09/03/2026

Archbishop Makarios of Australia: ‘We do not save the Church; the Church saves us’

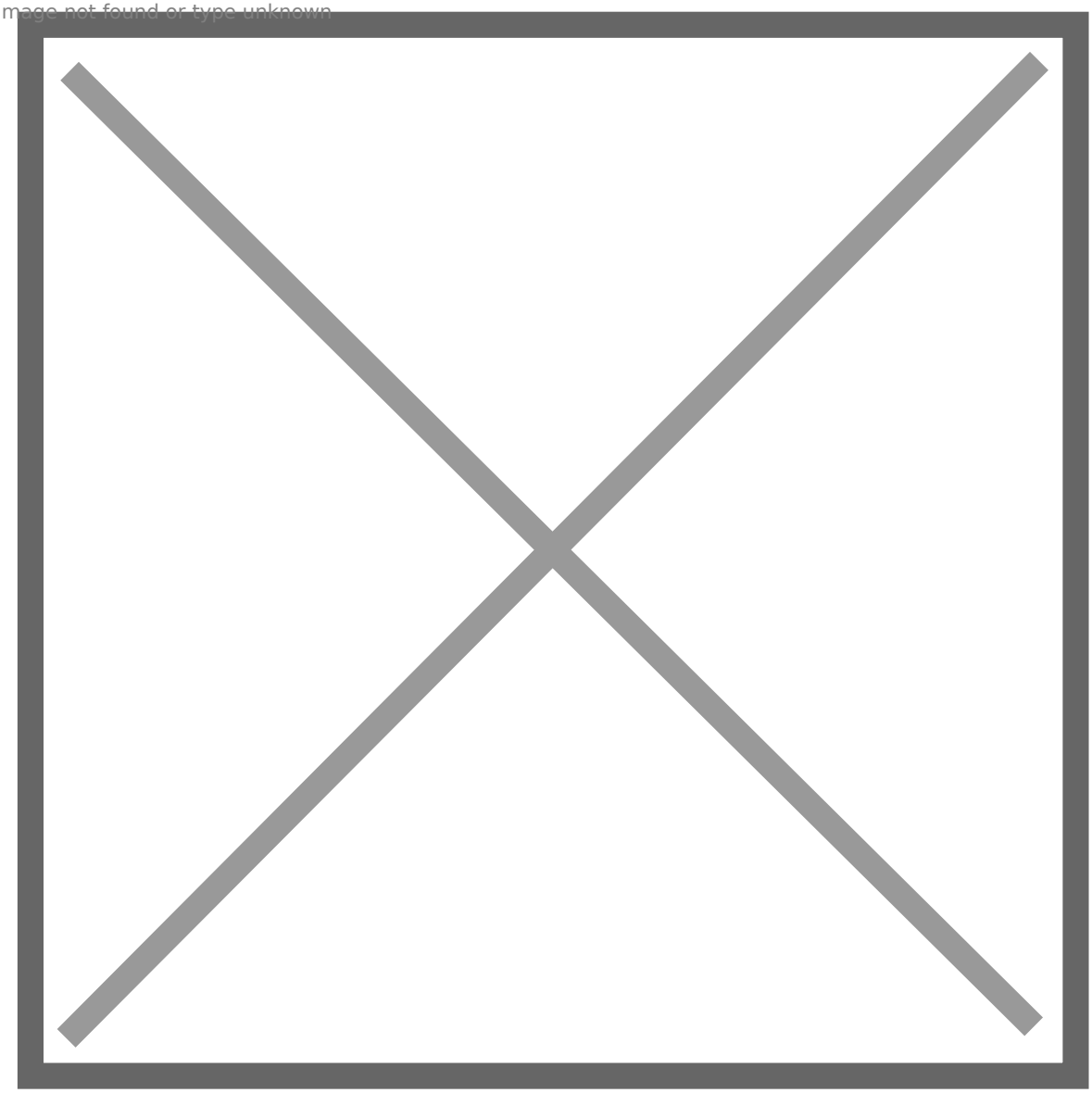


On Sunday, 8 March, the Second Sunday of Lent, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia visited the Parish of Saint Stylianos in the suburb of Gymea in Sydney, where he celebrated the Divine Liturgy. Concelebrating with him were the Parish Priest, Fr. Constantine Varipatis, Fr. Christos Triantafyllou, and Fr. Dimitrios Karakiozis. During the service, the Archbishop delivered a sermon inspired by the virtues and teaching of the “luminary of Orthodoxy,” Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessaloniki and Wonderworker.

