21/10/2021

Inaugural Feast of the Synaxis of Holy Medical Doctor Saints in Perth WA



On Sunday the 17th of October 2021, with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, the Archdiocesan District of Perth celebrated for the first time the Feast of the Synaxis of all Holy Medical Doctor Saints. This is a new feast established on the 21st of July 2021 by the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in order to set aside a special Sunday to honour all Doctor Saints and to pay tribute to all medical Doctors who serve our health system. The feast was celebrated at the Church of Sts Constantine and Helene, the first Orthodox Church to be built in WA, with the Matins and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy officiated by His Grace Bishop Elpidios of Kyanea.

On behalf of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, His Grace officially welcomed all medical doctors to the special service, saying, “The Archdiocesan District of Perth decided to invite various Perth doctors today, together with their families, to this special service, so as a church community we can all show our love, appreciation and honour to all medical doctors who look after our wellbeing on a daily basis”. In addition, His Grace welcomed and acknowledged the other special guests that were in attendance at the service including the Consul of

Greece in Perth, Mrs Georgia Karasiotou, President of the Hellenic Community of WA (HCWA), Mr Paul Afkos and members of the executive committee, Trustees of the HCWA, Principal of St Andrew's Grammar, Mrs Dawn Clements and her husband Jonathan Clements and representatives of the Castellorizian Association of WA.



Following the welcome of the official guests, His Grace read from a special letter written by His Eminence for the feast day: “As you all know, for almost two years now, our entire humanity has been sadly plagued by the Coronavirus pandemic that has ravaged thousands of lives and affected millions of people, worldwide. It is a tragedy beyond belief, but in our affliction, we do not lose hope and trust in our Lord, the Physician of our souls and bodies. Instead, we turn to Him, humbly and persistently beseeching His benevolence, through the intercessions of the saints, for an end to this calamity and to enlighten the minds and hearts of those who are involved in the medical profession and scientific field to find the means for treating and preventing the spread of this catastrophic virus. We feel comfort that He has answered our prayers as we have seen the successful development of a number of vaccines and treatment protocols. For all this, we are grateful to Him and, through Him, to all the medical doctors who serve our health system and who, with great sacrificial love and devotion, offer their services and expertise to all of humanity. Therefore, today is a source of great celebration and joy and I would like to convey my sincere appreciation and heartfelt gratitude along with my paternal blessings to each and every one of you who are in the medical profession. Through the intercessions of the Holy Doctor Saints, may God richly bless and reward you!”

Senator Dean Smith from WA (who was invited but unfortunately could not attend due to commitments in Parliament) also wrote a letter to His Grace officially thanking the Archdiocese for honouring all the Medical Doctors with this special feast day. In his letter, Senator Smith recognised how “our brave medical staff have been a pillar of support for our society during the pandemic and this service is a welcome blessing for them – as well as a testament to the community outreach of your church.”



At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy a memorial service was conducted for all medical doctors who have fallen asleep in the Lord. Following the memorial service a procession took place of a special icon of the Holy Wonder Working Saints Cosmas and Damianos who were also doctor saints. This historic icon, which has been housed in the Church of Sts Constantine and Helene in Perth for many years, was recovered after a bomb blast on the island of Castellorizo during WW1. Following the procession, a Special Blessing of the Loaves Service (Artoklasia) took place for all doctors who serve our health system so our Lord can give them health, strength and enlightenment to continue their outstanding work.

After the service, two prominent Greek Orthodox Doctors in WA were invited forward to say a few words, Professor Con Michael and Dr Maria Kailis. Professor Michael made particular mention about the fact that so much of western medicine is founded on the ideas of ancient Greek medical figures such as Hippocrates and Galen. Dr Kailis acknowledged the pioneering work in the medical field that has been done by many Greek Orthodox doctors in WA and also reminded everyone about the importance of the COVID vaccine.



At the conclusion of the entire service, morning tea was provided for all in the lower hall of the HCWA adjacent to the Church.

Overall, this inaugural event was very well received by the congregation as they gave the two doctors a big warm round of applause at the conclusion of their speeches and the feedback received by all was extremely positive.

We thank His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarchate Bartholomew and the Members of the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople for giving us the opportunity to officially express our appreciation to all our medical doctors through the feast day of the Synaxis of the Holy Doctor Saints.

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