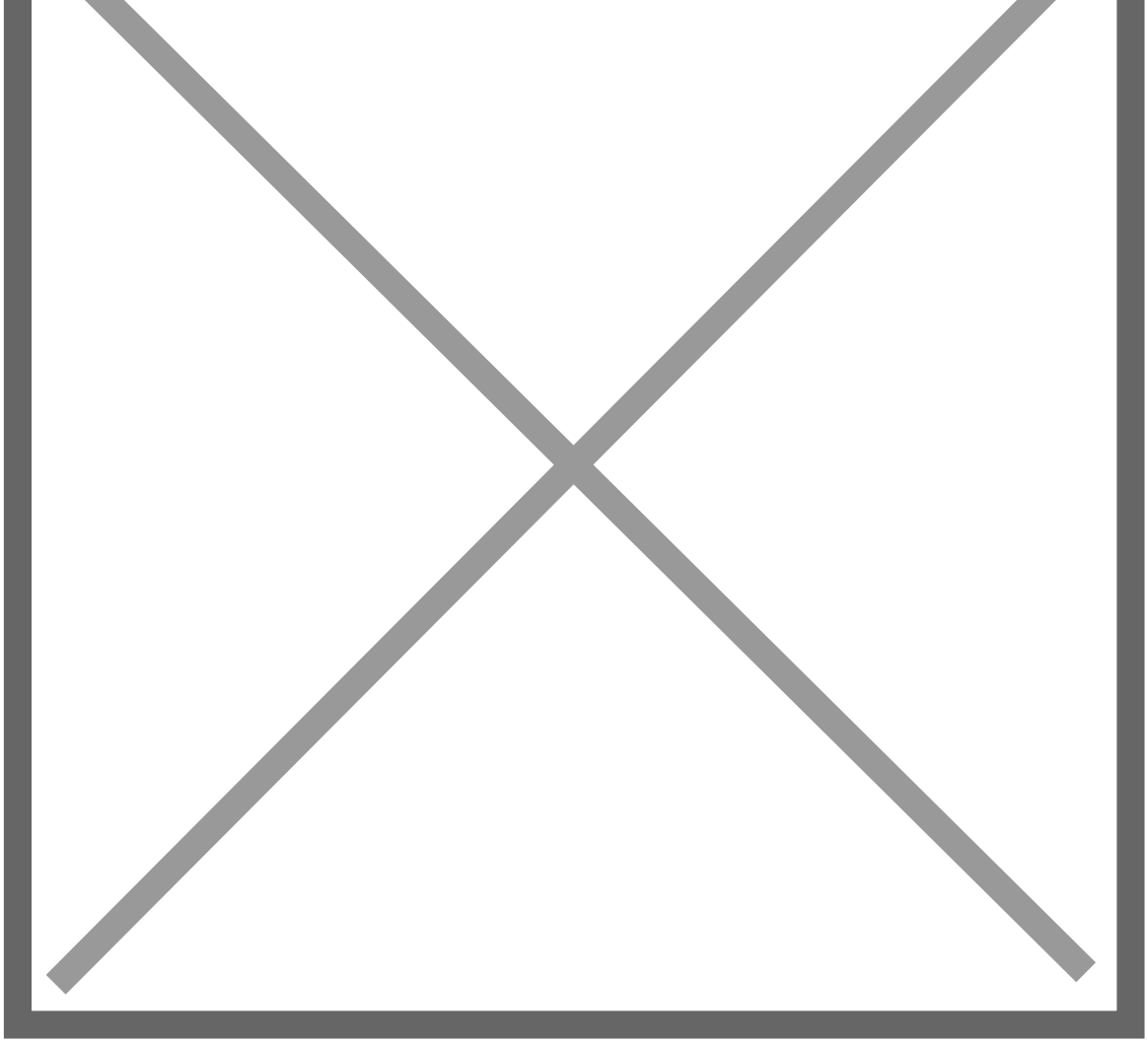


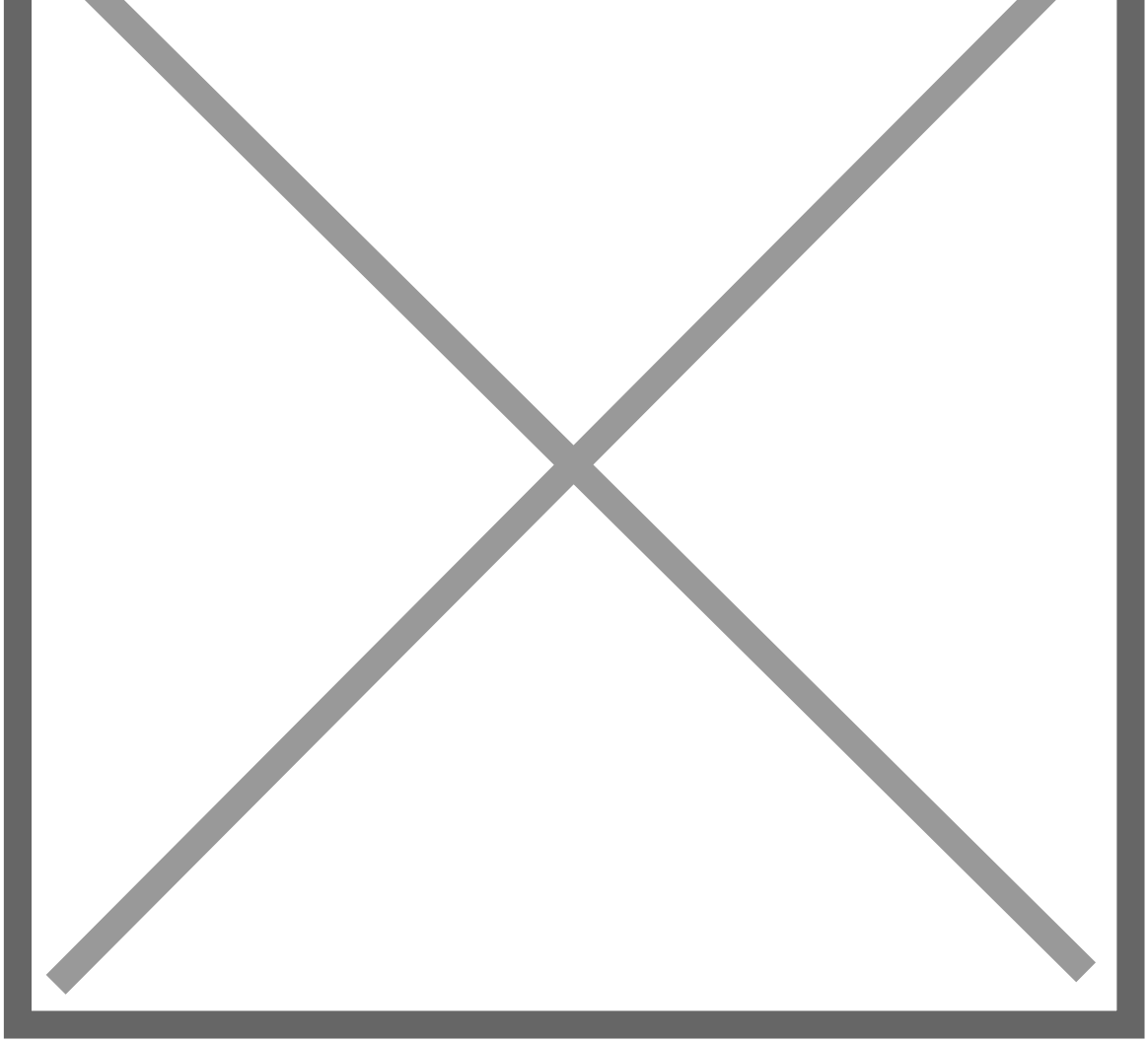