At the beginning of his homily, the Archbishop observed that it is not by chance that on the Second Sunday of Great Lent, immediately following the Sunday of Orthodoxy, the Church presents to us the figure of this great theologian, who in the 14th century took a leading role in safeguarding Orthodox truth from distortion. “From today’s feast we learn that Orthodoxy is not a theory but a practice,” he emphasised, adding: “Orthodoxy is not a faith that we experience encyclopaedically or merely intellectually, but an experience related to the heart. It is not one among the many philosophical movements that have existed, exist, and will exist in the future, but a revelation of a light that will never fade.”

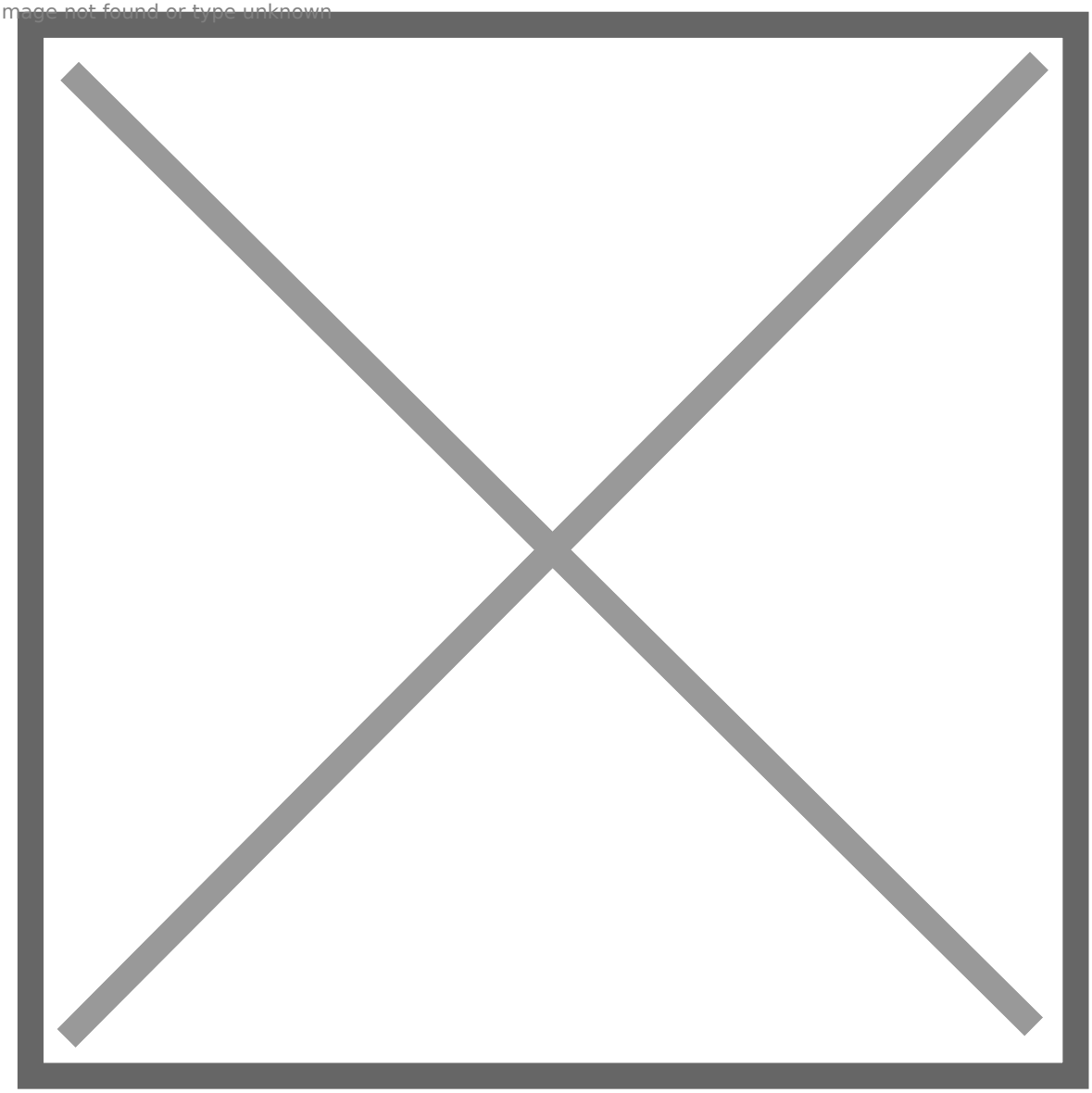
The Archbishop then briefly described the early life of Saint Gregory Palamas, focusing especially on his contribution to the defence of Hesychasm and his struggle against the erroneous teachings of the monk Barlaam. “There are many who think they are Orthodox and that they struggle for Orthodoxy,” he noted, “but in reality they are not Orthodox because they lack the Orthodox phronema (mindset). Such a person was Barlaam, who attempted to introduce certain theories and philosophies that diminished the value of the Jesus Prayer, slandered the Orthodox teaching on the uncreated light, and consequently undermined what our Orthodox Church believes about the human person’s ability to reach theosis (deification).”

