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The commencement of Federal Parliament by Archbishop Makarios of Australia is an historic milestone



The Commencement of Australian Federal Parliament was inaugurated by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia in the Church of St Nicholas in Canberra. This was of utmost importance for Australian society, but also for the Greek community and the Holy Archdiocese of Australia since, for the first time in the history of the fifth continent, the Greek Archbishop, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Oceania, was called to bless and announce the beginning of such an important institutional event.

Present were the Prime Minister of Australia Mr Scott Morrison, the leader of the Federal Opposition, Mr Anthony Albanese, Senators, MPs, Ministers of the Federal Government, staff of the Australian Parliament, while from the ecclesiastical side, present were the Archiepiscopal Vicar of Canberra, His Grace Bishop Bartholomew of Charioupolis, the Archiepiscopal Vicar of Adelaide, His Grace Bishop Silouan of Sinope, the Chancellor of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Christophoros Krikelis, as well as the Catholic Archbishop of

Canberra, His Grace Christopher Prowse and the Anglican Bishop of Canberra, the Right Reverend Mark Short. In addition to the politicians, the ceremony was attended by the Ambassador of Greece to Australia, Mr George Papakostas, and the President of the Greek Community of Canberra, Mr John Loukadellis.

During his address, His Eminence having welcomed Mr Morrison and Mr Albanese, as well as the Senators and the members and staff of Federal Parliament, described the value the message of St Paul acquires for modern society and especially for the political world, namely that all human beings are called to be “a temple of the living God” (2Cor 6:16-18; 7:1), while he pointed out that the essential role of Christianity in the world, and of religion in general, lies in the fact that it puts as primary concern not only the ‘well-being’ of the human person but also, the ‘eternal well-being’ of humanity.

His Eminence could not omit making reference to the issue of the environment, which has been at the forefront of the concern of the Orthodox Church for many decades. He reminded that, already in 1997, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew had broadened the understanding of sin to include not only the harm caused by human beings against other human beings, but equally and importantly, humanity’s harm against the created world: the animals, the trees, the air, the earth and water. It is for this reason, as His Eminence emphasised, that His All-Holiness has long placed the development of ecological programs at the forefront of his agenda.

Finally, addressing the leaders and members of Parliament, who in the midst of many challenges are called upon to play a key role in the future of Australia, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios urged them to promote solidarity and dialogue in the performance of their responsibly-laden duties, in order to bring about positive change both for all Australians and the global community more broadly.

After the service, all those present personally greeted Archbishop Makarios expressing their gratitude and congratulations for the event, meanwhile His Eminence managed to have a short conversation with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Federal Opposition. Finally, it is worth noting that the event generated great interest by journalists and had much coverage in the Australian social media.

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