

An Elevation to Spiritual Father by Archbishop Makarios of Australia at All Saints Church, Sydney



On Sunday, 14 January, the Leave-taking of the Feast of the Holy Epiphany and memory of Saint Platon the Hieromartyr, the First Bishop of Estonia, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia liturgised at All Saints Church, in the suburb of Belmore, Sydney. At the end of the Divine Liturgy, His Eminence elevated Father Dimitrios Papaoikonomou to the rank of Spiritual Father, Assistant Priest to Parish Priest Father Christos Triantafyllou.

Next, His Eminence analysed the Gospel passage of the day, where Christ is shown repeating the teaching of Saint John the Forerunner and Baptist, who called the people to repent. He pointed out that it is no coincidence that the Lord's first sermon was about repentance. And this, because repentance marks our change in direction and the change to our way of life.

Addressing, then, Fr. Dimitrios, the Archbishop advised him paternally about the new function assigned to him by the Church, to accept people's confessions and to accompany them on the blessed path of repentance. His Eminence urged him to listen carefully, to understand and respect the trials and troubles experienced by

every believer, who comes to the Mystery of Confession, and to always act with the intention and purpose of the consolation and deliverance of the soul of the confessee.

“When a person comes to confess, listen to them very carefully,” he emphasised and continued: “You have the power to forgive or not to forgive. You have the power to bind or loose the sins of men. I do not want to tell you what to do, I will leave it up to you. But I will tell you what I do. I try to loosen people’s sins, I never bind them. I’d rather a person leave confession with a light heart and a beautiful smile on their face than leave with their head bowed down and a lot of thoughts in their mind.”



Also, His Eminence observed that in our time society pushes people in various ways to feel guilty for their actions or mistakes. It is a phenomenon to which the Church must respond, as he pointed out, by freeing people’s souls from the burdens of guilt. “Try to make the soul of every person free and allow them to fly to heaven, to reach Christ”, His Eminence characteristically urged the new Spiritual Father.

Finally, His Eminence stated that he was convinced that Fr. Dimitrios would respond successfully to his new mission, having the valuable support of the experienced cleric and Parish Priest of All Saints Church, Father Christos, whom he thanked for his many years of ministry and contribution. His Eminence also thanked and congratulated the President of the Parish-Community and his Board of Directors, as well as the Head of School of All Saints Grammar and her colleagues, for their hard work for the advancement of the Orthodox Church and Hellenism. Archbishop Makarios concluded with an exhortation to all: “May you always strive



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