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The ordination of Bishop Christodoulos of Magnesia in Sydney



“It is not those who are perfect who are sought for the promotion to the episcopal office, but those who are saints,” His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia emphasized, addressing His Grace Bishop-elect Christodoulos of Magnesia during the ceremony of his ordination to the episcopacy, which took place in the Parish of St Nicholas in Marrickville, Sydney, on the morning of Sunday, 14th November.

Making a distinction between the concepts of “perfect” and ‘saintly”, His Eminence explained, “one who has reached perfection is ideal, complete, flawless. He perceives that he is perfect; he believes it; he testifies to it with his behaviour and his dangerous self-confidence. On the contrary, the saint does not know that he is a saint – because holiness is not perfection but a sense of sinfulness. Holiness is not a personal achievement but a gift. It is not based on knowledge and degrees but on the personal, experiential struggle. Holiness does not make you see others as inferior but as superior. Holiness is not harshness but sensitivity. The one who is perfect can become the best screenwriter and lead the viewer of the film to a series of intense emotions, but the saint is the poet who plays with light and shadow; with sunrise and sunset; with spring and winter; and comforts everyone

and pacifies them. The one who is perfect honours and loves whatever has value but the saint loves even that which has no value. The one who is perfect easily rejects, but the saint does not. On the contrary, he always feels that he is wounded and fallen. Viewed through this prism, the worst obstacle for the episcopacy is to think that one is worthy."

Continuing his speech, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios referred with words of praise to the personality and priestly journey of the new Bishop of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia. "Watching your journey from the first moment of my arrival in Australia," he noted, addressing His Grace Bishop Christodoulos, "I appreciated the simplicity of your heart, your ecclesial mindset and your conviction that you do not belong to the category of clergy who are waiting for a promotion, considering that they deserve the episcopacy. Therefore," he continued, "wherever you served as a priest, whether in the Holy Metropolis of Larissa or in our Holy Archdiocese, you worked selflessly for the Church and for your Shepherd; you served with humility and devotion, working only for the glory of Christ. I consider it a given that you will continue with the same simplicity, humility, devotion, diligence, obedience and striving from your new position, responding to the needs of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia."

The Archbishop also stated with confidence that the late Metropolitan Ignatius of Larissa, who ordained as deacon and priest the new Bishop of Magnesia, "will be rejoicing from heaven and offering praise to the Triune God for your worthy promotion. Similarly, the current and choice brother in all and always, Metropolitan Ieronymos of Larissa, a charismatic and worthy Hierarch of the Orthodox Church, also rejoices and is glad" and, in fact, he sent a congratulatory letter immediately after learning of the promotion of His Grace Bishop Christodoulos.

In closing, His Eminence paternally urged the newly ordained Bishop to walk the new path of his life with love for his brethren and to remain faithful to the principles and ethos of the Orthodox Church, as well as to defend to the death, the rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Holy Archdiocese of Australia, to work for the unity and peace of the local Church and, of course, to remain humble and never seek perfection in what is human.

It is worth noting that in the Church where the ordination took place, in the historic Parish of St Nicholas, in the "Greek-held" suburb of Marrickville, His Grace Bishop Christodoulos had served for eight and a half years. Emotionally laden during his address, he stressed that the Parish of St Nicholas holds a special place in his heart, as he only received joys during his time there. "In the church where we are today, I received holy Baptism from the sanctified hands of Fr Nektarios Zorbalas.

Here, I became an Orthodox Christian. This is where I took my first steps in life and faith. Here, my parents came into the communion of marriage. St Nicholas invited me to serve him, here. Everything began for me from here and today, my new path in the Church begins, again, from here."

His Grace expressed the boundless love for the people with whom he collaborated in the Church of St Nicholas, as well as for all his parishioners. Furthermore, he mentioned in detail and fervently thanked the people who, in the course of his life, deepened his love for God and guided him spiritually during his priestly journey.

Addressing Archbishop Makarios with filial love, the newly ordained Bishop noted with emotion: "By ministering to Orthodoxy in the Antipodes and serving at your side, I have discovered in you, Your Eminence, that the Bishop becomes a living image of life in Christ. You have taught me that the Bishop is not a teacher of theoretical truth, but a bearer of a mindset and ethos that transforms the present into a noetic relay race towards the Kingdom of Heaven. You taught me that the Bishop should remain faithful to the Gospel command: 'do not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.' I pray to all-merciful God to adorn me with the compassionate humanity that is in you; a compassionate humanity that involves selflessness, sacrifice and constant identification with the other as a being in the image of God."

Finally, His Grace Bishop Christodoulos expressed his gratitude to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Holy and Sacred Synod for the honour bestowed upon him to enter the venerable ranks of the Hierarchs of the Ecumenical Throne. "I take on a sacred commitment from today until my last breath, to defend the rights of the Church of the first throne in Constantinople – our Ecumenical Patriarchate," he pledged.

It is noted that during the ordination service, also present with the Archbishop of Australia were His Eminence Metropolitan Ezekiel of Dervis, their Graces Bishop Iakovos of Miletoupolis, Emilianos of Meloa, Elpidios of Kyaneon, Silouan of Sinope and Kyriakos of Sozopolis, who, along with the holy clergy and the pious faithful who were present in the church, loudly called out, "Worthy" to the new Bishop of Magnesia and fervently wished him a good and fruitful hierarchical ministry.






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