



APOSTOLIC VISIT OF  
**HIS ALL-HOLINESS ECUMENICAL  
PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW**

OCTOBER 4 – 19, 2024

# PATRIARCHAL DIVINE LITURGY



**SYDNEY THEATRE  
DARLING HARBOUR  
14 DARLING DRIVE, SYDNEY**

**7.30 AM**

SUNDAY

**6**

OCTOBER

**2024**

REGISTER  
HERE



«ΛΥΧΝΟΣ ΤΟΙΣ ΠΟΣΙ ΜΟΥ Ο ΝΟΜΟΣ ΣΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΦΩΣ ΤΑΙΣ ΤΡΙΒΟΥΙΣ ΜΟΥ» ΨΑΛΜ 118, 105

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Greek Orthodoxy  
in Australia | 08



The Patriarchal  
Church of St George  
at the Phanar | 15



# ΛΥΧΝΟΣ

A GREEK ORTHODOX PERIODICAL





✠ Αύγουστος είναι γεμάτος απο της ευλαβικές εκδηλώσεις για την Παναγία Μητέρα μας. Ο τίτλος μας είναι παρμένος απο τα στιχηρά της εορτής που ψάλλονται στο Εσπερινό. Ο Γυμνωδός βλέπει την Παναγία που τοποθετείται μέσα στο μνημείο και αναφωνεί «Ω του παραδόξου θαύματος! Η πηγή της ζωής, εν μνημείω τίθεται και κλίμαξ προς ουρανόν ο τάφος γίνεται...» Γιατί βέβαια σαν πηγή της ζωής που είναι – αφού Αυτή γέννησαι τον ζωοδότη Χριστό – δεν μένει στο τάφο. Μάλλον γίνεται η μετάσταση της απο τη γή στον ουρανό. Γι' αυτό το λόγω ένα άλλο στιχηρό που ακολουθεί λέγει: «...αγάλλονται γηγενείς επι τη θεία σου δόξη κοσμούμενοι». Δηλαδή, όλοι οι άνθρωποι στη γιορτή της Κοιμήσεώς Της, έχουν και αυτοί μεγάλη χαρά καθώς στολίζονται απο τη θεία και ουράνια δόξα της Παναγίας μας.

Λέγει ο Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Δαμασκηνός (σε απλή μετάφραση) «Και αν είχε μύριες γλώσσες ο άνθρωπος και μύρια στόματα και αν όλες οι γλώσσες των ανθρώπων μαζεύονταν ποτε, δεν θά'φτιαχναν τα επάξια εγκώμια για να υμνήσουν την Θεομήτορα». Στο πρόσωπό της βλέπουμε τη συνεισφορά του ανθρώπου στο έργο της σωτηρίας του. Γιατί όταν εκείνη πρόθυμα και ελεύθερα υποτάσσεται στο θέλημα του Θεού απαντώντας στον Αρχάγγελο Γαβριήλ την ημέρα του Ευαγγελισμού της, «Ιδού η δούλη Κυρίου. Γένοιτό μοι κατα το ρήμα Σου» (Λουκ.1:38) – δηλαδή «Ιδού, είμαι η δούλη του Κυρίου. Είθε να γίνει σε μένα σύμφωνα με αυτό που είπες» – απο εκείνη τη στιγμή, ολόκληρος ο κόσμος ο αμαρτωλός

και καταδικασμένος, δια μέσου Εκείνης μπαίνει στο δρόμο της επιστροφής, στη πορεία της συμφιλίωσης με τον Θεό Πατέρα. Έτσι Αυτή γίνεται ο κυριότερος μεσίτης μεταξύ Θεού και ανθρώπου. Η κλίμακα (σκάλα) που οδηγεί και φέρνει τους ανθρώπους προς στον Θεο. Ούτε λίγο ούτε πολύ προς τη θέωση.

Στο ιερό πρόσωπο της Θεοτόκου, ο Άγιος Γρηγόριος ο Παλαμάς, φωτισμένος απο το Άγιο Πνεύμα, βλέπει σαρκούμενο το μυστήριο της Θεώσεως, και αποκαλεί την Θεομήτορα ως «Αυτή μόνη μεθόριον εστί κτιστής και ακτίστου φύσεως... αυτή των επί γης η δόξα, των κα'ουρανών η τερπνότης, το πάσης κτίσεως εγκαλλώπισμα». Δηλαδή Αυτή (η Παρθενομήτωρ) είναι το σύνορο ανάμεσα στη κτιστή και άκτιστη φύση. Αυτή είναι η δόξα πάνω απο όλα τα όντα που βρίσκονται στη γή. Αυτή η χαρά του ουρανού και όλης της κτίσεως το πολύτιμο κόσμημα. Αυτή η Θεοτόκος αποτελεί την πύλη αλλα και Αυτή οδηγεί και προηγείται στην οδό της θεώσεως.

Και συνεχίζει ο Άγιος Γρηγόριος ο Παλαμάς, με μια υπέροχη φράση για τη Θεοτόκο. Την περιγράφει «Η την γήν ουρανώσασα και το γένος Θεώσασα!». Δηλαδή η Παναγία έκανε τη γη ουρανό και χάρισε στον ανθρώπινο γένος τη θέωση. Στο ιερό πρόσωπό της αναγνωρίζουμε την ωραιότητα που χάρισε ο Θεός στην ανθρώπινη φύση. Στη γήινη δική Της φύση στηρίχθηκε η Νοητή σκάλα να κατεβεί ο Θεός. Κατασκευάσθηκε ουρανός απο γη και άνοιξε ο δρόμος προκειμένου να ανεβεί το γένος των ανθρώπων απο τη γη στον ουρανό.

Η Υπεραγία Θεοτόκος, ως άνθρωπος ουρανώνει τη γη οπου γεννήθηκε και έζησε. Και ως συγγενής της Αγίας Τριάδος, φανερώνει τον Θεό. Και ο Θεός είναι που προσκαλεί το ανθρώπινο γένος, όλους εμάς, προς τη δική Του δόξα, τη θέωση.

Είθε δια των πρεσβειών της Δεσποίνης ημών Θεοτόκου και αιειπαρθένου Μαρίας, όλοι μας να την απολάβουμε.

