

‘Anatolia - Light of the East’: The Archdiocesan District of Adelaide unveils its new Cathedral project



This year marks the 100-year anniversary of the Asia Minor catastrophe – an event that led to the extermination by the Turks of millions of Armenians, Pontian and Asia Minor Greeks, and Assyrians. With the blessing and inspiration of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia and under the guidance of the local Archepiscopal Vicar for the District of Adelaide, His Grace Bishop Silouan of Sinope, the Central Philoptochos of the Archdiocesan District of Adelaide decided earlier this year to honour the memory of the fallen by organising a cultural evening entitled Anatolia – Light of the East. This event would showcase the Byzantine culture of Asia Minor in a 100-year memorial dinner on the evening Sunday 2nd of October.

By Divine Providence, in the months since the evening was first scheduled, other doors were opening for the District of Adelaide. For historical reasons, the District of Adelaide has never had a permanent place to call its headquarters in Adelaide – the only District of the Archdiocese to be thus deprived. The current location of St Panteleimon in Glenelg North evolved as a temporary solution, but it has always been a compromise that was manifestly inadequate due both to its small size and its non-central location. Thus, from the start of his tenure in October 2019, His Grace Bishop Silouan had made it a priority to find suitable home for the District from which his vicarial oversight could be more effectively administered, and to better meet the spiritual needs of the people whom he has been blessed and entrusted to serve. By God’s Grace, it seems that this search had come to an end in recent months, with the successful purchase of a church and property in Bowden that is set to become the new Archdiocesan Cathedral for the District of Adelaide. So it was that this cultural evening came to double as an opportunity to publicly present the plans for the new Cathedral.

The evening was conveniently hosted in the Community Hall of the Holy Monastery of St Nectarios, Croydon Park. The proceedings were opened with prayer by His Grace, which was followed by an opening song-and-dance performance by the Pontian Brotherhood of SA. It was extremely touching to have the Pontians

perform, not only for their high standard of performance, but also as they are the living descendants and principal heirs of the Pontian Byzantine tradition, and they work hard to honour the memory of their fallen ancestors by keeping their culture of song and dance alive.

The Pontians were followed by the women's choir of the Archdiocesan District of Adelaide, accompanied by some of the men of the St John of Damascus Choir. The ladies gave an exceptional performance of a number of traditional Asia Minor songs that really set the tone for the evening as dinner was served.

At the half-way mark of dinner, His Grace presented what was to be the focal point of the evening. His Grace set out (in Greek and English) his vision for the Church, the importance of pastoral oversight, and the necessity for having a Cathedral and offices that were both fit and worthy to meet this task. This culminated in a short video clip showcasing the newly-purchased Cathedral - highlighting the site, its location and its proximity to the CBD. The new site in Bowden is much more central and only 2.7km from the CBD, and comes with an existing mid-sized, heritage-listed church building on the property that is up to five times the capacity of the existing church at Glenelg North. As with any inner-city site, there are some challenges but great potential. The video also highlighted some exciting concept drawings for the future development of the site that highlight this potential. The church itself was owned by Anglicare SA, and started life as a philanthropic outreach parish to the people of the local district - a fitting legacy that the District of Adelaide will be keen to honour and expand.

After the dinner (which was widely regarded as exceptional both for its quality and its quantity), the attendees were treated to further singing performances from the St John of Damascus Choir and the women's choir, chanting a mix of Byzantine Church hymns and more traditional hymns from Asia Minor while dessert was being served.

As the evening drew to a close, His Grace came for a final time for closing remarks and a prayer. He had the distinct honour of being able to announce a final fundraising tally for the evening of \$35,000 (a figure which the tally room was later able to revise upward to just over \$40,000) - a fantastic result and a great bonus for the new Cathedral, and a fitting tribute - both to the tireless efforts of the dozens of volunteers who were involved in making the evening happen, and also to the generosity of the 300 attendees who came to support the event and the Archdiocese.

Overall, by the grace of God, through the prayers of our shepherd and primate

Archbishop Makarios, and with the support of all the parishes of the District of Adelaide, the evening was a huge success. May God grant the District of Adelaide





Image not found or type unknown



vema.com.au