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Message from Archbishop Makarios of Australia for National Reconciliation Week 2026



The other as a person created in the image of God, lies at the very heart of life and witness in Christ.

“Love one another,” “welcome one another,” “show hospitality to one another”... The language of Holy Scripture leaves no room for us to walk a path detached from the path of our fellow human being. Consequently, mutual respect, mutual understanding, and mutual openness and communion are, for us Orthodox Christians, not merely social virtues, but a fundamental expression and witness of our faith.

Seen in this light, National Reconciliation Week, an institution born from the need to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians closer together, cannot but touch our hearts profoundly.

Indeed, over the course of recent decades, with milestones such as the historic referendum of 27 May 1967, the Mabo decision of 3 June 1992, and the great walk across the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 2000, decisive steps have been taken towards redressing the injustices of the past, bringing converging paths together, and removing barriers that divided and excluded.

Nevertheless, the journey towards genuine reconciliation allows no room for complacency. For this reason, each year National Reconciliation Week invites us to renew our commitment to its noble aims and to move forward with even greater resolve. It calls us to draw closer to one another, to every person with whom God has appointed us to live together, and especially to the First Peoples of this blessed land. It calls us to open our hearts, to listen attentively, to engage in dialogue, and to strive to see the stories of the past and the hopes for the future through the eyes of the other.

Our positive response to this call constitutes not only a living witness of our faith, but also a debt of honour owed to all those among our Greek Australian community who, even in difficult times, chose not to retreat into themselves or remain indifferent to the cause of reconciliation within the Australian nation. It is, therefore, the double duty of our generation to contribute its own small mark to this sacred work: to continue building bridges wherever gaps still remain, and to hand on to future generations an Australia marked by greater justice, unity, and reconciliation.

I pray that this year's National Reconciliation Week may prove fruitful for all and may become an opportunity for a deeper encounter with, and understanding of, the person of the other.

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