ΥΠΕΡΑΓΙΑ  
ΘΕΟΤΟΚΕ  
ΣΩΣΟΝ  
ΗΜΑΣ



MOST  
HOLY  
THEOTOKOS  
SAVE US



⊕ In the feast of the Dormition, the Mother of God succumbs to death and is placed in a tomb. Although we behold a scene of death, we do not mourn the end of an earthly life – although she did die. Rather, we celebrate her death because it became the means by which she was transferred to the eternal heavenly life, giving hope to all of humanity.

St John of Damascus expresses this in a dialogue<sup>1</sup> between the first humans and the Theotokos. He writes "Adam and Eve, the progenitors of the race, with joy shouted and said: 'blessed daughter, you freed us from the punishment of disobedience. A perishable body we left for you as an inheritance, and you prepared for us in your womb the garment of incorruption. You took your existence from our flesh and in return you gave us blessedness; you removed the sorrows, you tore the shrouds that wrapped us in death'".

This gratitude arises because the plague of death began after their fall in the Garden of Eden. The first woman, ironically named 'Eve,' literally "*mother of all living*" (Genesis 3:20) disobeyed the command of God. As a result, humanity would now lead a painful and hard existence followed by death and decay, for "*earth you are, and to earth you shall return*" (Genesis 3:19).

In the Theotokos we find the new Eve and Mother of all living, whose obedience to God echoes the words she spoke to the Archangel Gabriel: "*Let it be to me*

*according to your word*" (Luke 1:38). God the Word saw the purity of her soul and borrowed from her His human nature which He deified in His theandric existence. Thus, through her obedience, she brought forth the One who would ultimately destroy Death by His own death on the Cross and His triumphant resurrection.

The most holy Theotokos lived a most holy life on earth. She was the delight of the angels, the fulfilment of the prophets and the dawn of the apostles. She was praised as a model and example of faith, humility and purity because she always sought to align herself with the all-holy will of God. It was natural then that her death, which irrevocably separated her from the faithful, would bring feelings of sorrow and loss. However, in the case of the Theotokos the hymnographer declares, "*in your Dormition you did not abandon the world*" (Dismissal Hymn). Why? Because after three days her body was assumed up to heaven, where she continues to be present to those in the world by her intercessions and holy protection, something verified by countless miracles after her Dormition.

The Theotokos stands as irrefutable proof of God's truth, power, wisdom, love, justice, and grace for all people. Having found herself between God and the entire human race, she made God the son of man, and men sons of God by grace. Heaven received new citizens transported from the earth precisely because she was chosen for this sacred purpose. Therefore, "*neither the grave nor death could contain the Theotokos... [the] Mother of life*" (Kontakion of the Dormition).

Through the Dormition (literally sleep), death is transformed; it loses its tragic nature and assumes a sweetness, comfort and hope. It becomes the passport to the next life and this is why as Christians we say that one has '*slept in the Lord*' rather than '*died*'; as we anticipate the resurrection.

Through the feast of the Dormition, our holy Church highlights Mary, the mother of mercy, the holiest of all creation, as a model for our own lives. She leads us safely to her Son and God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who frees us forever from the bonds of sin, heals us, enlightens us and unites us with Himself. By her Dormition, she shows us that death does not lead those who believe in Christ to an end, but to a new beginning in the blessed life with Christ.

1 Excerpt from the book of St John Damascene, "The Theotokos, Four homilies on the Mother of God", published by Apostoliki Diakonia of the Church of Greece.



# SAINTHOOD

*An Orthodox Perspective*

*"You shall name yourselves holy, because I am holy"*

(Lev 11:44)



It must be stated from the outset that the only true 'saint' (or holy one) is God, Who commanded that "you shall name yourselves holy, because I am holy" (Lev 11:44), and, "You must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt 5:48). Man becomes holy and sanctified by participating in the holiness of God.

Sainthood or holiness is a gift (charisma) given by God to man through the Holy Trinity, and especially through the sanctifying power of Jesus Christ, who was incarnate, suffered crucifixion, and rose from the dead, so that we may lead a life of holiness through the communion of the Holy Spirit. God is both holy and perfect. But what God is by nature, man is called to become by grace. For God, sainthood is a natural state, whilst for man it is a lifelong pursuit.

The saints are those people who strive to live the life of Jesus Christ and fight hard within themselves to reach moral and spiritual perfection. It requires bravery to fight an external enemy, but one is a million times braver when he fights against himself, trying to eradicate the faults of his character, his passions, and the desires of the flesh. Who are the people that the world looks to for inspiration? The powerful, the rich, the successful, the stars of sport and television. The fruits of this mindset are revealed in the current state of the world, where mankind is rapidly leading itself to destruction.

St Maximus the Confessor (7th century) says that saints are men who have reached theosis (godliness). They have avoided unnatural developments, that is, sin, and tried to live with their attention fixed on God, thus achieving total unity with God through the Holy Spirit (*on Theology*, 7' 73). The saints are also 'friends' of God. Through their genuine piety and obedience to God, they pleased Him and therefore have been sanctified,

both in soul and body. Many of them were given the grace to perform miracles, either before or after their death, and all were granted the special gift to intercede for those still living to continue their spiritual fight to perfection and for the glory of God. Such practices are approved by Saints Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa (*In Praise of Blessed Theodore the Great Martyr*).

In our times it is difficult to recognise a saint, but God makes certain that His friends are identified by the faithful. One only need look at the number of recently canonised Saints of the Orthodox church in order to be convinced of this. They were identified by their virtues: love, kindness, self-sacrifice, and dedication to God. We do not honour the saints as if to worship them, but we implore them in a heartfelt manner, since they are sincere friends of God. We honour the saints on their feast day, which is often the calendar day on which they fell asleep in the Lord. We celebrate this with the Divine Liturgy and the study of their lives. We refer to them as our mediators before Christ and we ask them to intercede to Christ on our behalf. We implore the saints for help and courage in facing the tribulations of this world. Their spiritual life and successes are of great help and examples for imitation. Hence, the study of their lives is most important for every Christian. Similarly, we honour and venerate the relics of the saints in order to receive grace, help and spiritual comfort.