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Pointing out that Gregory Palamas successfully refuted Barlaam's errors thanks to the authentic Orthodox ethos that inspired him, the Archbishop urged the faithful to learn from the example of this great saint of the Church. "What we so greatly need today," he said, "is the Orthodox ethos. Very often this is what is missing from the Church. Today the Orthodox Church is not tested by heresies but by Orthodox Christians themselves. It is divided not because we face external enemies, but because we cannot reconcile among ourselves... Here too we have encountered in the past, and perhaps even today, people who claimed to be Orthodox yet fought against the Church, believing that they themselves would save the Church. But whoever believes such a thing is possessed. We do not save the Church; the Church saves us. For we have weaknesses, we make mistakes, we commit sins, and we are in need of the salvation that the Church offers us. I pray that we may all receive the ethos of Saint Gregory and follow his example, so that Orthodoxy may not remain a theory but become right practice (orthopraxy)."

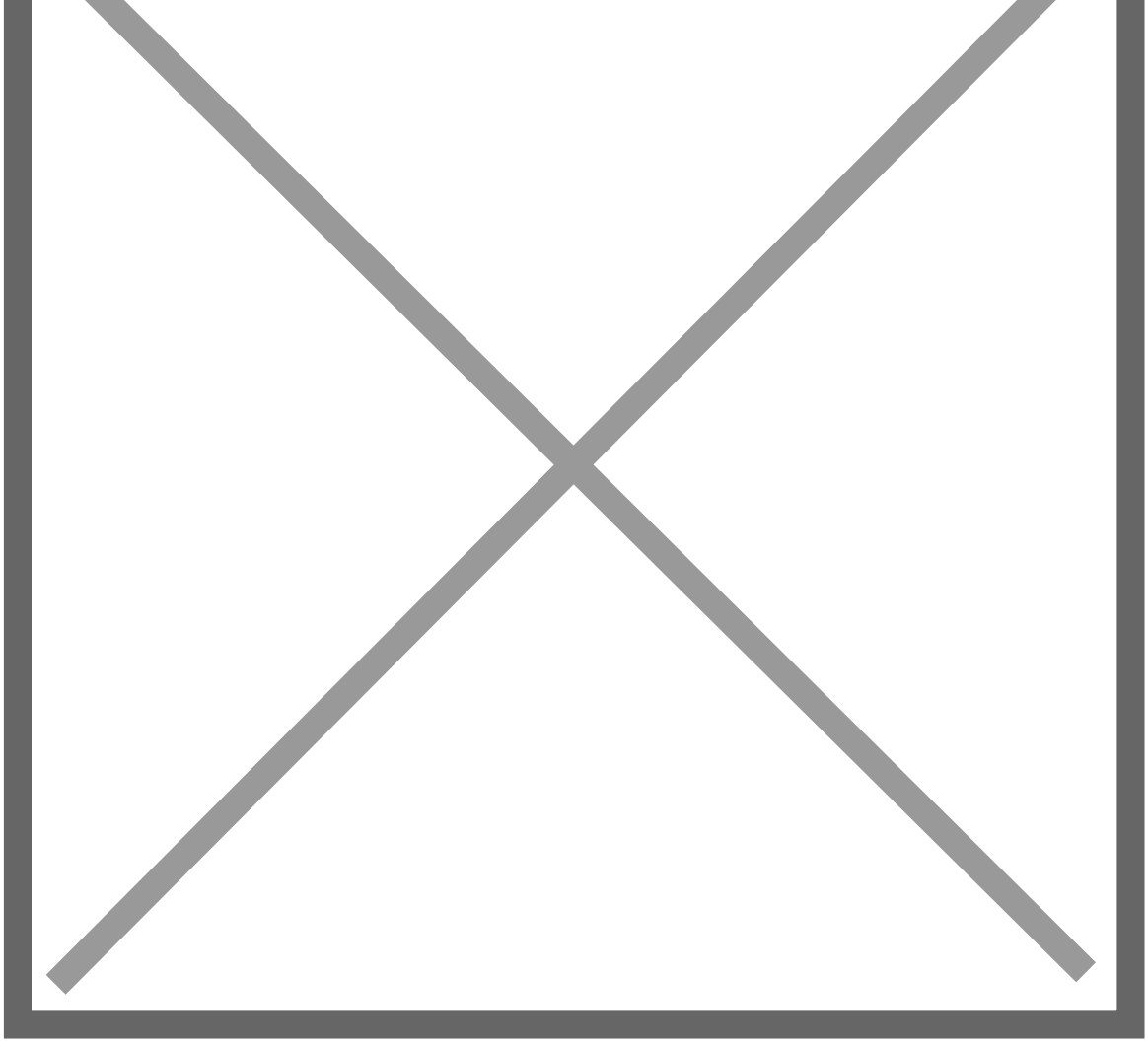
