

The Australian Prime Minister to His Eminence Archbishop Makarios: “I came to greet my friend”



His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, looking towards the future, where the first critical milestone is the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia (1924-2024) celebrated his Patronal Feast Day. The celebrations culminated on the evening of Thursday, 19 January 2023, with a celebratory dinner held at Le Montage function hall in Sydney, of which the proceeds will go towards the renovation of the Holy Cathedral of the Annunciation of Our Lady, Redfern. In the joyful atmosphere of the evening, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios presented the progress of the ambitious projects launched by the Holy Archdiocese, while he also gave rise for the preparation of the festive celebrations of the Centennial Anniversary of the local Church next year.

About 1,500 guests honoured the Archbishop with their presence, including Hierarchs and distinguished representatives of Australia’s political leadership, such as ministers and Members of Parliament, Ambassadors and Consuls. Important and absolutely exceptional, however, was the presence of the Prime Minister of Australia, The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP and the Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, who represented the Crown.

The Prime Minister of Australia offered a warm greeting, addressing His Eminence as his “dear friend” and wished him well wholeheartedly, while praising his personality and the work he has done during the last three and a half years at the helm of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia. “I have come to greet my friend,” Mr Albanese was quoted as saying, before referring to the enthusiastic reception His Eminence received when he arrived at Sydney Airport in June 2019.

Among other things, he pointed out the following: “What the Archbishop has found in Australia is a Greek community that constitutes an essential and exuberant part of this “blessed country”. As I have said elsewhere, Australia without its Greek Community is simply something we cannot imagine. In turn, the Greek Orthodox Community has found in the person of the Archbishop a charismatic shepherd and

a distinguished learned cleric.

Orthodoxy in Australia is being reborn. Like his Patron Saint, Saint Makarios the Egyptian, the Archbishop is a man of vast knowledge and devotion to both God and the welfare of people. He exudes humility, service, kindness and concern for others, virtues that are the best that the Orthodox Faith has to offer. I remember what the Archbishop said when he arrived here, which touched us all: “from today until the end of my life I belong to Australia”.

The Prime Minister of Australia concluded his speech by referring to a historic event of the Orthodox Church in Australia, the blessing of the beginning of the work of the Federal Parliament for the parliamentary year 2022, held for the first time in a Greek Orthodox Church, at the Holy Church of Saint Nicholas in Canberra. At that Doxology Service, he had read a passage from the 1st Letter to the Corinthians of the Apostle Paul: “Love is patient, it is kind. Love... does not rejoice in injustice, but praises the truth, always endures, always believes, always hopes, always endures. Love never fails.” Recalling this fact and repeating the words of the Apostle Paul, Mr. Albanese finally emphasised that “love, therefore, it is what holds this community together and love is what holds you together with your extraordinary leader, Archbishop Makarios.”

The celebratory event, in which Protopresbyter of the Ecumenical Throne Fr. Peter Mavrommatis conducted the evening as Master of Ceremonies, began with the National Anthems of Greece and Australia, which were sung by the choir of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society of Sydney. During the evening, traditional Greek dances were presented by young dance groups of the Greek community, while at the end His Eminence Archbishop Makarios awarded medals of “The Order of the Christ-loving” to certain individuals who distinguished themselves for their service and contribution to the local Church.