It is important for us, if we wish to be genuine Christians, to imitate the saints by our way of life. We all know enough to fulfill our mission – to conform our lives to those of the saints as much as possible. The more we progress in our spiritual life, the more our prayers to saints for help are answered by them. Studying the lives of the saints sets for us a daily reminder of the spiritual progress we ought to make and inspires us.



WITH Fr D. K.

## Is Sunday School necessary?

Sunday School is very necessary! When this author meets parents, he will from time to time suggest that they encourage their children to come to Sunday School. Fairly often they reply that their children have no time, they are busy developing their academic, sporting, musical or other talents. This author will then often try to explain that it is indeed desirable for children to progress academically, to be psychologically, emotionally, socially and physically healthy, however, ultimately these children will not be happy if they are not spiritually healthy. If they have not learnt how to forgive, how to be compassionate and kind, how to be patient and resilient in the face of hardships, how to be humble, and ultimately to find God and peace and strength in prayer, then sooner or later they will suffer and feel an emptiness. Some parents seem to understand this, and some do not.

Parents can try very hard to choose a good day school for their children. This does indeed have an importance. There are other factors in a child's development, however, that are much more important. Vital for children is that their parents are united, and that their parents are genuinely devout and love Christ. Preaching and sermons to our children achieve very little; what truly helps children is fervent prayer and if their parents are growing towards sanctity. Also, enormously beneficial for children is Sunday School.

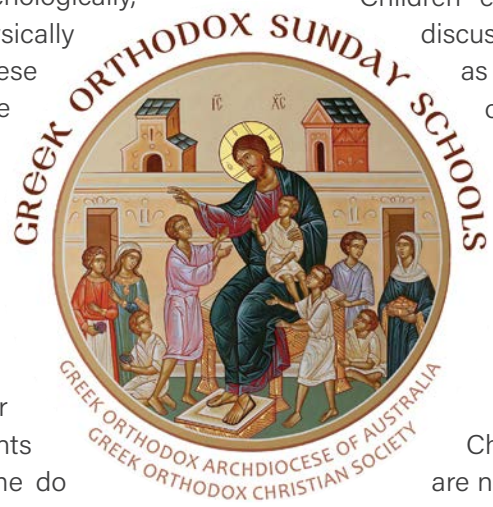
At Sunday School, our children learn about our faith and are encouraged in the faith by the example of their

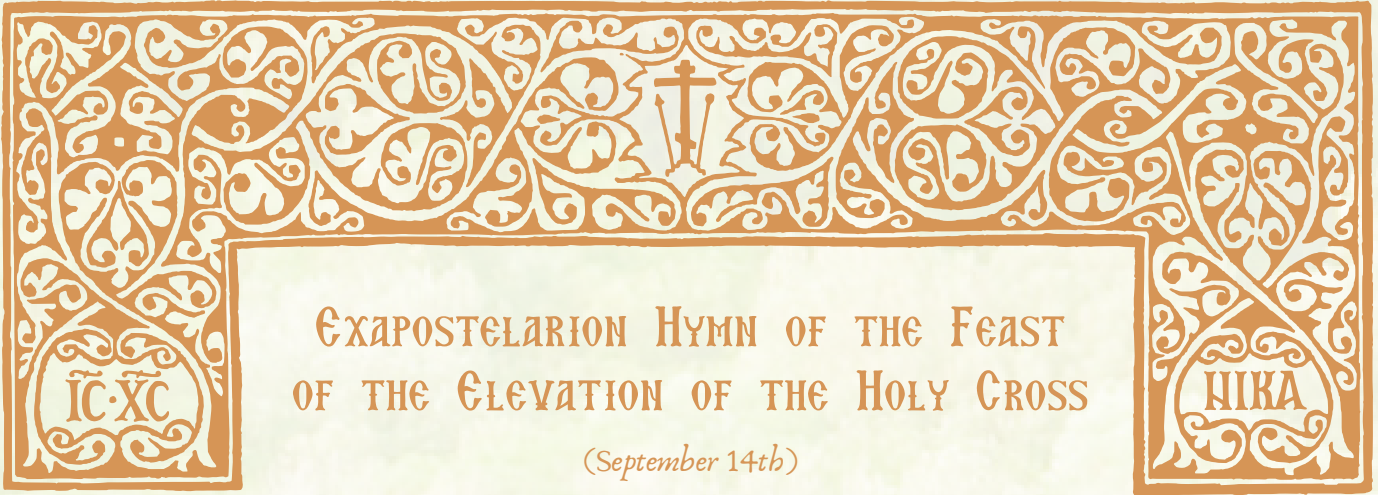
Sunday School Teachers and the other children who attend. We will not find angels on this earth, but at least those that teach and attend Sunday School love God and are striving to come closer to Him. We all need one another, no one can be a Christian alone. In the Bible it says, "Woe to him who is alone" (Ecclesiastes 4:10).

Children enjoy the Sunday School lessons, discussions, games and songs on Sundays, as well as other activities organised on other days. Sunday School organises a camp, picnics, bush walks, and other fun activities. At these events, under the loving guidance of their teachers, children develop a deep sense that they belong to the family of God which is the Church.

Children benefit enormously if they are nurtured in the faith from their family, when they are older by a spiritual Father where they go to for Confession, from their reading of spiritual books, from friendships with the devout, and very importantly from Sunday School. If they come to love Christ, then this not only leads them to the Kingdom but their lives on this earth will be sanctified. Family life will improve, they will be kind, more respectful, less selfish: they may not be angels but will be vastly different to what they would have been. By seeing the "big picture" they will be less anxious over those little things that many people get very stressed about.

Glory be to the Lord that there are countless examples of those whose lives have changed for the better due to the Church!





## ΕΧΑΡΟΤΕΛΑΡΙΟΝ HYMN OF THE FEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

(September 14th)

Σταυρός, ὁ φύλαξ πάσης τῆς οἰκουμένης· Σταυρός, ἡ ὠραύτης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, Σταυρός, Βασιλέων τὸ κραταίωμα· Σταυρός, Πιστῶν τὸ στήριγμα· Σταυρός, Ἀγγέλων ἡ δόξα, καὶ τῶν δαιμόνων τὸ τραῦμα.

