

## Message of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia on International Greek Language Day



“Look what a wonderful thing it is to consider that, from the time when Homer spoke until today, we speak, breathe and sing in the same language. And this never stopped, whether we think of Clytemnestra speaking to Agamemnon, or the New Testament, either the hymns of Romanos or Digenis Akritas, or the Cretan Theater and Erotokritos, or a folk song”.

Today, when, together with the memory of our national poet Dionysios Solomos, we also honour the greatness of the Greek Language, let us follow the exhortation of another great poet born by our homeland. George Seferis invites us to turn our attention to a “wonderful thing”, which is not relegated to the distant past that is lost in the “night of the past”, but constitutes “the marrow of our bones”. So condensed and apt, it outlines the essence of what essentially constitutes a primary element of our identity: our Greek Language!

Moreover, the Greek Language has been praised by numerous thinkers and personalities of the spirit throughout the world, because over the centuries it has been – more than any other code of communication and understanding – a vehicle

for the expression of the human spirit and a driving force for the advancement of the sciences. It played an essentially fundamental role in the consolidation of European and world culture, and for this reason it has rightly been characterised as a universal language.

The Greeks of the fifth continent, are blessed to live in a multicultural society where words that trace their origins to the language of our ancestors, ring in our ears every day, we have more reasons to celebrate today with pride. And it is this pride that strengthens us as we shoulder the great burden of responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the precious treasure we have inherited. It is this pride that allows us, despite the objective difficulties and the great distance that separates us from our most beloved homeland, to keep our Greek language alive in the Antipodes and to cultivate it systematically, so that it is also becomes the property of the younger generations of our Greek Community.

Our Holy Archdiocese will not cease to maintain at the forefront of its mission and work, the facilitation of educational structures, which, as modern “arks”, take the lead in saving the language, but also the traditions and all the precious valuables of our faith and our people. And this blessed purpose could not be achieved without the sacrificial ministry of our people – leaders, teachers and volunteers of the educational institutions and the parishes-communities. On the occasion of today’s celebration, I thank all these important people from the bottom of my heart and may our God always bless their works.

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