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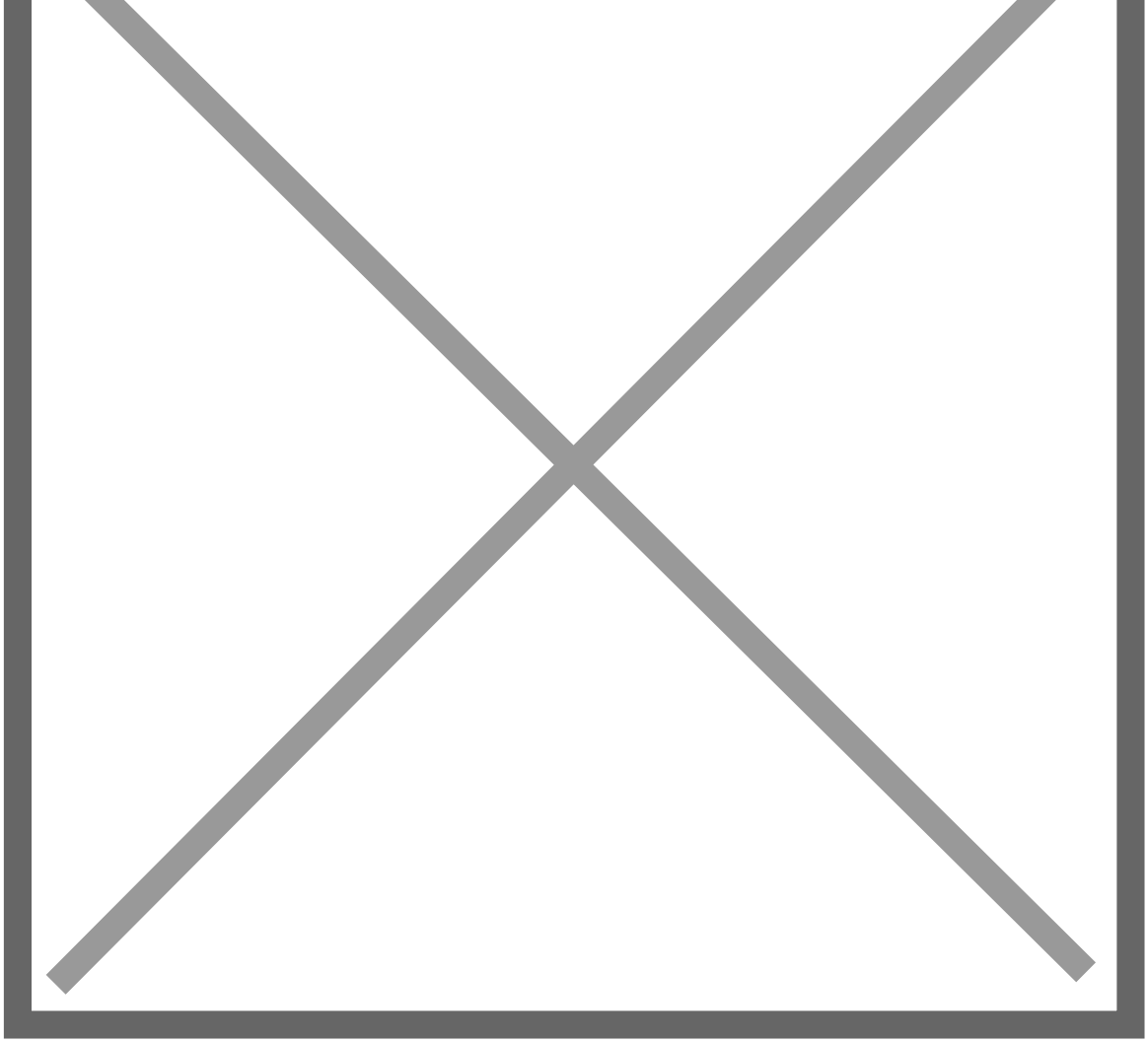


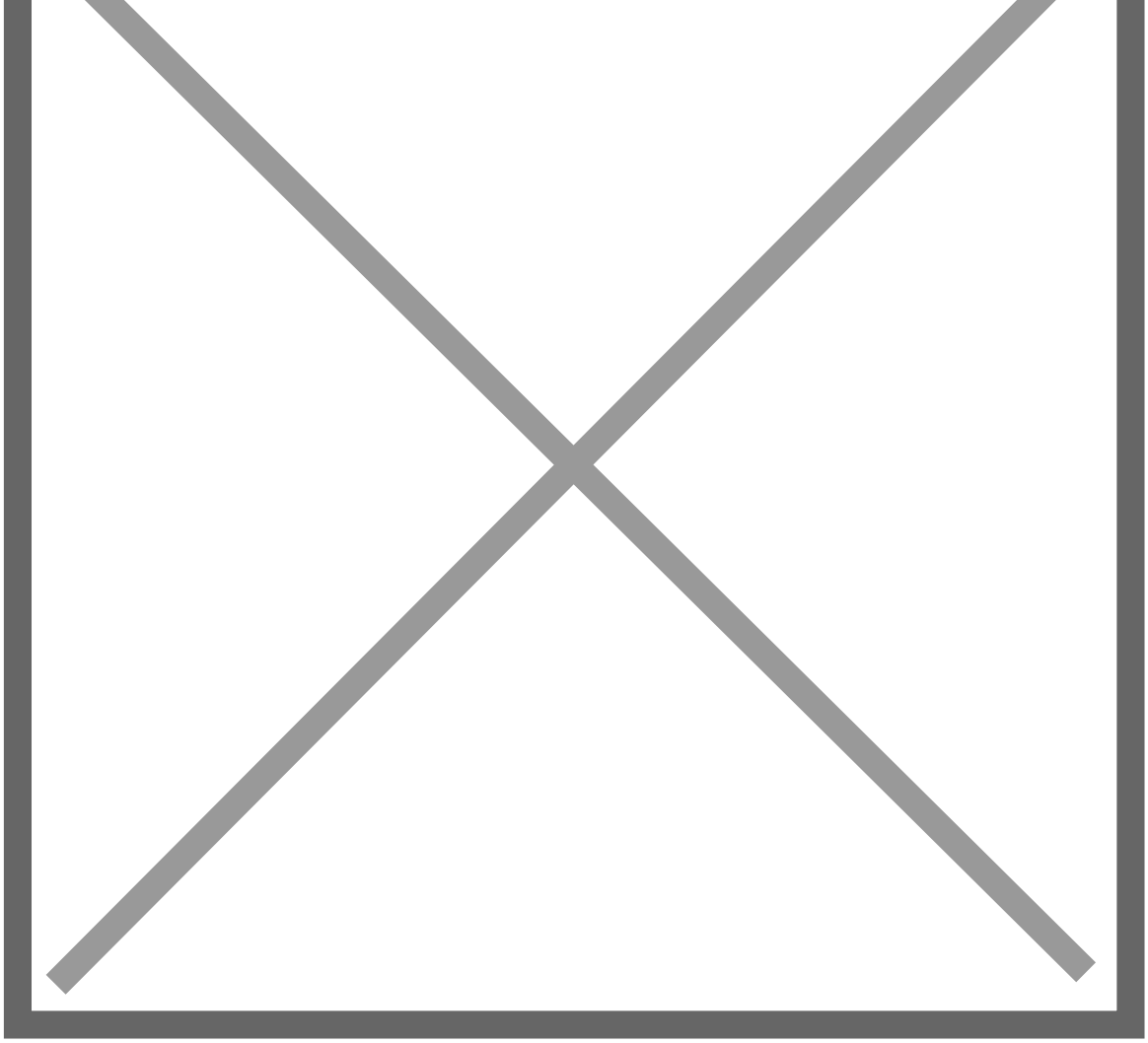
In conclusion, Archbishop Makarios thanked the parish priest Fr. Constantine for the invitation and warmly congratulated him for his ministry and work, as well as all those who collaborate for the progress and growth of the parish. He also congratulated the chanters for their excellent rendering of the hymns and especially welcomed the presence of the Sub-Dean of St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College, Associate Professor Philip Kariatlis, who was serving at the chanters' stand.

