

The Celebration of the National Anniversary of “OXI” (NO!) Day in Sydney



The National Anniversary of the 28th of October, 1940, was celebrated early in Sydney on Sunday, 23rd of October, with splendour and in an emotionally moving atmosphere.

In the morning, at the Holy Cathedral of the Annunciation of the Theotokos, on the commemoration of the feastday of St James (Iakovos), the Brother of our Lord, a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated and presided over by His Eminence Metropolitan Andrew of the Forty Churches and with concelebrants Their Graces Bishop Iakovos of Miletoupolis, who was celebrating his nameday, Bishop Bartholomew of Charioupolis, as well as the Chancellor of the Holy Archdiocese and Archimandrite of the Ecumenical Throne, Very Reverend Father Christophoros Krikelis.

His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia was also present and at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy addressed fraternal and heartfelt words to the Metropolitan of the Forty Churches, in view of his imminent departure from Sydney and return to the sacred centre of Orthodoxy: “Today’s Divine Liturgy, celebrated by His Eminence Andrew, an elect Hierarch of our Ecumenical Patriarchate, is the seal of his blessed and peaceful visit here to the fifth continent on the occasion of the convening of the first national clergy synaxis, at which he was a speaker and the Patriarch’s representative. “We thank you very much for your presence all these days, Your Eminence, and we pray for God to grant you many and blessed years to continue your ministry, to continue your witness, which is the testimony of Christ, the testimony of the Church and – since you, like me, are spiritual children of our Patriarch – the testimony of Patriarch Bartholomew the Great.”

His Eminence Makarios also expressed the hope that the presence of the Metropolitan of the Forty Churches in Australia was spiritually beneficial for him, while assuring him that this was the case for the clergy and the people of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia who met and communicated with him. Specifically, the Archbishop said, “I want to believe that you are leaving here, having obtained the

best impressions from an Archdiocese that is pulsating with love and enthusiasm and with faith and hope for the future. I want to believe that in your luggage you are taking the fragrant aroma of faith and dedication of all our people, both to our Ecumenical Patriarch and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as well as to the person that three years ago the Ecumenical Patriarchate elected to undertake the steering of this great eparchy of the Ecumenical Throne. And know that during your stay with us, we also received the gifts of your own heart, which are your humility, your prudence, your theological words, the love you showed from the first moment you set foot on the sacred soil of the fifth continent. We thank you very much and ask that you convey to our Ecumenical Patriarchate and our Ecumenical Patriarch what you saw, what you heard, what your hands touched and above all to convey our respect, our reverence, our love and our dedication”.

In his response, His Eminence Andrew assured the Archbishop that he is leaving Australia with very good feelings and memories, filled with the love he received during his stay. “I am certain, and the Mother Church is also certain”, he pointed out, “that in this distant eparchy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in the Archdiocese of Australia, you are carrying out – personally and collectively – God-pleasing work for the glory of God, for the glory of the Church, for the benefit of the people and for the establishment of peace and the fellowship of peoples in this multicultural nation”. “I will convey to His All-Holiness, not only as a matter of duty but also from my own personal need”, he added, addressing the congregation, “all that I have experienced here – your love, your respect for the Church, your bond in Christ with the Archbishop, the Bishops and the reverend Clergy, but also the bond in Christ between you”. In closing, the Metropolitan of the Forty Churches said with emotion that, “a part of my heart has remained here, with you, and I hope that God allows for us to meet again in the future”.

