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Archbishop Makarios of Australia: “Healthy love is not only addressed to God, but also to our neighbour”



In a climate of deep emotion, The Monastic Tonsure of Novice Monk Kosmas Magdalopoulos took place on Friday, May 27, officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, in the Holy Monastery of Panagia Pantanassα, in Mangrove Creek, New South Wales.

This is the first monastic tonsure performed by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia in the Holy Monastery, which intensified his joy and emotion, while, as he affirmed, it strengthened the spiritual ties that connect him with this blessed monastery of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia.

Addressing the young monk, who was renamed Maximos in honor of St. Maximos the Confessor, with paternal words, His Eminence urged him to live a monastic life full of love and respect for his neighbour. Besides this, speaking of love, His Eminence could not miss the reference to the exceptional Philokalia work “The 400 chapters on love”, written by the Saint whose name the new monk bears.

Presenting and briefly analysing the content of the work, Archbishop Makarios, first distinguished that two seem to be the deepest and most substantial reasons that prompted Saint Maximos to collect and compile these chapters on the subject. The first is “to speak and admonish oneself first, on the occasion of the envy and hatred he once received from other monks,” he explained, in an attempt, as he pointed out, “to face spiritually this great temptation of vengeance.”

The second reason is “that in life according to God, ascesis, fasting, wisdom prevail, but above all, love and respect for one’s neighbour. “Something that is sometimes ignored by many, who wrongly separate the love of God from that of his neighbour,” His Eminence remarked and added: “This is how they transform love into a religious ethical obligation.

Healthy love is not only directed to God, but also extends to the face of the neighbor […] After all, the characteristic of Christians is love and, in fact, not the love between relatives and friends, but that which extends beyond human justice and reason and reaches even to enemies. “

Further analysing the theological content of the work of Saint Maximos, His Eminence focused on the connection of speech – especially the speech of judgement – within human relations. “Saint Maximos the Confessor is against the many and hollow reasons and cauterizes the judgement against his neighbor”, His Eminence underlined and then quoted a loving supplication of the Saint to every human being: “Do not surrender your hearing to the words of one who overspeaks, neither surrender your own words to the hearing of an accuser, speaking or listening with pleasure words against your neighbour, so that you do not lose the divine love and find yourself completely estranged from eternal life “.

In this supplication by Saint Maximos, it is clear that the Saint intends to pay attention not only to speech but also to hearing, since, as His Eminence distinguished, “reproach is a passion that demobilises all the strengths of man, in order to achieve the abolition of the neighbour”.

Having presented the life of Saint Maximos the Confessor, as well as a sufficient sample of His spirituality and monastic quality, the Archbishop urged the young monk to try to embrace and experience the theology of the Saint, and to accept to make His teaching a part of his life and daily life.

Finally, His Eminence reserved praise for the monastic brotherhood of Panagia Pantanassa and their Abbot, Very Rev. Father Eusebius Archimandrite of the Ecumenical Throne, while he also made special reference to the monastic



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