

## The Holy Archdiocese of Australia honours Mr Vassilis Koditsis



A man with a significant contribution over many years to the Greek Orthodox Church and the wider community was honoured on Wednesday, 6 January, by the Holy Archdiocese of Australia. This was the president for many years of the Parish-Community of St John the Baptist in the suburb of Parramatta in Sydney.

Mr Koditsis was awarded the Gold Cross of St Andrew in an emotion-rich atmosphere during the Vespers service at the Church of St John the Forerunner. The award was made by the Chancellor of the Archdiocese, His Grace Bishop Emilianos of Meloa, representing His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia who, unfortunately, could not attend due to other commitments. Bishop Emilianos conveyed to Mr Koditsis the cordial wishes of His Eminence as well as his fervent congratulations for the commendable work he has performed and his contribution to the Church.

Fr Dimitri Kokkinos, Parish Priest of St John, briefly described Mr Koditsis' valuable contribution not only to the Parish of Parramatta but also to other Greek Orthodox parishes in Sydney and to the Holy Archdiocese as a whole. "Mr Vassilis Koditsis worked for this parish during difficult years" he noted and continued, "he was

president for many years. He was a pioneer in the construction of the former church on Hassall Street, not only in the capacity as president but also as a self-taught architect, who designed the church and was responsible for overseeing it. He was so effectual that the church was built much quicker and at a considerably lower cost than what was expected by those who knew about these works. All this without any remuneration and, as I mentioned, during difficult years.”

At this point, Fr Dimitri stressed that the labour and contribution of Mr Koditsis was not only confined to the Parish of St John. He recounted that it was he who designed the beautiful Sydney churches of St Spyridon in Kingsford, St Euphemia in Bankstown, St Raphael, Nicholas and Irene in Liverpool, as well as the church of St Nicholas in Canberra.

“There are many other works that I am not aware of and, therefore, I do him injustice”, Fr Dimitri characteristically pointed out and, referring to the testimonies of the parishioners of St John and of his predecessor, Fr Nicholas Tsouloukidis, he praised the ethos, humility, patience and the spirit of cooperation of Mr Vassilis Koditsis.