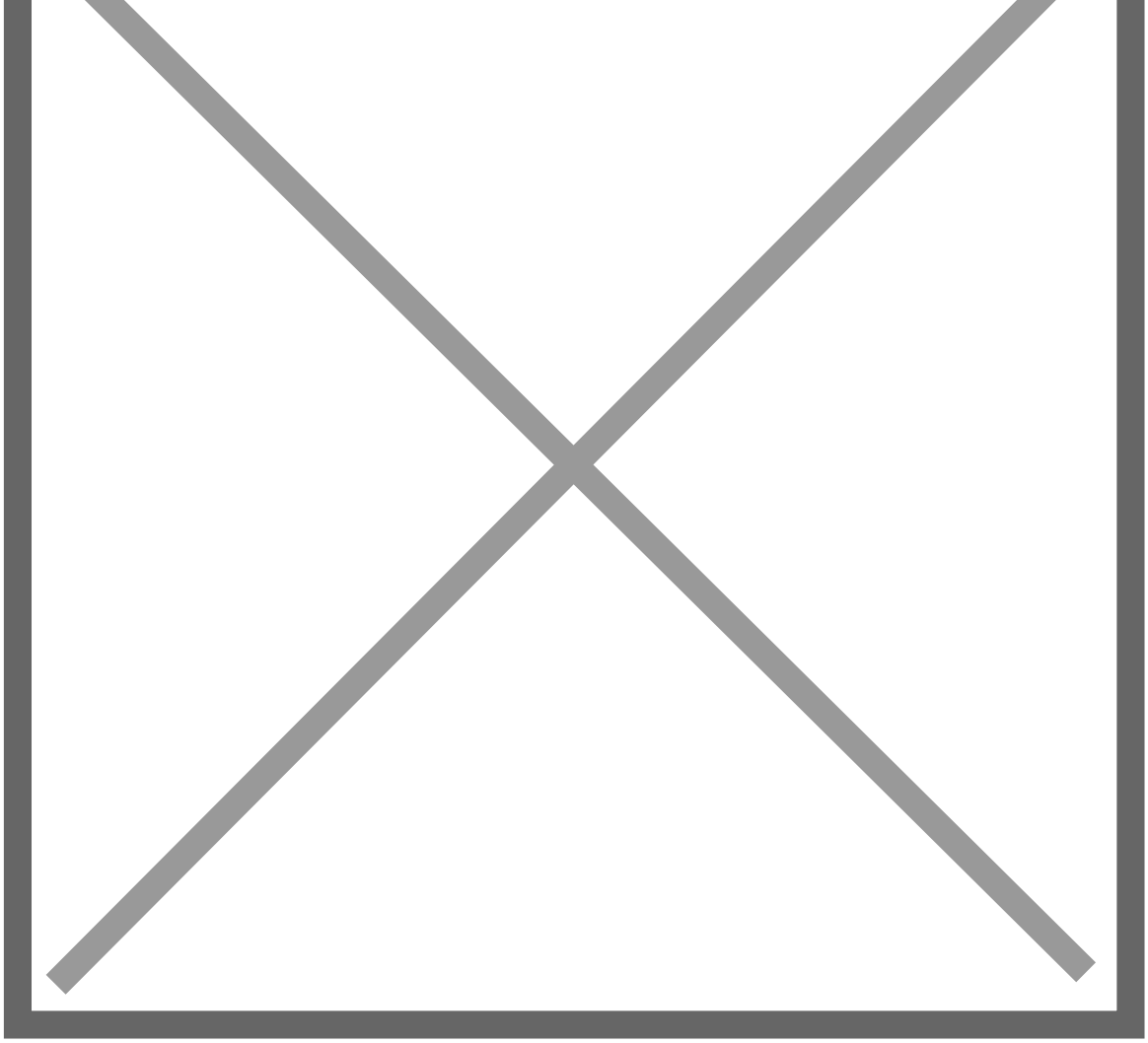
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