

Adelaide: Bishop Silouan of Sinope speaks at the new English-speaking Parish of St. Sophrony of Essex



With much joy and gratitude, the new English-speaking parish of St Sophrony located in the eastern suburb of Hectorville, South Australia, welcomed the Archiepiscopal Vicar of Adelaide, His Grace Bishop Silouan of Sinope, to present a talk on the life and teachings of St Sophrony of Essex. A full church of faithful were in attendance, blessed by the presence of numerous clergy from both the Greek Orthodox and Russian Orthodox jurisdictions.

After conveying the heart-felt prayers and blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, His Grace began his talk with an outline of the life of St Sophrony, a truly modern saint who lived through almost the entirety of the twentieth century, before touching upon pertinent topics from the saint's writings such including that of depression (or acedia), the "wisdom" of the world, loving your enemies and suffering

Throughout his talk, Bishop Silouan emphasized the relevance and importance of St Sophrony being a modern saint, for he teaches us through his life and writings that despite the unique challenges and temptations of our current society, sanctification is possible for all; being a Christian is for everyone and holiness is possible for all people within our contemporary world. Moreover, His Grace emphasized, not only is it possible, but if we are to call ourselves Christians, then holiness, sanctity and greatness in Christ is the only way to be. If we are to call ourselves Christians, we must be lead by this reality, "we must be that which we claim to be, children of God, in the communion of the church, growing from strength to strength and holiness to holiness." St Sophrony's life exemplifies a man who realized this and lived it, who "came to the realization that Christ's precept to love God with all one's being was not merely a psychological thing but... has to do with our entire being; the way that we breath, the way that we live, the way that we are."

Barely a month had passed since His Grace Bishop Silouan, with the blessing and prayers of our beloved Archbishop Makarios, conducted the inaugural liturgy within

the church of St Sophrony, the first Greek Orthodox church in Australia that will conduct services entirely in English. This is a great milestone for the Archdiocese, and is another vivid reminder that His Eminence Archbishop Makarios has come to spiritually serve all within Australia regardless of race, language or identity, which is the core of the truly global apostolate of our Ecumenical Patriarchate. As such it was fitting that our Archbishop selected St Sophrony as the patron saint of the new English parish, a saint who personally spoke of overcoming nationalism and the call of the Christian “to pray for all mankind, from beginning to end” in which he said there can be no nationalism. The Orthodox church is the Church for all, the home and hospital for all people who wish to know God and grow to become like Christ, as the saints have shown us is possible through the examples of their lives which reflect the grace of God with such intensity and clarity.

St Sophrony himself embodied an ecumenical existence; born in 1896, he was raised within an Orthodox family in Russia. However, as a young adult he led an intellectual life, educated first in Moscow before moving to Italy, Berlin and then Paris. Realizing the limitations of the intellectual and artistic pursuit of the divine, in 1925 he travelled to Mount Athos where he became a disciple of St Silouan, an uneducated ascetic who became the primary spiritual influence of St Sophrony for the remainder of his life. After decades of monastic life St Sophrony founded the Patriarchal Stavropegic Monastery of St John the Baptist in Essex, England, in 1959, which has attracted monastics and pilgrims from all over the world. St Sophrony reposed on 11 July 1993 and was canonized by the Holy Synod of our Ecumenical Patriarchate on 27 November 2019.

Reflecting the inclusive and hospitable atmosphere that the committee aspires St Sophrony Parish to become, His Grace Bishop Silouan’s talk was followed by a relaxed and enjoyable afternoon tea attended by many of the faithful. This provided a beautiful opportunity for all to participate in Christian fellowship and to encourage this new community to forge bonds as brothers and sisters in Christ, while benefiting from the edifying presence of the clergy and parishioners from parishes and jurisdictions around Adelaide.

