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Bishop of Meloa: Let us imitate St Paisios' example of 'Philotimo'



The Chancellor of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia, Bishop Emilianos of Meloa urged the faithful of the Parish of St Nicholas in Marrickville, Sydney, to put aside their "egos" and follow the example of St Paisios who encouraged people to live with selfless love and to have 'philotimo'. (According to the saint, 'philotimo' refers to "the relevant distillation of goodness and the radiant love of the humble man bereft of himself, but with a heart full of gratitude to God and his fellow man" – Tr.)

His Grace presided at the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Parish of St Nicholas on Sunday, 12 July, which is the feast-day of St Paisios of the Holy Mountain. Speaking to the congregation about the great contemporary Saint of Orthodoxy, he also gave a personal testimony from his visit to Mount Athos and his acquaintance with the Elder. Relating his experience, he explained that he was only 18 years old when he visited the Elder with two others of similar age; one was his friend and the other

was an acquaintance of his friend. The latter, in fact, was thinking of becoming a monk at the Holy Monastery of Panagia Stomiou at Konitsa. By contrast, Bishop Meloa like his friend had not, at the time, even entertained the thought of entering the priesthood and becoming a monk. However, addressing these two, Elder Paisios said, “I saw you”; they were both going to end up on Mount Athos. It must be noted that the third youth who was with them did not become a monastic.

“This is not a great miracle; it is not something that can be described as impressive as are other miracles of St Paisios that we have heard about,” said His Grace Bishop Emilianos and pointed out, “but this shows that every day he prayed for the entire world and for all those who would visit him. And he saw us. That is why he said, “I saw you”. He knew that we were going to visit him. And he knew what we were going to do with our lives.”

Bishop Meloa then focused his attention on the concept of ‘philotimo’, which distinguished Elder Paisios. “He would pray for God to allow him to get sick in order to take away someone else’s pain,” he said. “In the same manner, all the saints pray that they suffer in order to help their fellow human beings,” and then made extensive reference to his spiritual father, the later Elder Emilianos of Simonopetra, in whom he had the opportunity to learn and experience this sacrificial disposition for his spiritual children.

In conclusion, His Grace Bishop Emilianos requested that the faithful: “Think about the example of St Paisios and think about what we do. How much ‘philotimo’ do we have?” And added, “because if we do not have ‘philotimo’ God will judge us”, and explained that if we pray and struggle for the salvation of other people, then we secure our own salvation. “He who wants to go to hell in order to save others, has emptied himself to such an extent that he is full with the presence of God, and it is not possible for him to go to hell,” said Bishop Emilianos of Meloa.

