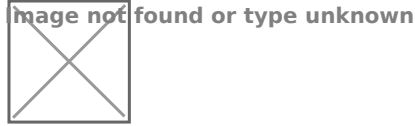


19/01/2023

Tribute to His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia on the occasion of His Patronal Feast Day



**On the 19th day of January 2023
Fr Christophoros Krikelis
Archimandrite of the Ecumenical Throne
Chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia**

On the feast day today of St Makarios the Great, we take this opportunity, on behalf of all the faithful of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia, to wholeheartedly wish our Chief Shepherd in Christ, our Spiritual Father and revered Archbishop all blessings from above on the occasion of his patronal feast day. It is not only with sentiments of joy, but also and most importantly with deep and ardent feelings of gratitude that we seek to express, to His Eminence our Archbishop Makarios of Australia, our warmest and heartfelt wishes for the gift of his light-filled and Spirit-imbued leadership to the faithful here in the Antipodes; a leadership characterised, from the very first moment of his arrival, by extraordinary faithfulness to his high calling and vocation; namely, unflinching dedication and profound vigilance for “the building up of the Church” (1Cor 14:12) and her unity.

Perhaps it is not extraneous on this important feast day, where we remember our Archbishop and Father in Christ, to briefly be reminded of the immense significance of the Bishop’s role within the life of the Church; a role pre-eminently focused upon cultivating and strengthening, on a daily basis, unity, and concord; unanimity and fellowship. The episcopal ministry within the life of the Church is responsible for gathering the faithful together as the one body of Christ; and in so doing, not only do they become one with Christ, but also with one another. And this is most perfectly realised in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, over which the Bishop presides, and where we, the faithful, are united so intimately together with one another that we are able to glorify and praise our loving Lord with “one mouth and one heart [έν ένι στόματι και μιᾷ καρδίᾳ]”; moreover, we also become united, in this way, to Christ our Saviour as well. As chief celebrant of the Holy Eucharist for the faithful here in Australia, it is Archbishop Makarios who makes this gift of unity

and κοινωνία a reality.

Indeed, as the one pre-eminently responsible for gathering the faithful into unity and solidarity with Christ, especially through the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, it was so heartening to have experienced this most intimate fellowship, on a national level, earlier last year in October, within the context of the Pan-Australian Clergy Synaxis—an event envisioned and engendered by our Archbishop who was responsible for gathering all the Bishops and clergy from all around Australia, together with the faithful—an unprecedented event for the life of our Holy Archdiocese—so that, as ‘one body’ we could experience the oneness and unanimity that St Paul spoke about in his letter to the Corinthians: “we who are many are one body, for one partake of the one bread” (1Cor 10:17). Well aware of the sublime calling to which the Church has called him, our Archbishop brought the faithful together “in one place [ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό]” (Acts 2:1) and actualised the gift of adamantine κοινωνία around the Holy Altar of Christ. This was a most amazing and awe-inspiring blessing that I am certain will remain indelibly marked in our hearts and minds throughout our life. What a wonderful gift bestowed by our Archbishop to the Church here in Australia! And for this we express our most ardent thanksgiving and gladness for this most resplendent bestowal beyond compare. For this God-given gift of unity together with so much more— as for example, the Bishop’s charism to preserve the identity and integrity of the apostolic faith, charged with “rightly explaining the word of truth [ὀρθοτομοῦντα τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας]” (2Tim 2:2)” and “contend[ing] for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints [ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι τῇ ἅπαξ παραδοθείσῃ τοῖς ἁγίοις πίστει]” (Jude 3); also to be the visible sign of unity with other Orthodox Churches throughout the world and our representative, through his membership on the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, of which he was a representative already in his first year tenure as Archbishop (this was a first for our Archdiocese here in Australia)—we pause to give thanks and glory, first and foremost, to our gracious God for all these boundless gifts bestowed upon us through His Eminence Archbishop Makarios. We pray that our loving God will continue to grant our genuine Father and Shepherd in Christ many blessed years in his difficult yet sacred mission in the service of Christ so that He may continue to guide the Church, strengthen the faith, unite us in Christ, rightly teach the Word of truth, and grant the peace, the joy and presence of our Lord here in the Antipodes.

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