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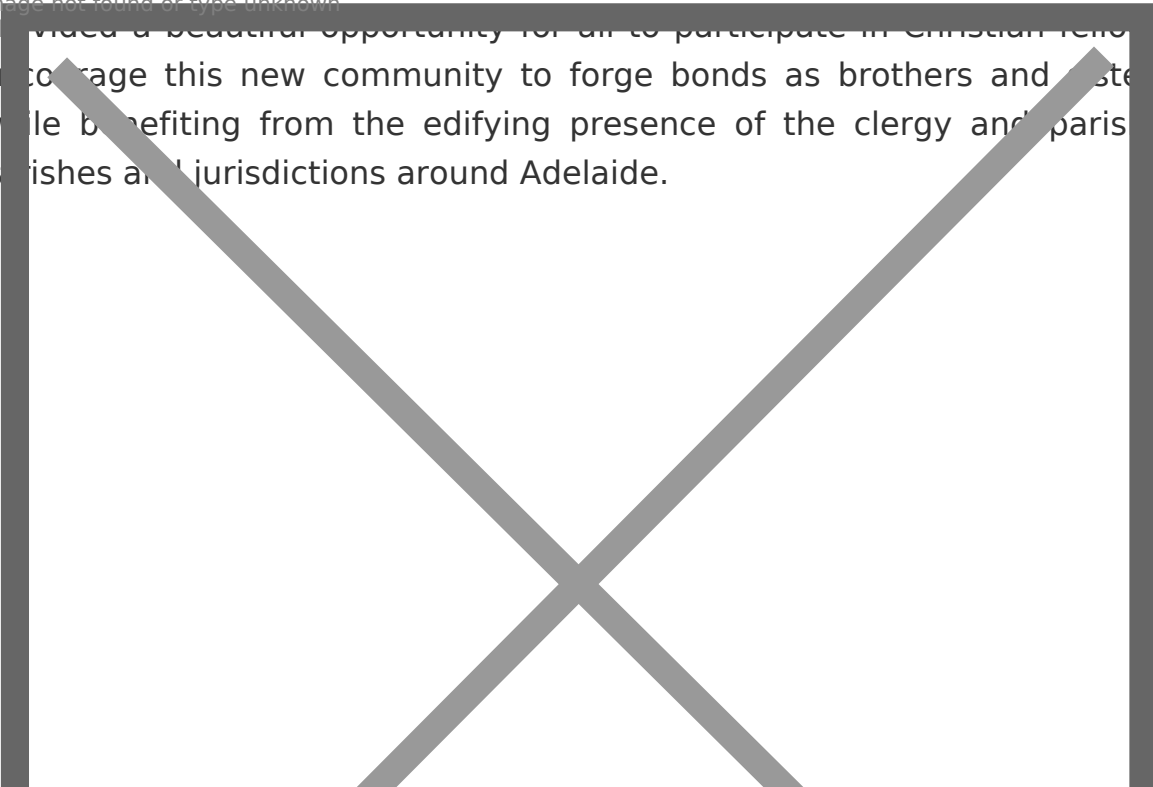
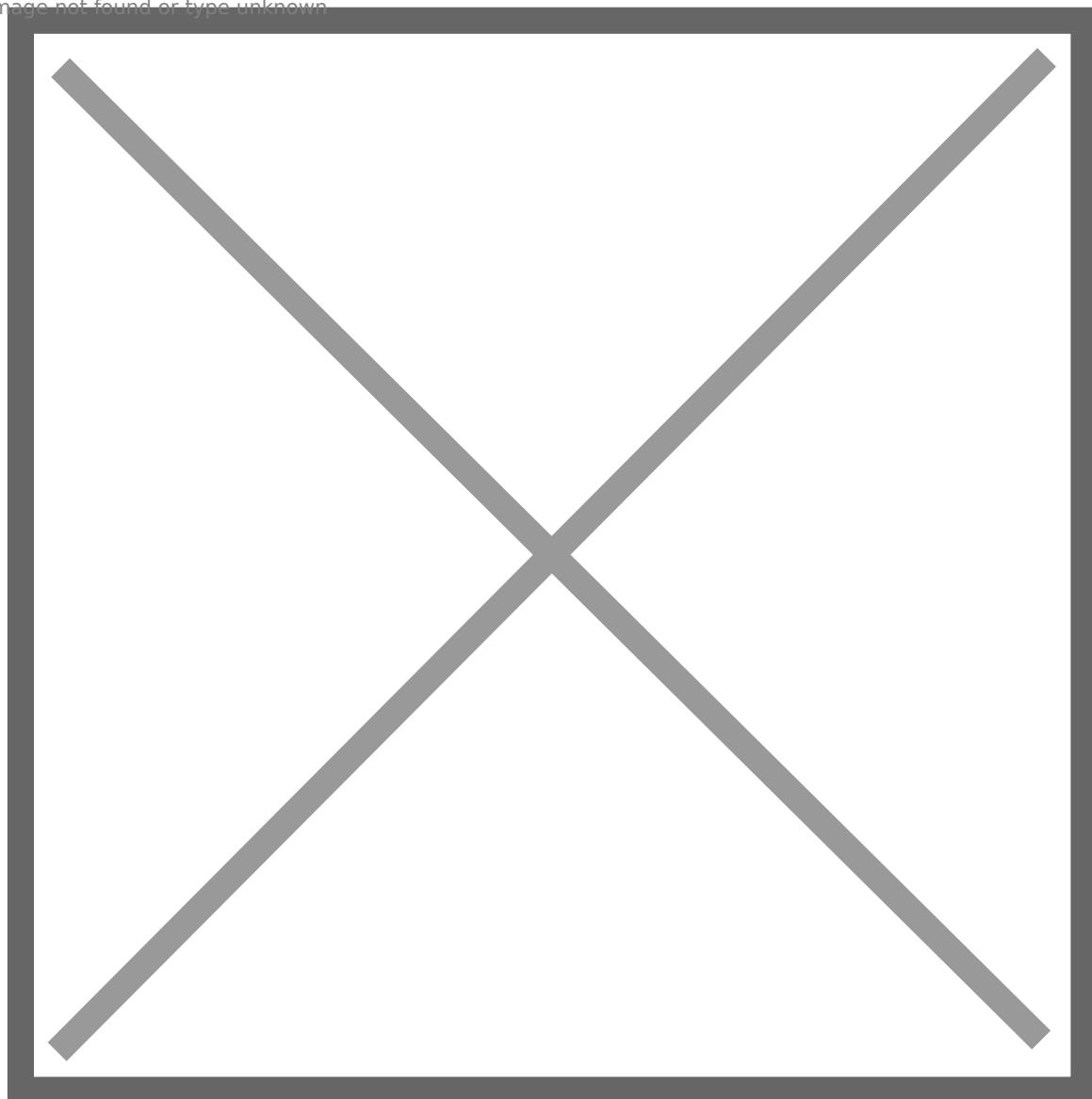


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