

06/03/2023

Public Statement of Disapprobation by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia



It is with a deep sense of sadness that the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia expresses its profound discontent and denounces the extremely distasteful and rather deplorable content aired on The Project, on Tuesday 28th February 2023 relating to Jesus Christ and the contemptuous derision of His suffering and crucifixion on the Cross. Equally inappropriate is the fact that such suggestive and disparaging remarks of a sexual nature were aired at a time in the early evening, 6.30 pm, when children were more than likely to be viewing such material.

It is well known to all who believe in Christ—and indeed have done so throughout the centuries, with countless Christians suffering martyrdom and death for their faith—that the selfless sacrifice of Christ on the Cross is the most striking and compelling reminder of God’s boundless love for the entire world. Whilst formerly a most brutal instrument of torture and defeat, a most scandalous form of death in Roman times, the Cross, through Christ became the most pre-eminent symbol of life, love and freedom, of renewal and eternity. It is for this reason that such scorn and ridicule to more than half of the Australian population for whom Jesus and His sacrifice on the Cross is considered sacrosanct, was both highly offensive and openly disparaging.

At a time when all people seek equal rights and justice—and do so rightly—it is

equally important to be reminded of our common responsibilities, our common efforts and goals, as one human race, which are far more congruous than are our differences. Indeed, it is quite unfortunate, in our day and age, that many are quite happy only to lay claim to their rights but neglect their requisite responsibilities. Everyone is free to believe in Christ or not, but no one has the right to disparage the Christian God, Christian teachings, and sacred symbols—or in fact those of any other religious faith. Rather, it is incumbent upon all of us to foster a culture of peace and solidarity, creating bridges and opportunities for dialogue; promoting ways in which all people can have the right to exercise their religious beliefs in a spirit of amity and fraternity without fear of violence or ridicule. Anything less can only be a negation of our human dignity, nobility and mutual self-respect.

In Sydney, on the 4th day of March, 2023

With fervent prayers

† Archbishop MAKARIOS of Australia

Primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia

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