

The Archbishop of Australia at the celebration of 50 years of priesthood of Protopresbyter Father Chris Triantafyllou



On Sunday the 9th of October, the feastday of St James the Apostle, the son of Alphaeus, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia officiated at the Church of All Saints in Belmore, Sydney, participating in the official celebration for the 50-year anniversary of priesthood of Protopresbyter Father Chris Triantafyllou, Rector of the Parish.

Fr Chris warmly welcomed his Shepherd and proceeded to give a brief recount of his personal priestly journey, which began almost three and a half years after his arrival in Australia. It was January 1969 when he arrived in Sydney as an immigrant and, a few days later at his first church service at St Sophia, Paddington, came into contact with members of the Christian Society. He decided to participate in the Society meetings, which were held at the Cathedral of the Annunciation of the Theotokos and there met two persons who would play a decisive role in his journey: the one became his wife and Presvytera, Sevasti, and the other, Fr John Kapetas, who encouraged him to teach in the Greek schools operating under the local

Church.

The following year, he was blessed to meet Elder Fr Stephanos Pantanassiotis, then Chancellor of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia, who invited him to take up the duties of Secretary in the Holy Archdiocese. The time for his entry into the priesthood was fast approaching. It was July 1972. He could not deny the invitation to the calling by the late Archbishop Ezekiel. Thus, after being ordained a Deacon and Presbyter, he began his ministry at the Cathedral with Fr Stephanos. A year later, he was assigned to the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Redfern and from March 1976 until today, he has dedicated himself to the ministry of the dynamic Parish - Community of Belmore.

During his moving recollection, Fr Chris remembered with gratitude the late Archbishops Ezekiel and Stylianos and also thanked all those who contributed to his journey including His Eminence Metropolitan Panteleimon of Vryoula, then Assistant Bishop of Theoupolis, who ordained him, His Eminence Metropolitan Seraphim of Sevasteia, with whom he had a close working relationship for many years and, of course, Elder Stephanos Pantanassiotis who, as he confessed, was a valuable teacher for him - teaching him with his love, ethos and by his example.

With emotion, he also thanked his Presvytera and all his family for the sacrificial support they offered him, as well as the clergy, the Board of Directors and the people of the Belmore Parish - Community. Finally, he warmly thanked His Eminence Archbishop Makarios for the honour of his presence in the celebration of his personal anniversary.

In his address, His Eminence emphasised both the long-term contribution and the ecclesiastical ethos of Fr Chris, observing that sometimes the clergy, or even the Bishops and Archbishops, during the course of their life and ministry become swept away by being in a position of spiritual authority. This did not happen with Fr Chris, as he pointed out, acknowledging that he has served the local Church with great devotion, with deep spirituality and with an ecclesiastical ethos and mindset. Furthermore, he added that he considers it a great blessing for his Archiepiscopal ministry that he elevated him to the rank of Protopresbyter, awarding him the highest rank for a married clergyman, and he wholeheartedly wished that God would grant him many more years to serve the Holy Archdiocese of Australia. He also did not fail to express his gratitude to his predecessors, the Archbishops, as well as to all those who supported Fr Chris throughout the course of his ministry, foremost his Presvytera Sevasti, their children and grandchildren.

Subsequently, the Archbishop analysed the Gospel passage of the day regarding

the miracle of the resurrection of the widow's son in Nain. His Eminence first emphasised that Christ is head of both life and death and made the distinction that the Orthodox Church, unlike what most of the other religions advocate, preaches the resurrection not only of the souls but of the souls and bodies. He stressed that, "When we talk about resurrection in the Orthodox Church, we are essentially talking about the reunification of the body with the soul. Throughout his journey, a person is a psychosomatic being" he explained, "everything we do in our lives has both a physical and mental impact. That is why when someone is afraid – and fear is a mental function – they develop a rapid heart rate, which is a reaction of the physical body.

This, therefore, shows the unity that exists between body and soul. When death comes, it tears this unity apart. And the body remains in what it was composed of and the soul passes into eternity. So, when Christ speaks of resurrection," he concluded, "He is not speaking about a process where the souls will leave one place and go to another. But, rather, He is speaking about the reunification of the body and soul. This event of the resurrection is something that we will all experience."

It is noted that among the large congregation at All Saints was the newly appointed Consul General of Greece in Sydney, Mr Yannis Mallikourtis, who recently assumed his new duties. Archbishop Makarios welcomed the new Consul General in church and wished him strength and a good ministry, for the glory of the Hellenic Nation and the Faith. Mr Mallikourtis, giving a short greeting, pledged before the people that he and his colleagues at the Greek Consulate are willing to make every possible effort for the best possible service to the community.

After the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, a festive meal was served in the hall of the Parish-Community.



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