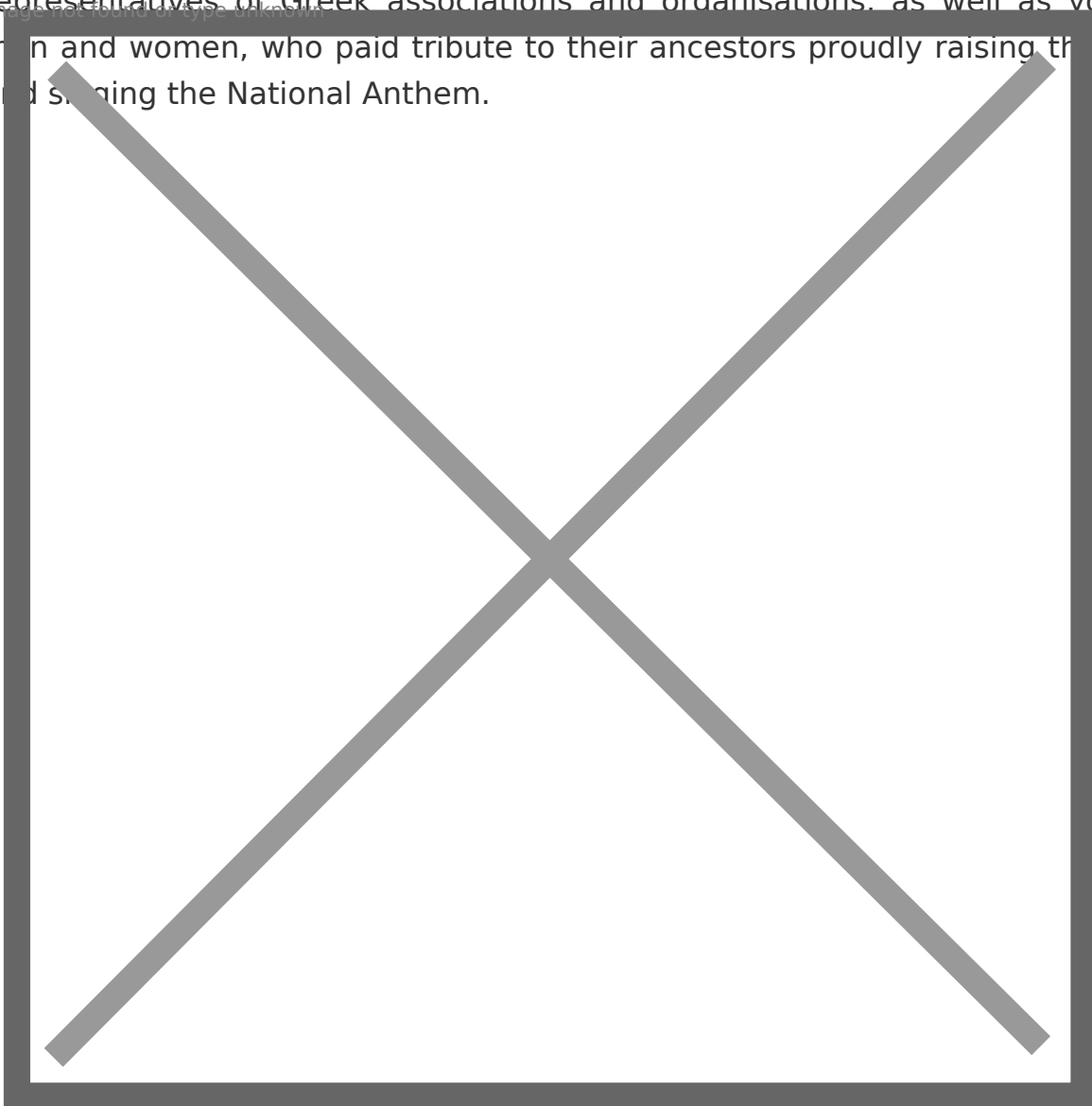
Afterwards, the two hierarchs conveyed their heartfelt fraternal wishes to Bishop Iakovos, who was celebrating his nameday, expressing their appreciation to him. “I thank him for what he offers to our local Church with a lot of love, with a lot of humility and, above all, with a spirit of unity”, emphasised His Eminence Makarios while Metropolitan Andrew of the Forty Churches spoke of a humble and honest person, with a lot of faith and love for God and people.

After the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, the official Doxology service took place for the National Anniversary of “OXI” (NO!) Day, officiated by His Eminence Andrew and this was followed, at the cenotaph located in the forecourt of the Cathedral, by a memorial service and the laying of wreaths in memory of the heroes who fought and sacrificed themselves in the defence of their faith and their homeland during

the era of the 1940's.

In his short message, His Eminence Andrew stressed that "the struggles of our nation must be an example for us to follow in an age where many things are in question", adding that, "just as in those years, fascism threatened the world, so today, our world is often threatened by corresponding dangers". "We must consolidate the peace in Christ, the love and fellowship of the peoples", he pointed out, "firstly, because this is what is commanded of us by the Lord and our Orthodox faith and, secondly, because we are law-abiding and sober people, members of a privileged state".

