

Bill Papastergiadis meets with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in Constantinople



His Eminence Metropolitan Myron of New Zealand, Andrew Mesourouni, along with Bill and Lee Papastergiadis had the privilege of recently meeting His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in Constantinople. Over lunch and a subsequent private meeting spanning a number of hours, their conversation turned to many topics.

As the President of the Greek Community of Melbourne, Mr Papastergiadis, states: "What was particularly evident was the humour and humility of the Patriarch. The Patriarch was interested in each of our journeys thus making time for us despite his incredibly busy schedule. His days following our meeting packed in what a normal person would do in a month. Yet, despite all of the work that was before the Patriarch, he was at all times patient and humorous in his exchanges with us moving fluidly from the languages of Greek, English to Italian."

In the meeting, The Metropolitan of New Zealand noted the significant humanitarian work undertaken by Mr Andrew Mesorouni in the orphanages which are overseen by the Holy Metropolis in Fiji. The Metropolitan noted that this work was pivotal to maintaining the functioning of those orphanages.



The Patriarch was particularly interested in this work and enquired as to the number of children that were being cared for.

Conversations then turned to Australia and Greece. The Patriarch noted that his favourite city was of course Melbourne as it was the home of his brother. Bill Papastergiadis remarked how he often met his brother at numerous church events and that the Patriarch's brother was a person who was always cordial and in good spirits.

Following the meeting, Metropolitan Myron, Andrew Mesourouni, Bill and Lee Papastergiadis made their way back to their hotel. Along the way, The Metropolitan took them to the places that were a part of his life in this city. The Metropolitan recounted how his own experiences in Constantinople had in fact shaped his destiny in the church. His Eminence showed them the small hotel where he stayed

along with the curbside restaurant where he ate each day on his many visits to Constantinople. "The Metropolitan of New Zealand is an incredibly humble person" commented Mr Papastergiadis, "whose commitment to faith and others can only be described as exemplary. These places were in a poor neighbourhood that only locals frequented."

"The Metropolitan's determination to acknowledge the work of Mr. Andrew Mesourouni was such that he took a long trip from New Zealand to Constantinople with only a 24 hour stopover before flying back. The Metropolitan had arranged the lunch and the subsequent meeting to highlight the work of Mr. Mesourouni."



As the meeting with the Patriarch approached the end, His All-Holiness turned his attention to Lee Papastergiadis and asked as to his journey. He inquired as to his law degree, his current football team and in particular his regular attendance on Sundays at church. The Patriarch presented Lee with his own biography personally

signed with a message to him that encouraged him to pursue his legal career for the benefit of those around him and society.

“This day in Constantinople, which involved a journey through the narrow streets of this ancient city, the places of significance to the Metropolitan and our meeting and lunch with the Ecumenical Patriarch will forever remain in the hearts and minds of those of us fortunate to be there”, Mr. Papastergiadis stated in conclusion.

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