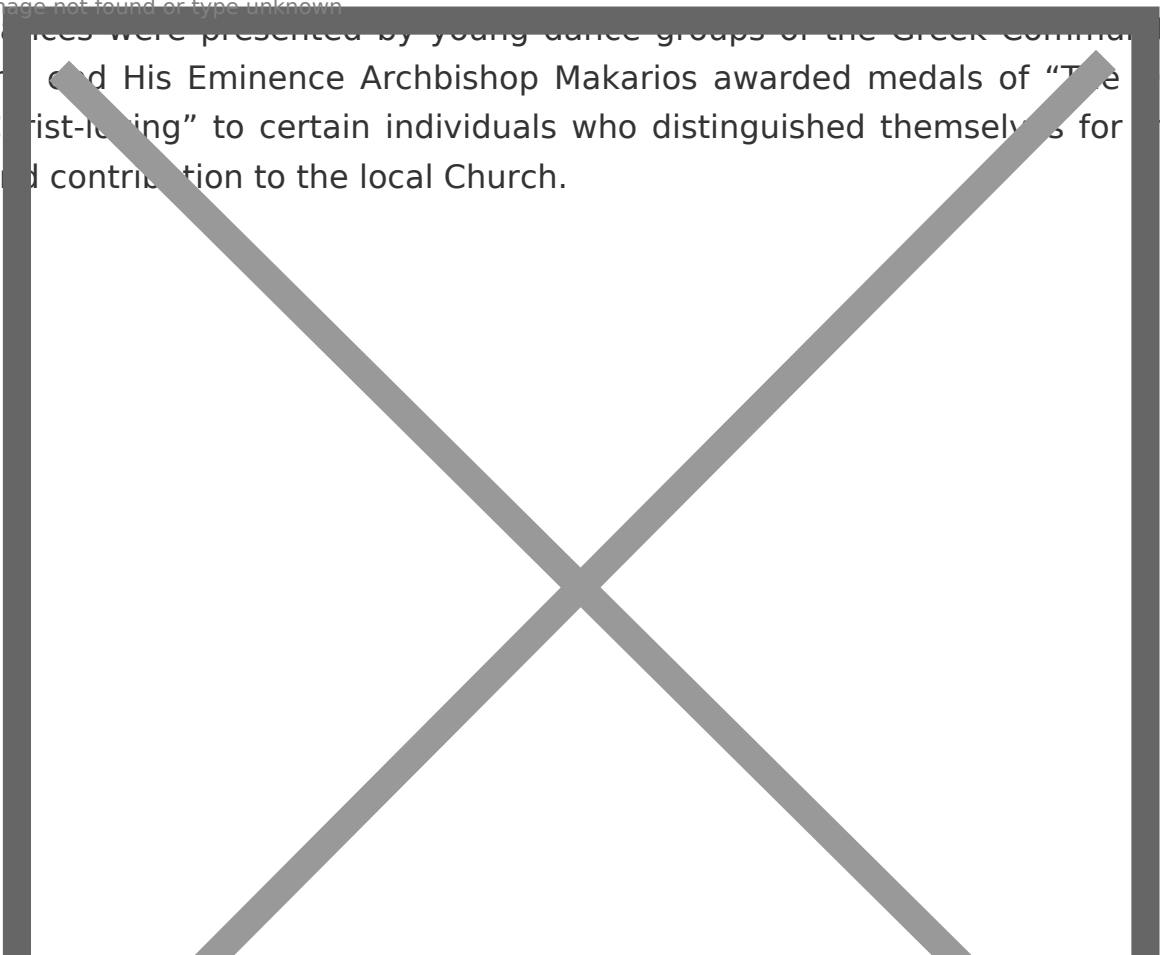




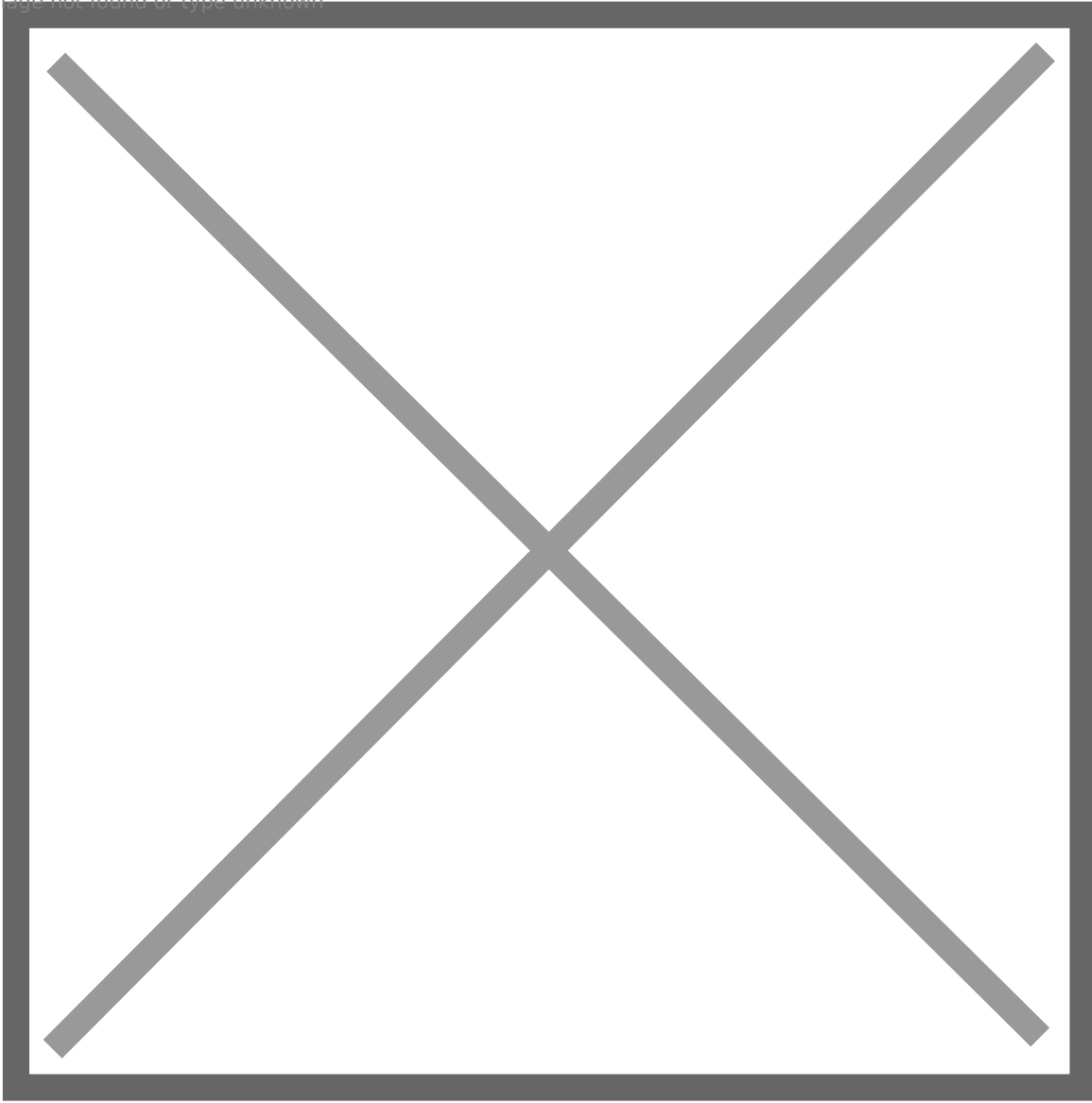








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