20/01/2026

Archbishop Makarios of Australia: “Our abiding within the Church is a prerequisite for our salvation”



With ecclesiastical splendour and grandeur, the Great Hierarchical Vespers in honour of the sacred memory of Saint Makarios the Great were celebrated on the evening of Sunday, 18 January, at the Holy Cathedral of the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Sydney. The service was presided over by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, who was celebrating his Name Day, while concelebrating in prayer were the Their Graces The Bishops—members of the Holy Eparchial Synod: Bishop Elpidios of Perth, Bishop Silouan of Adelaide, Bishop Kyriakos of Melbourne, Bishop Evmenios of Chora, Bishop Bartholomew of Brisbane, and Bishop Athinagoras of Canberra; the Their Graces Assistant Bishops: Bishop Iakovos of Miletoupolis, Bishop Christodoulos of Magnesia, and Bishop Christophoros of Kerasounta; as well as the invited Hierarchs: Their Eminences, Metropolitan Seraphim of Sevasteia, Metropolitan Myron of New Zealand, Metropolitan Iakovos of Ireland, and Metropolitan Eirineos of Florina, Prespes and Eordaia, and His Grace Bishop Prodromos of Toliara and Southern Madagascar. Also present were the Ambassador of Greece to Australia, His Excellency Mr Stavros Venizelos, clergy, Archons of the Great Church of Constantinople, presidents and representatives of parishes–communities, organisations and institutions of the Holy Archdiocese, and many devout faithful who came to extend their wishes to their spiritual father.

At the conclusion of Vespers, the Archbishop was addressed on behalf of the Holy

Eparchial Synod by His Grace Bishop Evmenios of Chora. His Grace conveyed to the celebrating Hierarch the heartfelt wishes of himself and all the Synodal Bishops and, making reference to the enlightened leadership of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the venerable Centre of Orthodoxy, noted that “what His All-Holiness laboured for over decades on a global level, we see living and bearing fruit locally here in Australia over the past six years through your own archiepiscopal ministry, the same direction, the same openness, the same sense of responsibility, lived daily, pastorally and concretely in our own land.”



Thereafter, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios received, as a gift from the Holy Eparchial Synod on the occasion of his Name Day, an episcopal sakkos. In his response, he warmly and emotionally thanked all the Hierarchs, clergy, and faithful for their honouring presence and asked them to pray for him.

Continuing, after referring to the virtues that adorned his patron saint, Saint Makarios, His Eminence emphasised that holiness remains attainable even in contemporary times, clarifying, however, that it does not arise merely from the strict observance of specific commandments and rules. “It depends on the extent to which we make our hearts receptive to the holiness of Christ,” he stressed, adding: “Our participation in the holiness of Christ can exist only when we are members of His Body, that is, the Church. Christ does not exist outside the Church. That is why you will never find Saints in heresy, schism, or irregular ecclesial gatherings. Our abiding within the Church, with all our mistakes, weaknesses, and

shortcomings, is a prerequisite for our salvation.”



Recalling that historically all heresies and schisms were caused by individuals possessed by demonic pride, he countered that “the Saints never distance themselves from the Church, even when there are objective problems or when they themselves are treated unjustly on a personal level.” “For the person who wishes to imitate our Saints,” he continued, “there is only one choice: to remain always within the Church and in the safety of grace bestowed by the Holy Spirit.”

Moreover, His Eminence underlined that the Orthodox Church continues unceasingly to bring forth Saints, because “holiness is proof of the presence of the All-Holy Spirit in our lives.” He referred to the fact that the Ecumenical Patriarchate, during the illustrious 35-year Patriarchate of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, has inscribed dozens of Saints in the calendar of our Church. “In this way,” he noted, “it is confirmed that our Orthodox Church, despite human errors and difficulties, remains a place of Grace and constitutes a harbour and an ark of salvation.”

Concluding his address, the Archbishop observed that in Australia there have been, and to a lesser extent continue to be, problems with schisms and irregular ecclesial gatherings, as a result of self-interest, petty agendas, and at times ignorance. He expressed his joy that some of the wounds of the past were healed during his pastoral ministry and voiced optimism for the future. “Since last year, when we

e, and the
ent is our






©MARKELLOS PETROPOULOS


©MARKELLOS PETROPOULOS


©MARKELLOS PETROPOULOS


©MARKELLOS PETROPOULOS


©MARKELLOS PETROPOULOS


©MARKELLOS PETROPOULOS


©MARKELLOS PETROPOULOS


©MARKELLOS PETROPOULOS


©MARKELLOS PETROPOULOS