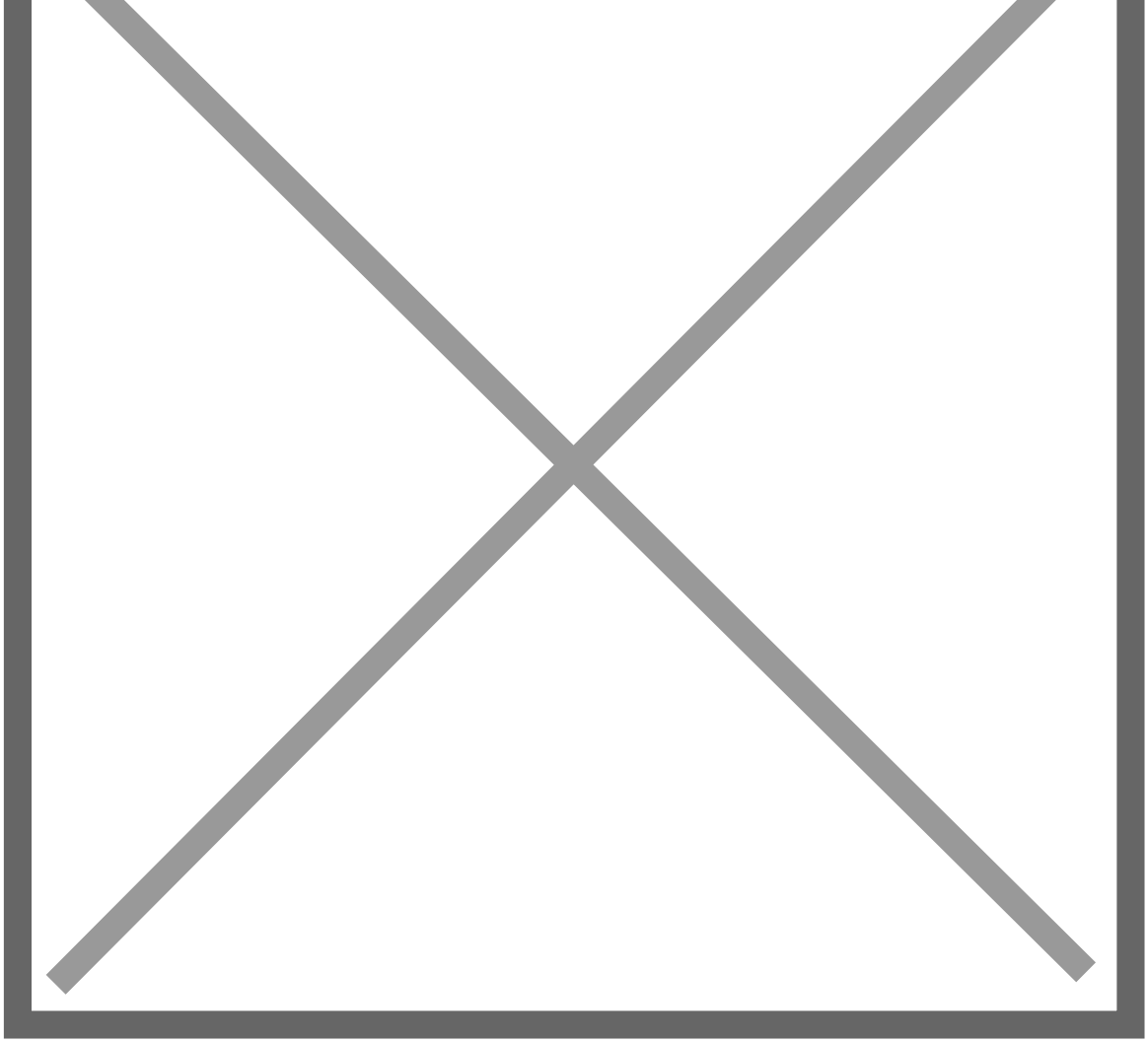
