

11/07/2023

Archbishop Makarios of Australia honours two hard-working members of the community



The medal of the Order of the Christ-loving, a high distinction awarded by the Holy Archdiocese of Australia to persons distinguished for their contribution to the Orthodox Church and the Greek Omogenia more broadly, was received by two devout parishioners of Saints Constantine and Helen, in Newtown, Sydney, on Sunday 9 July 2023.

Both Mrs. Maria Markou and Mr. Efstratios Pitelis, were bestowed this honour by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia for being hard-working individuals despite their “lacking” in material resources, yet “rich” at heart, members of the community. This took place at the end of the Divine Liturgy, which His Eminence celebrated at the said Parish.

Mrs. Maria Markou, originally from Athens, was honoured for her continuous and selfless service for 55 years as a Greek School Teacher in the afternoon schools of the Parish and as a member of the Philoptochos Association. Her achievements, in the more than half a century she has devotedly served the Parish of Saints Constantine and Helen, are innumerable. An important fact which stands out is that, under her guidance, an Indigenous student, that had no connection and previous contact with the Greek language and heritage in general, was ranked first in the final exams of the Greek language course, in the State of New South Wales. It is also remarkable that Mrs. Markou, who is distinguished for her self-sacrificing love for her students, is now teaching the children and grandchildren of her first students, one of whom was the Deputy Chief Magistrate in New South Wales, Mr. Theo Tsavdaridis.

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The other recipient, Mr. Efstratios Pitelis, who originates from Mytilini, Lesvos, has contributed 45 years of uninterrupted service as a sacristan to Church of Saint Nicholas, Marrickville and the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, Newtown. In particular, after his retirement, in 1978, Mr. Pitelis devoted himself completely to the Church, undertaking the ministry of a sacristan, initially at the Church of Saint Nicholas, until 1988, and since then at the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen. His offering goes beyond the narrow limits of a sacristan's duties. Mainly thanks to him, the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen is well regarded for always remaining open, since he devotes 12 hours a day, 365 days a year to his ministry.

His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, who with great joy and emotion awarded the medal of the Order of the Christ-loving to the two truly philanthropic expatriates, wished them that God grants them many good years full of health and strength, while he pointed out that their tireless and selfless offering becomes an

example for the younger generations to follow.

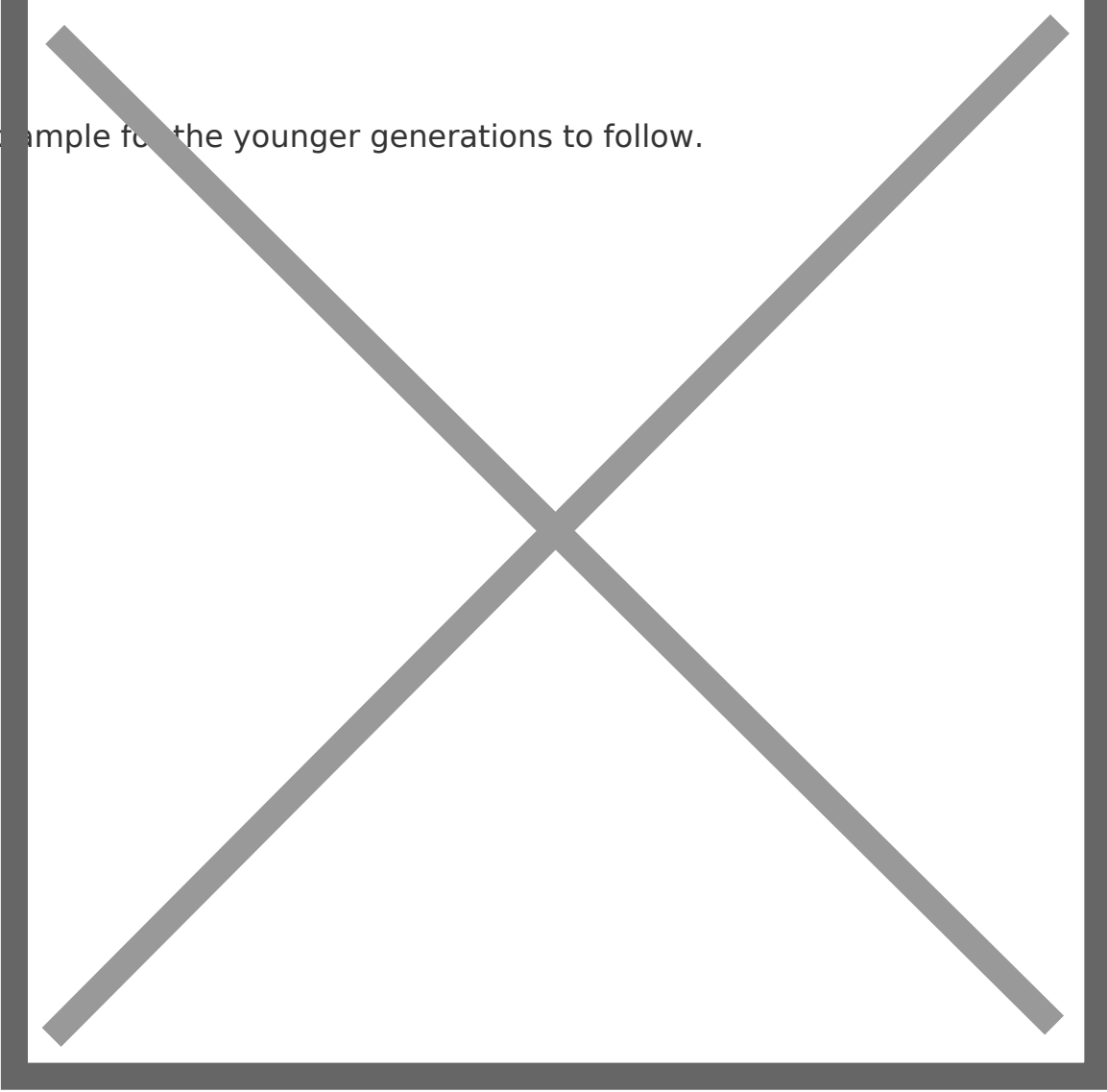






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