

30/06/2023

## **Feast day of the Holy Glorious and All-Praised Apostles Peter and Paul in Sydney**



On Thursday, 29 June 2023, the memory of Saints Peter and Paul and the fourth anniversary of the enthronement of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia (June 29, 2019), were celebrated with ecclesiastical splendour in Sydney. The locus of the double celebration was the Church of Saint Stylianos, in the suburb of Gymea, which is also dedicated to the Leading Apostles Peter and Paul, as well as to Saint Gregory Palamas.

In a crowded church, His Eminence presided over the festive Divine Liturgy, joined also by Their Graces Bishop Iakovos of Miletoupolis, Bishop Elpidios of Kyanea and Bishop Bartholomew of Charioupolis, the Chancellor of the Holy Archdiocese Archimandrite of the Ecumenical Throne Christophoros Krikelis, Parish Priest of the celebrating church, Father Constantine Varipatis, and by other priests of the city of Sydney. At the end of the Divine Liturgy, His Grace Bishop Elpidios addressed heartfelt wishes to the Archbishop, on behalf of all the Bishops of Australia and the Holy Clergy. "May God grant you many and blessed years to continue to sanctify us and guide us all, clergy and laity, to the port of salvation", Bishop Elpidios of Kyanea wished characteristically, addressing His Eminence Archbishop Makarios with much love and respect.

The Archbishop thanked with great emotion, both the Hierarchs who were present, clergy and faithful, and asked God to grant them strength, so that "all together, beloved and united, under the protection and blessing of our Patriarch and our Lord Jesus Christ who is the builder of our Church, may we move forward for His glory and not for the glory of men."



In addition, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios referred to the honoured Saints, the Leaders of the Apostles Peter and Paul, first noting the reasons why our Church has instituted the common celebration of their memory. The first reason, as he explained, is that they fell asleep in the Lord on the same day, with a difference of one year, while for the second and most essential reason he referred to the idiomelos verse of the vespers service of the feast day, where we chant: “...Although they were physically separate, yet in the Spirit they were unified...”. Indeed, as the Archbishop pointed out, the two Apostles had a common course and contribution, as well as a common spirit in teaching and spreading the Gospel to the nations.

Analysing the apostolic reading of the day, His Eminence focused his attention on the description of the vision of the Apostle Paul, speaking of the “most powerful existential text written by human hands”. He recalled that the Apostle of the Gentiles was initially a persecutor of Christians, but he had kindness in his heart and for this reason he accepted Christ. In addition, he emphasised that he was a prayerful person, which is why he was made worthy of the divine revelation.

“This experience is what we are all looking for and it does not come every day in a person’s life,” His Eminence Archbishop Makarios pointed out, urging the faithful not to stop praying, not to get tired and not to get discouraged when they think that God does not answer them. “At some point in our lives, if we are prayerful, we

too will feel that we see the world from another perspective and from another standpoint.

This is the result of prayer and does not happen all the time. But believe me, it is worth praying a lifetime in order to live out this moment, which Paul lived. There is no way you can pray and not experience this. But it takes patience, faith and perseverance. I wish and beseech all of you to follow Saint Paul's example and



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