

Leading with love, Metropolitan Konstantinos of Singapore talks about being Orthodox in Asia



Coming from a long lineage of priests (his grandfathers and his brother, who is Metropolitan Nektarios of Hong Kong), it came as little surprise that Metropolitan Konstantinos of Singapore decided to dedicate his life to God. Leaving his career in media, he was ordained a deacon in 2008 and then as an Archimandrite. In 2011, he was ordained as the first-ever Metropolitan of Singapore.

Metropolitan Konstantinos first travelled to Hong Kong in 1998 to provide media work and assistance. "I went to volunteer in Hong Kong as I knew the Metropolitan of Hong Kong. I visited several times for the opening of orphanages, and other philanthropic events and I became connected with the people," he says. While acknowledging life was hard, he took heart in the people who buoyed his spirits with the love and welcoming they showed him.

The Orthodox Metropolitanate of Singapore was founded in 2008 when the Ecumenical Patriarchate made the decision to detach it from the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Hong Kong.

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Metropolitan Konstantinos has Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Timor, Maldives islands, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan under the spiritual jurisdiction of his Metropolitanate. There are around 15,000 Orthodox in total.

Liturgies are conducted in English but include some words of the local language, for example, Bahasa. “It’s important we do this because when we pray there has to be an element of the familiar and language plays a part in this,” says His Eminence. Being the Metropolitan of countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India brings with it unique challenges such as shifting a mentality of hate and mistrust of foreigners and Christians, as orthodoxy is a minority religion.

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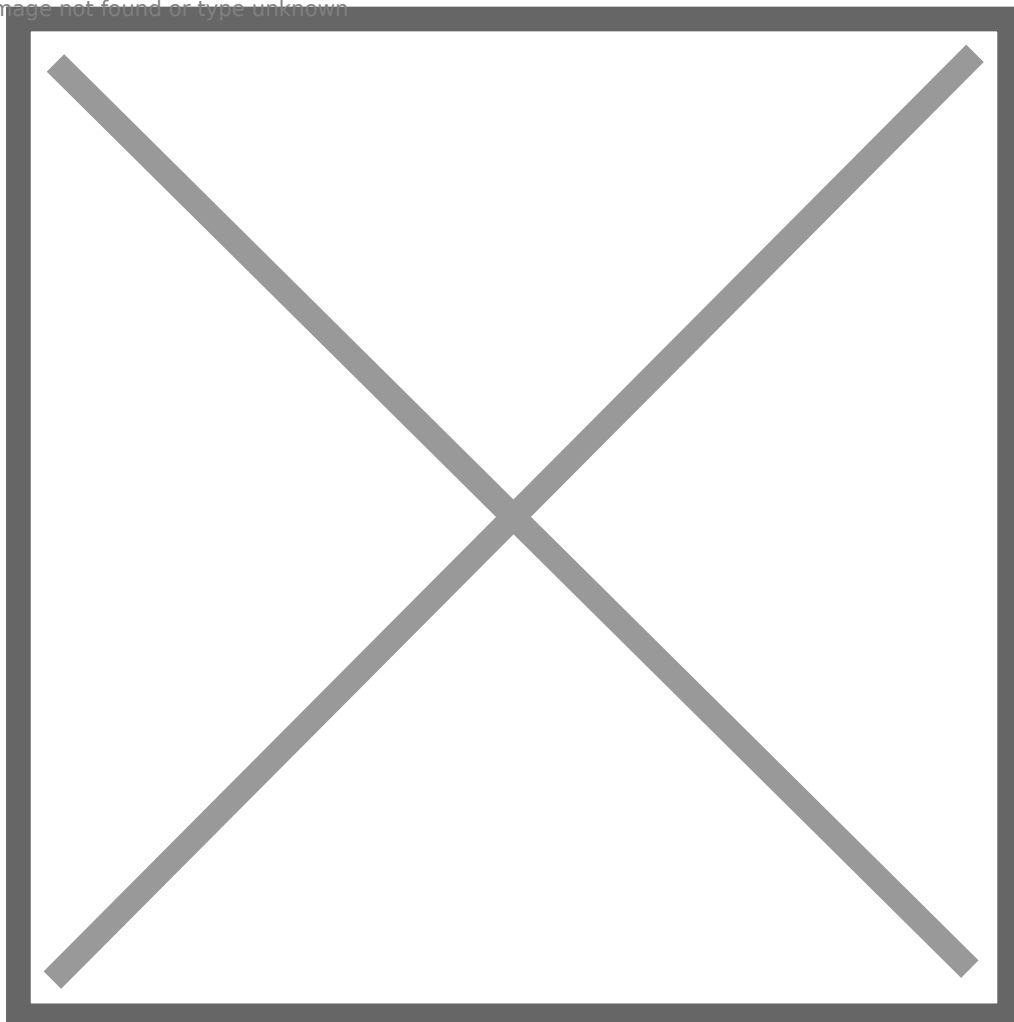
“When you have to serve in places where Christianity is a minority, this is a big challenge,” he says. “To explain that if you have to fight, you fight out of love, not out of fanaticism.”

“It’s not just to teach them that Christianity is a good solution, first we have to teach them that non-Muslims are not the enemy. Sometimes they listen, sometimes they don’t but we must remain there and lead by example. Show the example that we can do more things with love. With hate, you cannot continue.”

There are various reasons people in Asia have become Orthodox, including through mixed marriages or learning about faith through missionary work. Metropolitan Konstantinos pays credit to their journey. “To be an Orthodox in Asia has a cost,” he says. “Their family may disown them or spit on them. That kind of faith, of an Asian who has become Orthodox really touches me.”

Having opened 8 orphanages, 20 schools, scholarship programs, medical clinics and more, including a filtered water program in Bali, the Panayia Water Filtering Project, where they are able to help in filtering the water and making it accessible to the people of Bali as well as to the tourists who visit. It is worth noting that this is a missionary Metropolitanate which relies solely on donations to deliver these projects and initiatives.

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Asked what advice he reflects on throughout all his experience, he recalls the wise words of his grandfather who told him “trust God, he loves you more than you believe.”

His wish for the year ahead is for people to smile more. “In every bad moment or situation with a smile, we try to have hope in our heart and throw away fear.”

Metropolitan Konstantinos has a Youtube channel where he keeps followers up to date with weekly messages about his experiences and updates about what is happening in his Metropolitanate.

For more information on the Archdiocese of Singapore visit [orthodoxchurch
greekcitytimes.com](http://orthodoxchurchgreekcitytimes.com)