

22/11/2023

## Consecration of the Church of the Presentation of Our Lady, Melbourne by Archbishop Makarios of Australia



Tuesday, 21 November 2023, was recorded as a glorious and historic day for the Greek Orthodox Parish in the Melbourne suburb of North Balwyn. The Parish, which is dedicated to the event of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple of God, during this year's Holy Feast Day, experienced the special blessing of the celebration of the consecration of its beautiful Church, by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia.

On Tuesday morning, His Eminence officiated at the Matins Service and following this performed the Service of Consecration, accompanied by Their Graces, Bishop Kyriakos of Sozopolis and Bishop Evmenios of Kerasounta, Archiepiscopal Vicars of Melbourne and Northcote respectively, as well as the Chancellor of the Holy Archdiocese, Archimandrite of the Ecumenical Throne Christophoros Krikelis, and by many priests of the two Archdiocesan Districts of Victoria.

After the Service of Consecration, the first Divine Liturgy was celebrated upon the newly consecrated Holy Altar Table, of which His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia presided, joined by Their Graces, Bishop Kyriakos and Bishop Evmenios.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, during which the ordination of subdeacon Mr. Dimitrios Drougas was also performed, the Archbishop addressed a warm greeting to the faithful and the officials present, expressing the grateful thanks of the local Church to all those who participated in the establishment and progress of the Parish of the Presentation of Our Lady, both living and haven fallen asleep in the Lord. His Eminence made a special mention of the clergy who ministered in this particular Parish, and in particular the contribution of its first Parish Priest, Fr. George Kotsonis, and his immediate successor, Fr. Nicholas Vrettakos. "They worked with great dedication and in adverse circumstances", he acknowledged, recalling on the one hand that they had limited means and resources, and on the other hand that their work was hampered by the quarrels and divisions of the time.



“May God not bring all this to your Parish again”, His Eminence wished on this occasion, urging the faithful to remain forever united and beloved, moving forward with Christ and the Virgin Mary as guideposts. “You are a blessed Parish,” he pointed out, “and I want you to continue like this. Do not forget that unity, love and peace are the characteristics of our Church. Where there is unity, love and peace, we can speak about the Orthodox Church. Where they don’t exist, we can speak about anything other than the Church and the grace of the All-Holy Spirit.”

Concluding, Archbishop Makarios addressed the Parish Priest, Father Nicholas Georgiou, with paternal words, and congratulated him on his dedicated ministry in the Parish of North Balwyn. He recalled with emotion, in fact, that after his arrival in Australia, in 2019, the first ordination of a presbyter, which he performed, was of the former Deacon of the late Archbishop Stylianos, Father Nicholas, on the day of the feast of the Transfiguration of Christ the Saviour. He distinguished with paternal satisfaction that in the four or so years that have passed since then, Fr. Nicholas has worked tirelessly, accomplished important work in the Parish and above all has loved the people and is equally loved by his parishioners. Finally, on behalf of the Parish Priest, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios thanked all the members of the Parish Council and the Philoptochos of the Parish, as well as those who contribute, in any way, for its continued progress and development.

Among the faithful who participated in the rich spiritual joy and emotion on this blessed day were, among others, the Consul General of Greece in Melbourne Mr. Emmanuel Kakavelakis, the Victorian Member of Parliament and Shadow Minister Jess Wilson, Local Councillors Mr. Nicholas Stavrou and Ms. Cynthia Watson, as well



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