*The Cross is the guardian of the whole inhabited world; the Cross is the beauty of the Church; the Cross is the might of Kings; the Cross is the strength of believers, the glory of Angels and the wound of the demons.*

This hymn is from the Matins service of the feast of The Universal Elevation of the Holy Cross, celebrated on September 14th.

The punishment of crucifixion was one of the most brutal and shameful modes of death, reserved for the worst criminals of the time. St Paul writes that, "we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles." (1 Cor 23)

The stumbling block for the Jew expecting a triumphant Messiah was that such a Messiah could ever willingly submit to such a dishonourable demise. The "folly" for the Greek/Gentile would be the claim that someone divine would ever deign to become like one of us, let alone suffer death on a Cross.

So why do Orthodox Christians for centuries, confess through this hymn that "the Cross is the beauty of the Church"? We appreciate that the Cross defeated the power of the Devil, it is a victorious sign, it strengthens our faith, but why this emphasis on its beauty?

Centuries before Christ, Prophet David proclaimed in Psalm 44, "My heart is overflowing with the good wishes, spoken by me in this poem addressed to the king.... you are far more beautiful than the sons of men."

Eusebius, bishop of Caesaria, gives us some insight, in interpreting these opening verses:

You are fair and beautiful, you are good, or in your beauty you are beautified or in your beauty you are made attractive, O Beloved, far more than the sons of men. For

even though you yourself became the greatest of the sons of men, and were counted amongst those who live upon earth, you did not give up your beauty to another. This clearly refers to his virtue. For in this manner, Isaiah also does not appear to disagree, when he says, "and we saw him, and he had no form or beauty." ... For these words prophesy about His passion on the cross, full of madness and offense. But the psalm, according to what is written, proclaims the beauty not of his body but the beauty of His virtue, not receiving the stain of sin.

The Holy Cross is beautiful because on it was crucified the only one who could never sin.

As a hymn of the Adoration of the Cross says, in approaching the Cross, "He who gives sight to the blind is spat on by lawless lips, and He takes a whipping on the back for the sake of us captives", and as Prophet Isaiah proclaims, "his form was without honour, failing beyond all men," (Is 53:3), His absolute beauty resides in His virtue of absolute sinlessness.

We are called to participate, through the power of the Holy Cross, in the "beautiful struggle" of the Christian Life.

It is fitting to conclude with the words of St Theoleptos, Metropolitan of Philadelphia (14th century) who writes, "the suffering and hardship involved in the acquisition of virtue sets the ascetic free from the slippery road of attachment to pleasure. Self-reproach and abnegation enable the humble person to destroy pride. Suffering and dishonour for the sake of God are the adornments of the saving Cross." (3rd Monastic Discourse)

*Homily on the*

# *Birth of the Bearer of God*



*Excerpt from St Theodore the Studite  
(but also attributed to St John of Damascus)*

"When man was about to be brought from non-being into being out of the infinite goodness of God, first, heaven was stretched out, then the earth was spread out, the sea was bound and then whatever completed the whole orderly arrangement of both heaven and earth was undertaken.

Then, man was placed in paradise like a king, for the exercise of virtue. If the transgression had not taken place, he would not have been exiled from the place of life. Having been ostracised because of his clothing, if he had not rebelled against the divine commandments, he would not have been brought down to the altered state of many passions, instead of the one monarch God, worshipping many gods.

For these reasons, in summary, since everything was overwhelmed by corruption and God full of pity was fearful that the work of his hands would end up in total non-existence, He deigned to create another heaven

and earth and sea to contain the uncontainable, for the remaking of humans.

And these are the blessed and much-hymned Virgin. O what a great miracle! She is heaven because from her innermost treasures dawned the sun of righteousness. She is earth, because from her pure womb of incorruption sprouted forth the stalk of life. And she is the sea, because from the bosom of her bowels she brings forth the intelligible pearl.

Therefore, the newly evident creation of the uncontainable one was produced, the royal court of the King of All was made ready, the rational abode of the incomprehensible one was prepared. How magnificent is this world! How admirable the creation, beautified by plants of virtue, fragrant with flowers of purity, radiant with the splendour of spiritual contemplations, in no need of abundant gifts, worthy, as it is said, for God to dwell in her amongst men!

And even if the previous world was most marvellous, (for as it says, "when the stars were made all my angels glorified me with a great voice" and they sang to me), still, there was nothing more worthy of God as the self-same blessed and all marvellous Virgin. And to affirm the truth of these words, hear Job who endured so much, saying, "the heavens are not clear, and the stars are not pure before Him."

But before Her, what is purer?

What could be more faultless?

For God so loved Her, the utmost and purest light, that through the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Her, He united with Her in essence and from Her came forth a perfect man, together with the abiding of His characteristic unchangeable and unconfused properties.

Oh, what a wonder! He who loves humans most of all was not ashamed to make His own servant His mother.

Oh, what condescension! He who is beyond Good did not reject to become the child of His own creation, in other words, loving the one who is more beautiful than all creation, selecting her who is more worthy than the heavenly powers."





Metropolitan Christophoros  
(1924 – 1929)



Metropolitan Timotheos  
(1932 – 1947)



Metropolitan Theophylactos  
(1947 – 1958)



In recollecting the 100-year history of our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, it is not sufficient to simply list some dates or events or people. This would not do justice to the role of the Church in Australia.

One thing is certain – it is not by chance that there is a Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in Australia. God has planted it here for several purposes: to meet the needs of our Orthodox immigrants, to minister to their successive generations, and above all, to offer the message of Orthodoxy to the wider Australian population.

Throughout the last 100 years, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese has changed dramatically but at the same time remained fervently constant – true to its origins and ideals. The faith of our fathers has been cultivated and maintained across one of the largest countries

on Earth. Our Archdiocese serves just half a million Greek Orthodox. But there was a time when it was possible to feel that one knew almost every Greek in Melbourne or Sydney or elsewhere. Nowadays that is far from possible.

From its humble beginnings as a migrant faith that was frowned upon by the wider Australian community, the Orthodox Church now enjoys excellent relations with other Christian denominations. Due to the efforts of Archbishops Ezekiel, Stylianos and now His Eminence Archbishop Makarios, the Greek Orthodox faith is today recognised by leaders across the political and religious spectrums of our country.

