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## **Young Muslim man baptised as an Orthodox Christian in Victoria, Australia**



On Monday, 13 February 2023, with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, His Grace Bishop Evmenios of Kerasounta, Archiepiscopal Vicar of Northcote in Victoria, welcomed into the Orthodox Church, through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, a young man who comes from the Islamic faith.

The 28-year-old Ahmad Khodr, who after his baptism received the name Angelos, was born and raised in Lebanon. From a young age, but also after his migration to Australia, he was constantly searching for the truth about faith and the true God, without resting on what he had been taught in the early years of his life.

“I never had peace within me. Something was always missing from my life, but I didn’t know what,” he said characteristically and explained: “I believed in God, I grew up in the Islamic faith, but I had the feeling that God was different from the one I had been told about when I was a child. One day I happened to be in front of an orthodox church, I entered and that was it; I already knew that the truth was here, I felt it. And I realised now that it was at my disposal, to embrace it”.

The young man’s next step was to visit the Bookstore of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia, on the premises of the Holy Monastery of “Axion Esti” in Northcote. There he began to read books about the Orthodox faith, while at the same time experiencing the hospitality and kindness of the people he interacted with.

“I wasn’t judged, nor did I feel threatened,” he said of his experience. Afterwards, he met with His Grace Bishop Evmenios, who recommended that he participate in an eight-week catechesis program. He followed the advice of Bishop Evmenios and during the catechesis period he had the opportunity to get to know the Orthodox faith and the contents of Christian teaching more deeply. “I participated in the course and I learned so much, and it all made sense. My heart changed, I met Christ and decided to be baptised,” he pointed out.

At the end of the holy Sacrament of Baptism, His Grace Bishop Evmenios of Kerasounta conveyed to the newly enlightened Angelos the blessings of His

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Emmence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, while he welcomed him on behalf of his Shepherd, all the Bishops and the holy Clergy of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia, pointing out to him that he is now a member of the Orthodox family of the fifth continent.

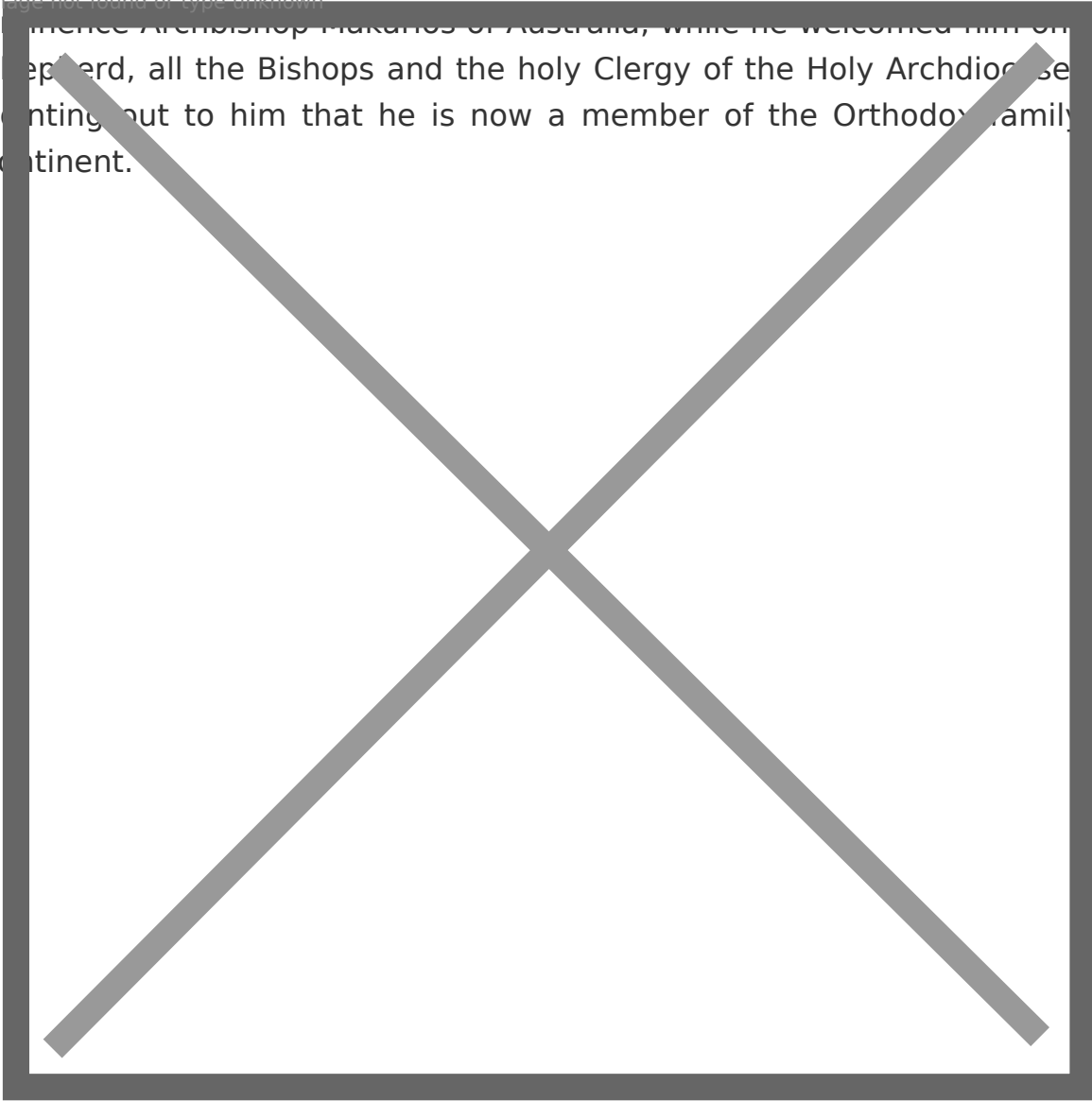








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