

## **Messsage of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia on the occasion of the Feast of the 25th March**



God-loving Brethren, beloved fathers and my beloved children,

Today, our Church celebrates the momentous event of the Annunciation of the Theotokos, that is, the announcement to the Virgin Mary by Archangel Gabriel of the joyful message of the Incarnation of our Lord. We refer to a joyful message precisely because we know that the Incarnation of God was the starting point for the salvation of humanity.

But what were the feelings that gave rise in Panagia when she heard from the Archangel the words: “Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus”? We are given the answer by Luke the Evangelist, who presents to us, on the one hand, the perplexity and bewilderment that Panagia felt upon hearing that she would conceive the Son and Word of God

and, on the other hand, Panagia's redemptive phrase that she is ready to accept the will of God: "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word."

This dialogue confirms that Panagia's obedience to the will of God was not from coercion but the result of free will and, at the same time, deep faith. While once, Eve's disobedience, also the result of free will, led people away from God and enslaved them to sin, on the contrary now, the Virgin Mary consciously chooses obedience and grants eternal life to fallen humanity.

It is not a coincidence that this significant ecclesiastical event is celebrated together with the start of the Greek Revolution. We praise God who has counted us worthy, today, to celebrate the 200th anniversary of this historic day, noting what has been indelibly engraved in the collective consciousness of our people – the inseparable relationship of our Hellenic Nation with our Orthodox Faith and Christ's Church. Let us never forget that the blood of the martyrs, who died for our Faith, and that of the heroes of our Nation, runs through our veins.

Furthermore, we note that the enslaved Greeks, despite their understandable hesitation, concern or unrest that they must have felt at the announcement of the proclamation of the Revolution, nevertheless, they participated in the uprising of their own free will and obeyed the voice of their Greek Orthodox conscience. Because of them, the following generations of Greeks were able to live with liberty and free of the Ottoman yoke, just like, because of Panagia, humanity was freed from ancestral sin and could re-enter the door of Paradise once again.

My beloved friends,

If there is something that we must reflect on during this double celebration, it is that we ought to hold high in our conscience, and pass on to future generations, the ideals of our Faith and Nation. The best way of honouring the Virgin Mary and the struggles of our ancestors is none other than to prepare our hearts so that in every difficult decision that we are called to make in our lives, we always put forward our love and our dedication to God and our Homeland.

— [facebook.com/goaa.aus](https://facebook.com/goaa.aus)