Within the church itself there has also been much change. The overwhelmingly Greek speaking congregation gave way

to a bilingual one, and now our parishioners increasingly belong to a mostly English-speaking generation. The first Greek to English liturgy books were brought by Archbishop Ezekiel from the US and opened the liturgy to many.

The post-war years, however, were a spiritual desert. Greeks clung tenaciously to their faith as a source of identity in an often-discriminatory society. The Church helped as best it could, serving as a refuge from the outside world.

But there were few resources. Property and buildings had to be purchased. There were no land grants as there were with the early Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. But the Archdiocese expanded at a fast rate with post-war migration. The needs of the people likewise increased.





Archbishop Ezekiel  
(1959 – 1975)



Archbishop Stylianos  
(1975 – 2019)



Archbishop Makarios  
(2019 – Present)

# YEARS

There were always Greek language schools, but Sunday Schools and religious instruction were scarce. The only religious books available were a New Testament in Greek and a book of daily prayers.

Gradually, Sunday Schools were established across parishes by those dedicated immigrants who brought with them a religious zeal. More books were imported from overseas. The nature of the community changed.

It is evident today in the long queues for Holy Communion, the hundreds who seek Holy Confession each week, and especially in the thousands who gather for the Easter vigil. There remains the spirit of Orthodoxy. The Church has now expanded, with welfare centres, a theological college, full time Orthodox schools and, above all, monasteries. It is

not always remembered today that the expression of our faith in the pre-war and immediate post-war climate was often challenging. For instance, priests were shaved and wore Roman-Catholic collars so as not to attract hostility. This practice changed under Archbishop Ezekiel and even more under Archbishop Stylianos. In looking back, great credit is owed to Archbishop Ezekiel for laying solid foundations for our archdiocese. Likewise, Archbishop Stylianos brought a powerful intellect and gave theological impetus to Orthodoxy.

Our current Archbishop Makarios has further inspired an authentic Orthodox *phronema* (mindset) amongst the clergy. He has enlarged the Episcopacy, giving each state its due recognition; held the inaugural gathering of Australian clergy in 2022; resumed the Clergy-Laity Congress in 2023;

and renewed bodies such as the Committee for the Translation of Liturgical Texts.

His Eminence Archbishop Makarios is now the steward of the next century. It is fitting that his close relationship with the Ecumenical Patriarchate bring the first hundred years to culmination with the historical visit of his All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew.

On the first Sunday of Great Lent, our Church celebrates the triumph of Orthodoxy, the triumph of the true faith, saying:

*“This is the faith of the Apostles, this is the faith of the Fathers, this is the faith of the Orthodox, this is the faith which has supported the whole world.”*

In the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia this faith of the Apostles has truly blossomed and grown for 100 years.

# Let Every Tongue Confess That Jesus Christ Is Lord

From the Epistle Reading of the Dormition: Philippians 2:5-11

On the feast of the Dormition of the All-Holy Theotokos, the epistle the Church selects to be read is one not so obviously connected to the occasion. Philippians 2:5-11 is a passage that initially speaks to the duty of man to humble himself as Christ humbled Himself for man. Christ, *"being found in human form, He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death"* (2:8). St Paul reiterates Christ's obedience in Hebrews 5:8-9 when he points out that although Christ had it in His power to be spared, *"He learned obedience by the things He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him"*. This obedience and humility that Christ displayed is what St Paul calls on us to imitate.

The focus of the passage shifts from Christ's humility to God's response to that humility. About Christ's sacrifice, St Paul tells us that *"God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name that is above every name"* (2:9). This honour is both bestowed on Christ for His exaltation but also for the exaltation of man through that very name. God bestowed this honour *"so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every*

*tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"* (2:10-11).

St Paul is teaching us to praise the name of Christ as His name was praised on earth by His Father. If the name of the Lord is on our lips, we also are sanctified. St Gregory of Nyssa says that the *"only proper way to name God is as above every name but God cannot be contained in any nominal definition. This is a sign to us of God's inexpressible greatness. Being united to the Lord the human nature is lifted up to*

*share in his divinity"*. We can neither comprehend nor communicate the true glory of Christ. However, we have been gifted His name, which in itself, contains grace and power. St Gregory Palamas commends us to pray the name of Christ as *"this very name of our Lord Jesus Christ, constantly invoked by you, will help you to overcome all difficulties, and in the course of time you will become used to this practice and will taste how sweet is the name of the Lord"*.

The reading can be described as the perfect Christian calling: to humble ourselves and glorify Christ so that we might be exalted in Him. He has opened the way to salvation in His perfected humility. The Church has placed this reading before us on the Feast of the Dormition as a reminder of our calling to unite ourselves with God. St Paul summarises this calling: we must be perfected in our humility and suffering as He was and thus be exalted in Christ as Christ was exalted by His Father. The way through which God granted us this salvific purpose for humanity was through the Theotokos. The Theotokos showed obedience in bearing Christ but was ultimately exalted as the spring from which He was drawn by His incarnation. She is the perfect example of the human life, reflecting the humility, obedience, and exaltation that we are all called to emulate.