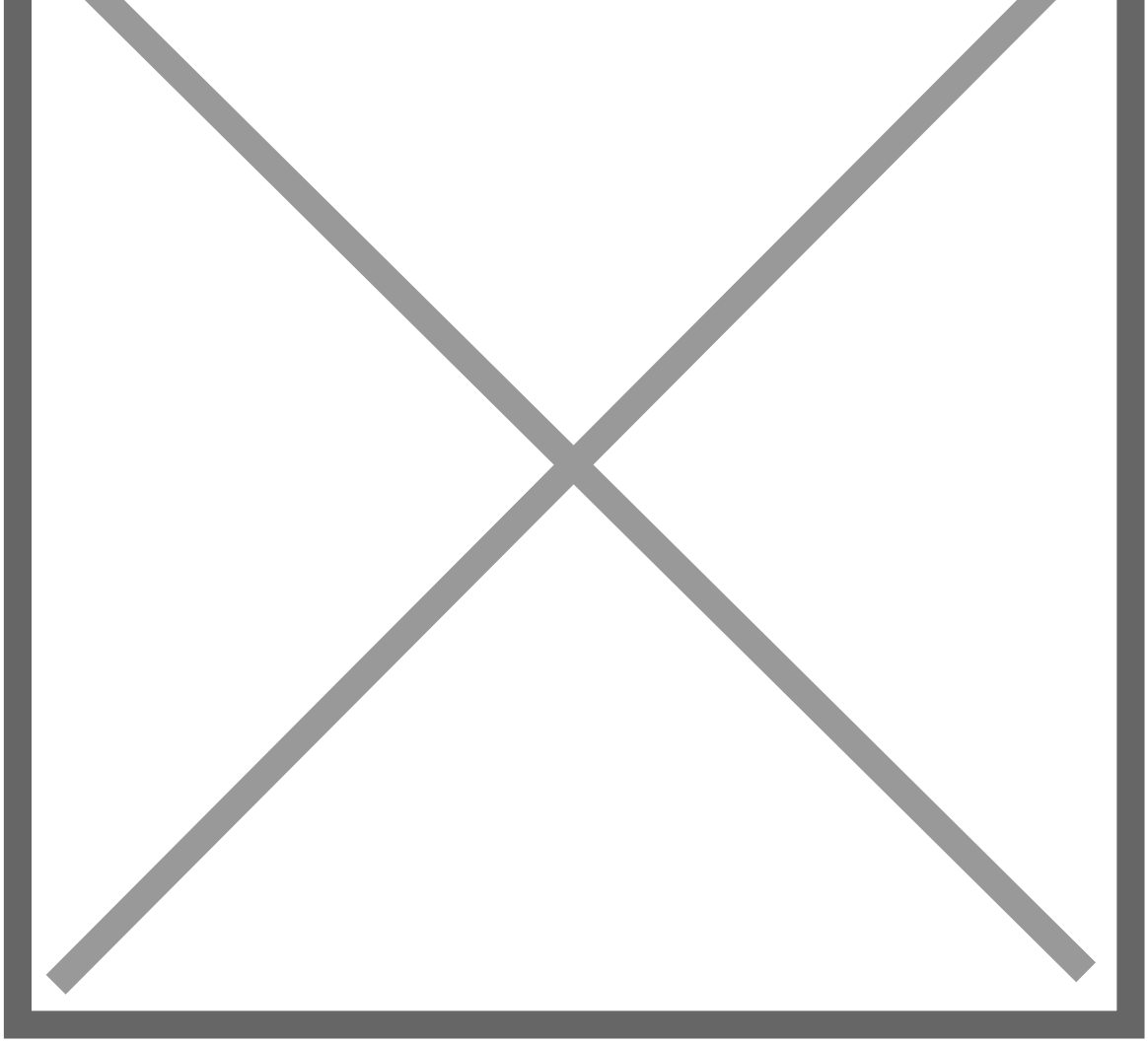


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