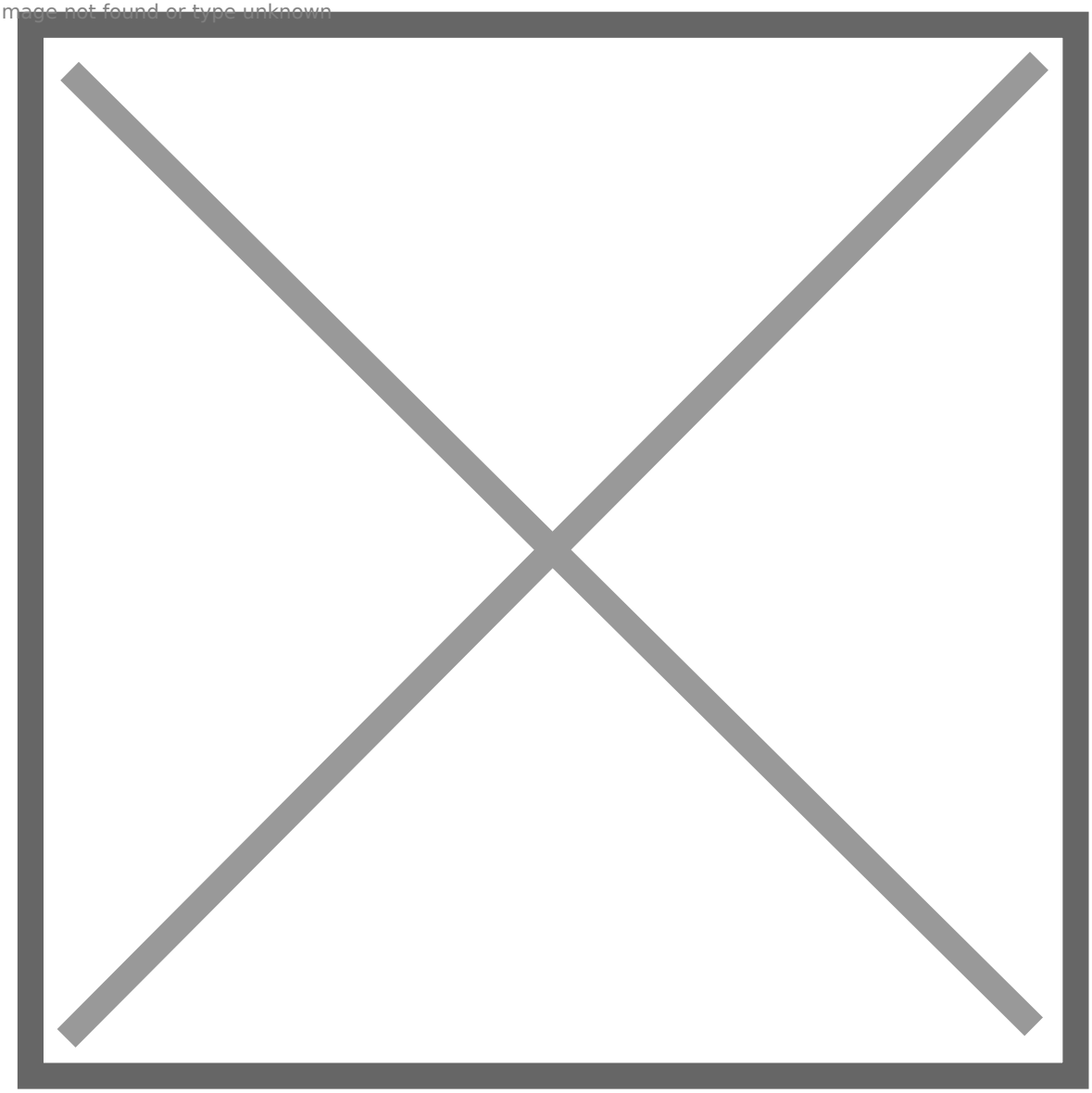


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