# The Orthodox Veneration of the **MOTHER OF GOD** by St John Maximovitch

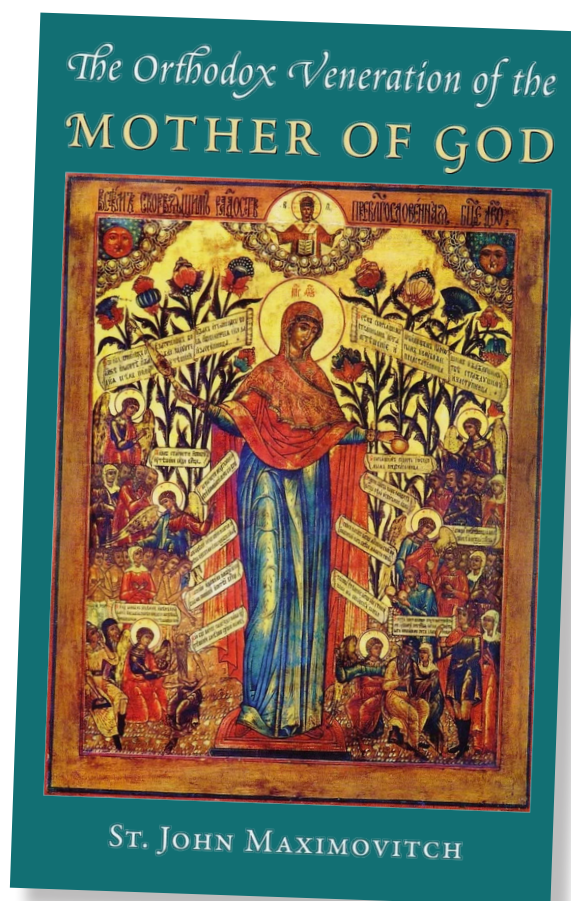
*"For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed"* (Luke 1:48).

These words – expressed by our beloved Panagia – are biblical proof of the veneration we must give to the Mother of God. Despite this, from early in the period of Christianity and to this day, there remains division concerning Panagia and her role in our salvation. Did she really give birth to God, as Nestorius denied? Was she immaculately conceived, as the Roman Catholics say? How should we properly venerate her, given that she is not God?

These and other questions are all comprehensively answered in the beautiful and short text, *The Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*. Written by St John Maximovitch (and translated by Father Seraphim Rose), it is a necessary read for all Orthodox Christians because, without a proper understanding of Panagia, we cannot have a proper understanding of Jesus Christ, her Son and our God.

*The Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God* is written in the Saint's characteristically simple style, and provides his deep personal insight into the role of Panagia in our salvation and our lives. It examines, in chronological order and from an Orthodox perspective, the veneration which ought be given to Panagia and each of the chief errors that have sought to undermine that veneration. It also demonstrates, in an Orthodox manner, why Panagia should be called the Mother of God, and why at the same time, she cannot be considered a co-redemptress along with Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of the world.

The book is short and can be read in only a few hours. It is written in an engaging and approachable manner, and does not assume any deep knowledge of theology. That notwithstanding, it contains rich truths that will help the reader deepen their understanding of Panagia and the theology of our Church. In this way, *The Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God* is recommended for everyone.



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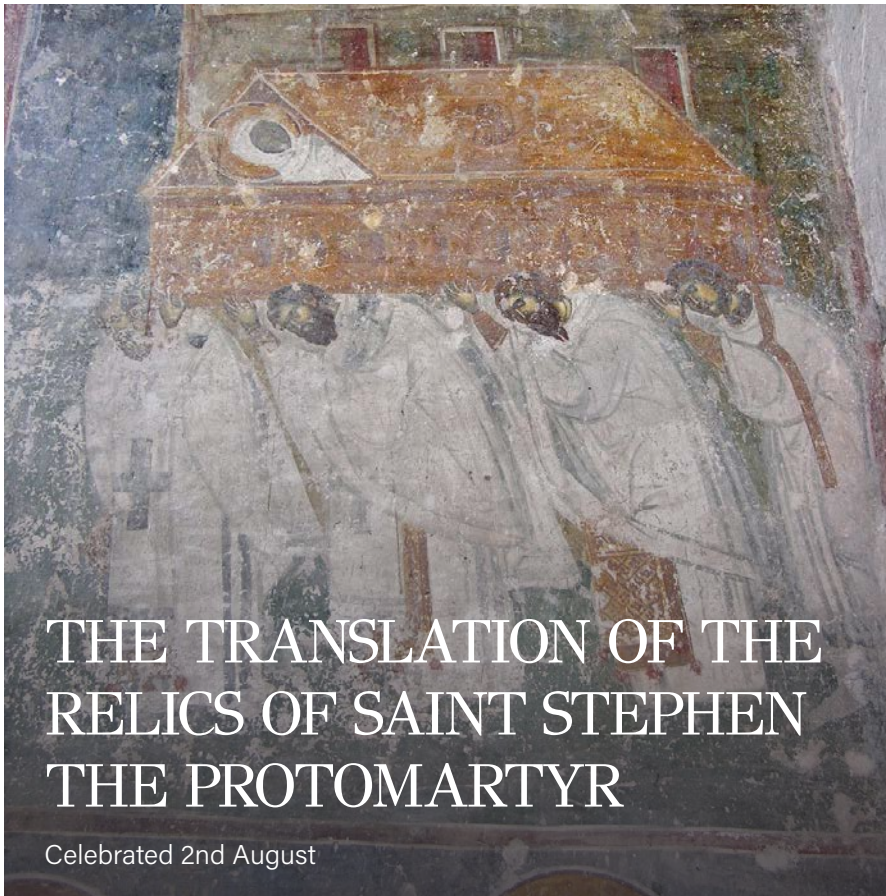


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## THE TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF SAINT STEPHEN THE PROTOMARTYR

Celebrated 2nd August

Caphargamala is a Roman-Cera Jewish village some 30 kilometres from Jerusalem. These days, the area accommodates the Catholic monastery known as Beit Jamal. Both names, Caphargamala and Beit Jamal, find their root in the name Gamaliel who was, of course, the teacher of Saul who became the Apostle Paul. Gamaliel was the president of the Sanhedrin and highly esteemed at the time of Christ as a scholar, a Pharisee and a *“teacher of the law”* (Acts 5:34). We hear from the Apostle Paul that he was brought up in Jerusalem *“at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law”* (Acts 22:3). Returning to Caphargamala (literally, field of Gamaliel), tradition tells that it was a property owned by Gamaliel and that Gamaliel had been baptised a Christian by the time St Stephen had been stoned by the Jews. Further, the body of St Stephen had been buried at Gamaliel’s property after he encouraged some

of his fellow Christians to help him remove the body of the Saint from the roadside where it had been discarded.

Gamaliel’s nephew was Nicodemus, the disciple of Christ by night. Only forty days after the death of St Stephen, Nicodemus narrowly escaped death by persecution and fled to his uncle’s property at Caphargamala. However, he died of his wounds some days later and his uncle buried him beside Saint Stephen. Soon after, both Gamaliel and his son also died and were buried with the Saints at Caphargamala.