Present at the double celebration for the local Church and Hellenism were the Consul General of Greece in Sydney, Mr Yannis Mallikourtis, presidents and representatives of Greek associations and organisations, as well as young Greek men and women, who paid tribute to their ancestors proudly raising the Greek flag and singing the National Anthem.







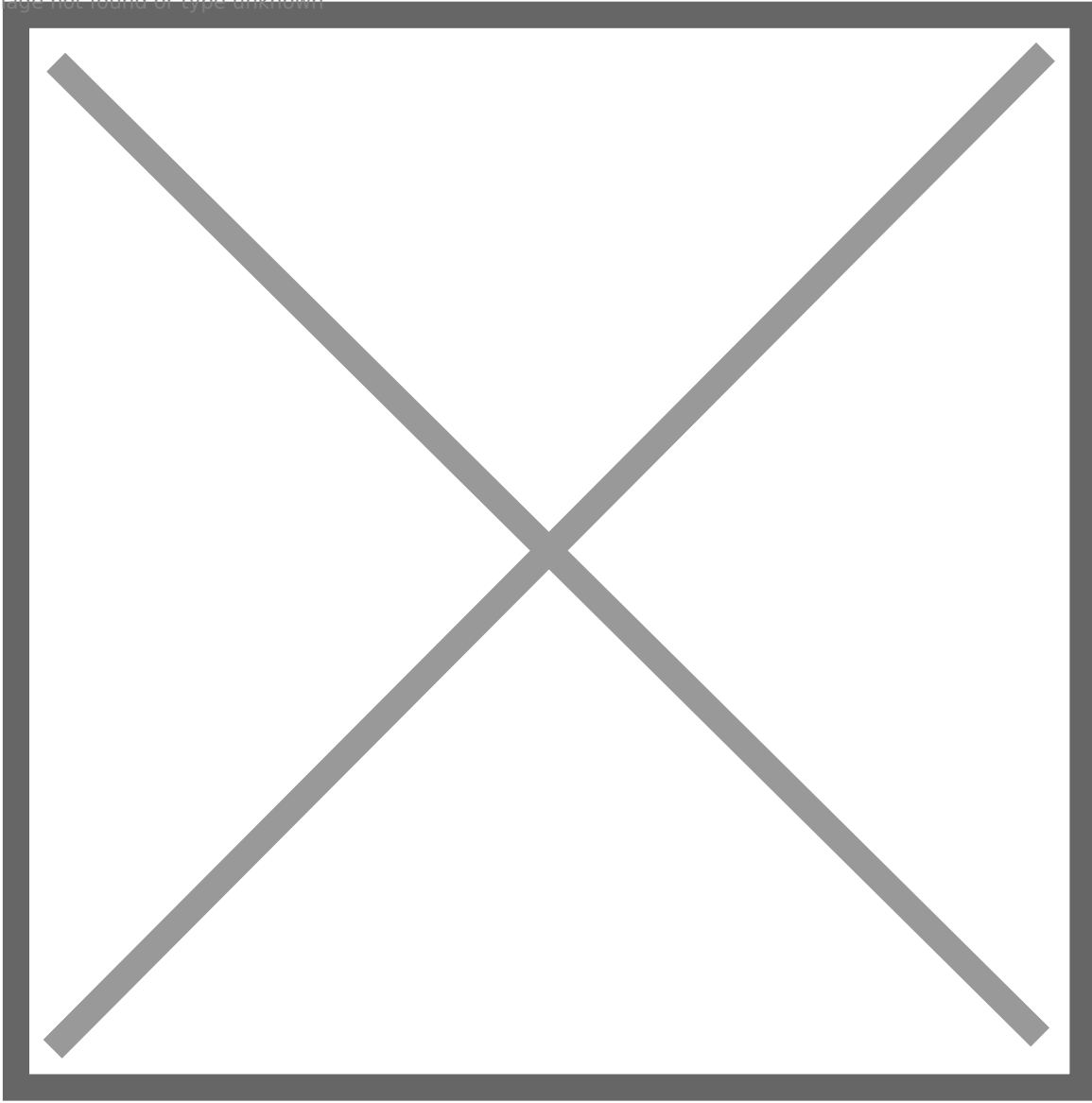






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