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Australia: Synodal Message on the occasion of ‘World Greek Language Day’



On the occasion of the recent proclamation by UNESCO of 9 February as “World Greek Language Day,” the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia unanimously decided that on Sunday, 8 February, following the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, a sacred Memorial Service be celebrated in all the holy churches of the local Church “for the blessed memory and eternal repose of the souls of the departed teachers of the Greek Language in Australia.”

At the conclusion of the Memorial Service, a Synodal Message will be read, which is as follows:

Most God-loving holy Hierarchs,
Most Reverend holy Abbots,
Most Devout Priests and Deacons,
Most Venerable Monks and Nuns,
Beloved children in the Lord,

It is beyond doubt that the history of the dissemination of the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ constitutes a complex process and that, unquestionably, neither its rapid spread nor its success can be attributed to a single factor alone. Yet it is equally certain that, had Christianity emerged in an environment where the

Greek language did not prevail, the course of history would have been markedly different, since Koine Greek served as the vehicle through which the word of Christ journeyed to almost the entirety of the then-known world. Indeed, our language was not merely the means by which the Gospel was proclaimed, but also the language in which our sacred Scriptures were composed, the dogmas of the faith were articulated, and the great Fathers and Teachers of the Church expounded theology.

All the above are, for the most part, well known, even though we often possess only a superficial understanding of these realities, insofar as we tend to regard language as a mere vehicle or instrument employed by the Church for the dissemination of her teachings. In truth, however, a profound “linguistic cosmogony” took place, in which learned and wise individuals, inspired by the Holy Spirit, using as their instrument our marvellous language with its astonishing and subtle distinctions, recorded and codified divine Revelation, endowing words and terms with new content and conceptual meaning, in order to describe and to delineate truth from falsehood.

This fruitful embrace and the mutual interpenetration of the theology of the Church and the unsurpassed Greek language constitute but one, albeit exceedingly significant, moment within its long and enduring historical continuity, which begins in the mist of myth and extends into the modern age. From Homer and the tragic poets, the philosophers and the sophists, Alexander the Great and the Fathers of the Church, Romanos the Melodist, the scholars of the Nation, Solomos, Papadiamantis, Elytis, and Seferis, to the language spoken today by our youth on social media, the thread of the language, as a continuous and unbroken strand, binds the Nation together, expresses joys and sorrows, longings and passions, accompanies every step in the cycle of life, and constitutes, together with our faith, the two unshakable pillars of Hellenism, which has assuredly transcended the narrow geographical boundaries of our homeland and has become a global cultural treasure.

We come to understand this particular value and uniqueness of the Greek language as the bearer of the ideals of Hellenism more profoundly when we live far from the motherland, for our common speech constitutes not only a connecting link among the members of the diaspora but also the umbilical cord that binds us to our ancestral soil. We bear the solemn responsibility to preserve this precious legacy and to pass it on to future generations. This is not solely the duty of the State or of certain official institutions, but of each and every one of us, who must not forget our roots, who must speak to our children and tell them stories in Greek, sing in

Greek, and pray in Greek.

The Holy Archdiocese of Australia embraces with particular love and care the cause of preserving the Greek language, not only through its insistence on its use in the worship of the Church, but also through the establishment of the Aetolian College and the enhancement of teaching at St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College, where, most recently, a new postgraduate program in Greek Philosophy (Master of Greek Philosophy) has commenced.

The proclamation by UNESCO, following the coordinated efforts of the Greek Government, of February 9—the day of the death of our National Poet, Dionysios Solomos—as "World Greek Language Day" constitutes not only an exceptional honour for all Greeks, but also a tremendous responsibility to preserve the continuity of our language and to elevate it as a universal beacon of culture, which will remind every person living on this earth of the great and unsurpassed ideals of our Nation.

Within the framework of this significant milestone, our Archdiocese recognises "World Greek Language Day" as a day also dedicated to the teachers who have taught our language on the Fifth Continent and thereby became luminous guides for thousands of Greek children of the Diaspora. Each year, on the Sunday preceding February 9, a sacred memorial service will be conducted—as was done today—for "the repose of the souls of all the teachers of the Greek Language in the Fifth Continent," as a small token of gratitude and respect, while affirming our pledge that the flame of their work shall not be allowed to fade. Even if the small or great light of each of us may, sooner or later, dim, as the poet says: "Man is but a single spark; and if you saw it, you saw it…,"1 the work of these great teachers will shine through the ages, to illuminate and guide. Eternal be the memory of the teachers of the Greek Language on the Fifth Continent.

With many paternal blessings.

In Sydney, on the 1st day of February 2026,
The President of the Holy Eparchial Synod

†Archbishop MAKARIOS of Australia
Primate and Exarch of all Oceania

Bishop Athinagoras of Canberra Bishop Kyriakos of Melbourne

Bishop Elpidios of Perth Bishop Silouan of Adelaide

Bishop Bartholomew of Brisbane Bishop Evmenios of Chora

Bishop Christodoulos of Magnesia Chief Secretary

1 Odysseas Elytis, O Kipos me tis Aftapates (The Garden of Illusions).

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