Some 350 years after the deaths of Saints Stephen, Nicodemus and Gamaliel, Lucian, a priest from the village of Caphargamala had a dream in which Saint Stephen appeared and ordered him to instruct John, Bishop of Jerusalem, to find his relics. Bishop John had Lucian dig at the location indicated

by the Saint in the dream. However, that night the Saint appeared again to instruct that the excavation should be undertaken further north. With much eagerness, Lucian dug as instructed until he found a stone plaque inscribed with the names of the saints in Hebrew. That hour, an earthquake struck, the ill in the area were cured and a fragrance filled the vicinity around the tomb. Bishop John attended soon after with two other bishops and translated the body of Saint Stephen to Jerusalem. That day, rain poured down on the city breaking a drought that had long-afflicted the land.

Years later, the widow of the founder of the church which held the relics of the Protomartyr Stephen, together with the relics of her late husband, decided to take her husband’s remains to Constantinople. However, she mistakenly took the coffin of Saint Stephen instead. Many miracles were performed on the journey. Once the ship carrying the coffin had landed, the coffin was placed on a carriage to be taken to Constantinople. At one point, the wagon stopped after the mules stubbornly refused to move forward. No matter what was done or how many further beasts were added to the effort, the wagon would not move. One of the mules then spoke in a human voice to declare that the body of the Saint would remain in that place. On 2 August, the relics were placed at the location at which the wagon stopped and at which a church was built in honour of Saint Stephen the Protomartyr.



# The Icon of Saint John the Baptist

The icon of St John the Baptist is one of the most recognisable in the Orthodox church. The saint is depicted in all Churches on the left hand of Christ on the altar screen (εικονοστάσι).

In our Church, he is given this honour because he is the most important and influential figure in human history after the Theotokos, who alone sits at the right hand of Christ. He serves as the bridge between the Old and New Testaments being the last and greatest prophet. Christ says of the Baptist, *“among those born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist”* (Luke 7:28).

What stands out immediately when looking upon his icon, are the large wings protruding from his shoulders. These wings are a symbol used in the iconography to depict the fact that he was sent as a messenger (ἄγγελον/angel) by God before the coming of His Christ;

*“Behold, I send my messenger (ἄγγελον) before your face, who will prepare your way before you. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord: Make his paths straight”* (Mark 1:2).

This theme is further accented by his ascetic labours in the wilderness, earning him the title ‘Angel of the Wilderness,’ a term which has now been adopted to describe other ascetic Saints of our Church. Saint Luke of Simferopol says of St John the Baptist, *“If the Prophets and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself called him an Angel, then this must be understood in the sense that he was also in the human body the bearer of the angelic spirit, purity and perfection”*.

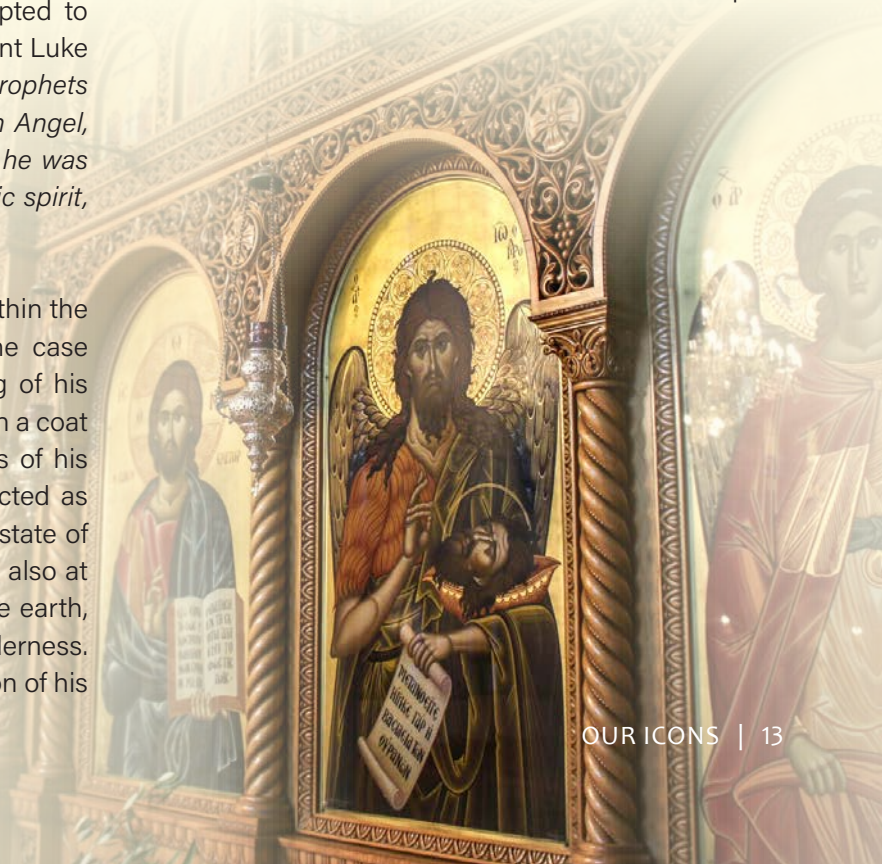
Typically, in iconography, saints are depicted within the elements characterising their sainthood. In the case of St John the Baptist, we perceive something of his character and martyrdom. His body is adorned in a coat of camel hair in accordance with the accounts of his ascetical labours. This coat is sometimes depicted as blue, the colour of Heaven, to elevate him to a state of heavenliness beyond his earthly struggle. He is also at times depicted in green robes, the colour of the earth, which symbolises his association with the wilderness. His long hair and beard are an accurate depiction of his

earthly appearance: in accordance with the prophecy of the Archangel Gabriel (Luke 1:15), he was to be a Nazarene and was therefore not permitted to cut his hair (Numbers 6:5).

In his hands, he holds the cross of martyrdom and a scroll. In iconography, a scroll is given to those who prophesied or imparted divine wisdom. There are many variations of what is written on the scroll: in most cases, however, it contains his most well-known teaching, *“Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!”* (Matthew 3:2). In his right hand, he holds his own head, resting on the platter on which it was presented to Herod after his beheading. This, paired with the cross which he holds, shows that his martyrdom is first and foremost his ultimate offering to God, and the humiliating death he endured is now the source of his glorification.

