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Doxology for the beginning of the new Academic Year for St Andrew’s Theological College in Sydney



The wish of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia to the students of St Andrew’s Theological College in Sydney, on the occasion of the beginning of the new academic year, was that the transforming experience of Theology becomes a personal experience for everyone.

On Thursday morning, 17 February, the College students, including 20 first-year students who are about to embark on their spiritual “journey” in Theology, gathered at the Church of St Nicholas in Marrickville, Sydney, for the customary Doxology service to mark the beginning of the academic year, officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios, who is also the Dean of the Theological College.

Also present at the service were His Eminence Seraphim of Sevasteia, their Graces Bishop Iakovos of Miletoupolis and Bartholomew of Charioupolis, clergy from Sydney, the College Sub-Dean, Dr Philip Kariatlis, as well as other Faculty members, staff and graduates.

At the end of the Doxology, Archbishop Makarios addressed the students with warm paternal words, first describing to them the sacred mission that the Theological College of St Andrew's has been serving for 36 years. He then urged the young people who had decided to devote themselves to the study of theology at a tertiary level, to remain steadfastly committed to Christ during their studies, which will grant them immeasurable spiritual joy. "You will understand that Theology is precisely this longing to seek Christ; to meet our Lord and Saviour, and in this way, to entrust our entire life to Him," he stressed among other things.

The ultimate aim is to achieve "the good change" (cf. Ps.77:10) as His Eminence pointed out, who explained: "When we struggle and long to place Christ before and at the centre of our lives, then we are shaped in such a way so as to become like Christ; and more than to become like Him; to become one with Him." However, in this process of transformation, man is called to be open and receptive to Christ, as the Archbishop clarified, referring to the example of the clay and the candle as presented by St Maximus the Confessor: "God is the Sun of righteousness, Who scatters the rays of His goodness to all. If the soul is not receptive then instead of a person achieving a "good change", he becomes harder, like the clay that hardens when exposed to the sun's heat. If the soul is receptive, then a person becomes more sensitive and his heart softens like a candle when warmed by the sun."

"The transformation of a person and the subsequent entry of Christ in him, is the true goal of Theology", His Eminence concluded adding that "this is the existential dimension of Theology that we try to inspire in our students here at St Andrew's Theological College."

In closing, he paternally urged the College students to dedicate themselves to their studies, setting as their priority in the coming years, not the acquisition of dry knowledge but the experience of the spiritual life. "Love prayer more than the internet," he urged and continued, "Stay longer in the library than in cafes; aim for spiritual discussions with your classmates, not secular ones; enjoy our precious patristic teachings more than any other reading, and eagerly participate in the worship services of our Church. Do all that is needed to acquire an ecclesiastical ethos and mindset."

The Archbishop then attended the speeches that took place in the official reception hall of the Theological College, to mark the beginning of classes.















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