

13/12/2023

Sydney: The Feast Day of Saint Spyridon presided over by the Metropolitan of New Zealand



With due ecclesiastical splendour the memory of Saint Spyridon, Bishop of Trimythous and wonderworker, was celebrated at the Parish of Saint Spyridon of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia in the suburb of Kingsford, Sydney. With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, His Eminence Metropolitan Myron of New Zealand presided over the Feast Day Divine Liturgy. The Parish Priest, Father Steven Scoutas, although he was recently hospitalised and underwent a triple-surgery on his leg, attended the celebration of the Patron Saint of the Parish, praying from the Holy Altar. Metropolitan Myron was joined by Assistant Parish Priest, Father Stavros Ivanos, as well as by Father Dimitrios Karakiozis and Father Meletios Pantic, Abbot of the Holy Monastery of Archangels in New Zealand.

During his homily, the Metropolitan of New Zealand referred to the many virtues that adorned the personality of the revered Saint, focusing in particular on his simplicity and humility, and his deep faith in God. Recalling that Saint Spyridon did not possess classical education or knowledge, he nevertheless pointed out that he

possessed the knowledge of God, that which sanctifies us and leads us into His eternal kingdom. And his holiness was recognised by all when the time came to fill the vacant position of Bishop in the Metropolis of Trimythous. “Holiness is not something that is hidden, but makes its presence felt through silence, through obscurity and through humility,” the Metropolitan emphasised and added: “This is also the purpose of each one of us, that for which God gave us the divine gift of life.”

At this point, Metropolitan Myron of New Zealand emphasised that life is a gift granted to humankind by God. And the first step to reach holiness, as he pointed out, is “to realise that everything we have and everything we are, are gifts from God”. “It is a great trap,” he countered, “the illusion that what we have and what we are, are ours or were made by our labour. By the will of God we became what we became and by the will of God we have what we have and we exist in this world.”

“Saint Spyridon gives us a model for life”, he continued, “he gives us an example to walk through life in humility and simplicity. Through the recognition first of our own weaknesses and our own sins, and then through the recognition of God as the giver of our “being” and our “having”. And he is the one to whom we owe the gifts he has given us. He gave them to us to cultivate them, to develop them and to deliver them back more beautiful to the one to whom they belong. And in this way may we also become partakers of the life and presence of our Lord and God. And may we be blessed to be granted eternity, that is, communion with Him and His constant presence in our lives. Heaven is life with God, and Saint Spyridon knew it well. And he put this into practice every day and in every moment.”

Pointing out that the Church is the one that worships God, honours the Saints and proclaims to the ends of the world the great truths of the Gospel, Metropolitan Myron focused on the work of the missionary Metropolis of New Zealand, which, although poor in terms of financial resources, territory and number of faithful, nevertheless does not stop trying to spread the messages of the Gospel to our newly enlightened brothers and sisters in the Pacific Ocean region. Specifically, on the islands of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, as His Eminence Metropolitan Myron explained, in the last 17 years their inhabitants have been blessed to hear the Gospel from the Orthodox point of view and to know Christ as he really came to our world and as he really is.

“The Orthodox Church arrived there,” he noted, “and built parishes, a monastery and an orphanage, ordained priests, tonsured monks and nuns, baptised and married the locals in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And all this was done with

the help of all Orthodox Christians, with the contribution of angels enlightened in the heart, sent by God to assist this work. And these angels were found all over the world and, helping in this work, they too became helpers, likened to Simon of Cyrene. They became fellow apostles of Christ who preached the joyful message of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. And so we have our brothers and sisters in the islands of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa who partake of the same body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, just as we did today.”

Speaking with paternal affection for his Orthodox flock in the islands of the Pacific Ocean, the Metropolitan of New Zealand pointed out: “We minister to these souls not thinking that we are superior and have something more to give them as people. These people in their poverty and destitution, are very happy. They know they are weak and have humility. But at the same time they are also very happy because they exist and live. And they rejoice in all the gifts that God has given them.

We as the Church, who are there, what did we do? We simply showed them where to direct their thanks. Not to thank the earth and the sun, or the air they breathe. Nor to thank idols and false gods. But to thank God, the creator and giver of everything. What we offer to these people is simply to show them where to say ‘thank you’, which is already in their hearts anyway. Therefore, the money that you donate, the resources that you send, the work or the time or the gifts that you dedicate to the new Orthodox Church of the Pacific Islands, these all become thanksgiving to God. All this turns into holiness.”



Concluding, Metropolitan Myron of New Zealand thanked His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia for his permission and blessing to officiate at the celebrating

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