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## **“There is no room for the division of Hellenism”, explained Archbishop Makarios of Australia from Adelaide**



His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia spoke about his deep conviction that unity is a precondition for Hellenism in the fifth continent to be bolstered and flourish further during the historic visit he made on Sunday, 12 November, to the headquarters of the schismatic Greek Orthodox Community of South Australia (GOCSA). Driven by this conviction, he emphatically explained that “there is no room for division and separation”.

More specifically, His Eminence, in the first visit of an Archbishop to the headquarters of GOCSA in more than 63 years, was accompanied by Their Graces Bishop Silouan of Sinope and Bartholomew of Charioupolis, Archiepiscopal Vicars of Adelaide and Canberra respectively and by Archdeacon Athenagoras. He was warmly welcomed by GOCSA President, Mr Peter Gardiakos and members of the Board of the Directors. More than 300 members of GOCSA attended and had the

opportunity to communicate personally with the Archbishop of Australia and to discuss the possibility of lifting the schism, which has been plaguing the Greeks of South Australia for decades.

The Archbishop addressed the members in a spirit of paternal affection and sincerity, repeating his vision to bridge the differences of the past so that Hellenism and Orthodoxy in Australia can move forward with harmony and unity. "I came not to judge the past, but to tell you that we are all together in the present and that, as I say to myself, we all have to pay attention to how we will build the future," he said during his greeting.

Moreover, he expressed his emotion for the opportunity given to him to come into direct contact and communication with the members. "I am moved to see your faces because the most important thing in human interaction is what is transmitted through the eyes," he noted and added: "I can see blessed people filled with light. You all love God, the Church, and Hellenism, and that is why my pastoral concern, as Archbishop of Australia, is that this love is not divided."

Earlier, GOCSA President, Mr Gardiakos, thanked the members of the Community who "with open minds and open hearts" attended this historic meeting with the Archbishop of Australia. "I understand that for some of you it takes a lot of courage and strength to be here with us, and for that I say, 'thank you'", noted Mr Gardiakos. He then spoke about an important event for the Community because, for the first time since 1960, the Primate of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia visited it, giving space for dialogue.

After the opening remarks, a constructive discussion ensued in the form of questions and answers, in which all attendees participated. His Eminence thoroughly answered questions and concerns expressed by the members of the Community, regarding the manner of their possible restoration and the integration of the Community into the Holy Archdiocese of Australia. He made it clear that for the local Church and for him, the exclusive goal is the ecclesiastical restoration and the spiritual progress of the members of the Community, and the achievement of unity within Hellenism. Furthermore, he clarified that the Holy Archdiocese does not aim to make any financial gain from the property of GOCSA, on the contrary, it expects to contribute to its continuous development and to ensure the future of the new generation of the Community.

During his speech, the Archbishop moved the audience with the paternal exhortation: "Don't forget that the blood of heroes and saints flow in our veins." As this moving and fruitful meeting was concluding GOCSA President, Mr Gardiakos,

offered the Archbishop an orchid as a sign of respect and hope for a prosperous future and thanked him for his historic visit and for keeping the promise he gave to him, to speak openly and with love to the members of the Community. He urged the members to promote unity, trust and understanding, noting: “Let’s take the right steps to ensure that our children and grandchildren are not negatively affected by our decisions of the past.”

His Eminence, after thanking Mr Gardiakos and before leaving the GOCSA members.









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