*What shall we call you, Prophet?  
Angel, apostle, martyr: Angel, for you  
have spent your life like those who  
have no body. Apostle, for you have  
taught the nations, and martyr, for  
your head has been cut off for the sake  
of Christ. Pray to Him then that our  
souls may be granted great mercy.*

+ Litany, Vespers of the Beheading of  
St John the Baptist



# THE VENERABLE PATRIARCHAL CHURCH



*Panagia Pammakaristos*



*The Martyrdom of  
Patriarch Gregory V*

By the shores of the Golden Horn, within the Phanar neighbourhood of Constantinople, stands the Venerable Patriarchal Church of St George – a church whose history, role, icons and sacred relics, preserve and reflect the fullness of Orthodox Christianity.

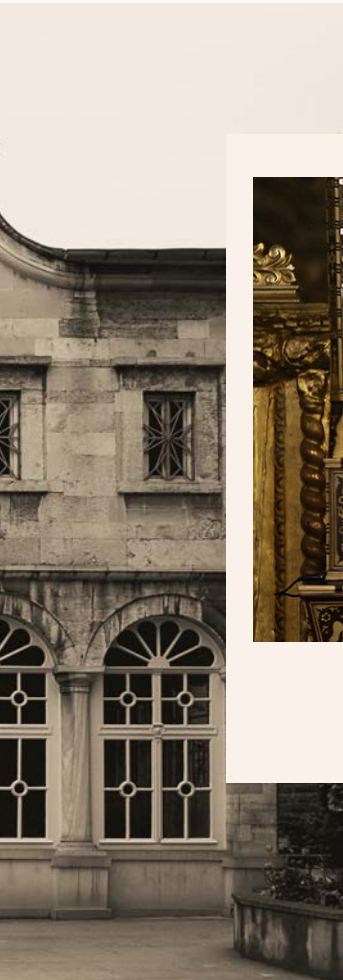
Prior to becoming the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1599, the church of St George was a female monastery. It assumed the role of the Patriarchal Church shortly after the previous patriarchal church of Panagia Pammakaristos was turned into a mosque in 1587.

The complex of St George, also comprising the administrative buildings and residential quarters of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, is steeped in the history of Orthodoxy in Constantinople.

To enter this complex, one must pass through many security measures, enforced in the wake of plots against the life of the patriarch and many attempts to attack the Church over the years. The central gate itself has been permanently closed since 1821, when the Patriarch of Constantinople, St Gregory V, was hanged there, suffering martyrdom at the hands of the Ottomans.

The church itself has the structure of a basilica with three aisles to the nave, separated by stalls (*stasidia*), reflecting the patriarchal role of the church and hearkening to basilicas of this style in Byzantium. In the central aisle is the patriarchal throne, held by tradition to be that of St John Chrysostom.

Next to the patriarchal throne is the parathronion, where dignitaries or visiting bishops stand. These thrones



*Ecumenical Patriarch  
Bartholomew*



*Relics of Sts Euphemia,  
Theophano & Solomone*



*Part of the Column of the  
Flagellation*

## OF SAINT GEORGE AT THE PHANAR

remind us that the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate has held a historic ministry in the preservation, witness and promotion of Orthodox Christianity.

The left and right sides of the Church host the relics of the Three Hierarchs, St Basil the Great, St Gregory the Theologian and St John Chrysostom.

The latter two saints' relics were returned to Constantinople by Pope John Paul II in 2004, on the 800th anniversary of their theft during the Fourth Crusade.

The left side of the church also features the icon of Panagia Faneromeni, a 12th century icon brought from the monastery of the same name in Cyzicus in Asia Minor. On the right of the church, there is part of the Column of the Flagellation, to which Christ was tied when He was

whipped prior His Crucifixion, and which St Helen had brought to Constantinople.

There are also relics of three female saints, Euphemia the Great Martyr, Theophano the Empress, and Solomone (mother of the Holy Seven Maccabee Children in the Old Testament).

Finally, there are two unique 11th century mosaic icons of St John the Baptist and Panagia Pammakaristos, both relocated from the former patriarchal church.

This holy church stands today as a testament and monument to the grace of God, which we have received through the Church and its saints, who suffered and sacrificed throughout the ages, unto eternal glory.

# News & Events



## Centenary Celebrations in Perth

From 11-14 July, the Archdiocesan District of Perth held its Centenary Celebrations. The four days were characterised by a liturgical, Christ-centred, festive joy and spiritual renewal. The events included the historic Consecration of the first Church dedicated to St Paisios in Australia at the Holy Monastery of St John.

With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia and at the invitation of His Grace Bishop Elpidios of Perth, about forty members of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society were present to participate and share in the joy of the celebrations. We are very grateful to His Eminence and His Grace for this blessed experience and we thank the Orthodox community in Perth for their warm hospitality and fellowship.



## Orthodox Youth Omathes Mid-Yearly Camps

Over the winter school holidays, over one hundred high school boys and girls from across Sydney and Adelaide participated in the mid-yearly camps of the Orthodox Youth Omathes. Each of the Omathes (Youth Fellowships), which run in the parishes of the Resurrection of Our Lord Kogarah, All Saints Belmore, the Transfiguration of Our Lord Earlwood, St Ioannis Parramatta and now also in Adelaide, journeyed away from the distractions of the city for a few days of activities, games and lessons.

Although seven different camps were run over the course of two weeks, the climax of each one was ultimately the same: the Divine Liturgy. For the Omathes based in Sydney, the liturgy was celebrated by the Very Revd. Fr Eusebios, Abbot of Pantanassa Monastery and Archimandrite of the Ecumenical Throne. Whilst the Adelaide camps had the blessing of the Divine Liturgy being presided over by His Grace Bishop Silouan of Adelaide.



## Annual Sunday School Camp 2024

From 15-17 July, with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, over eighty Sunday School children and leaders from across Sydney, journeyed to the Tops Conference Centre for the Annual Sunday School Camp. The children took part in a range of activities, including archery, vertical cluster, cart racing, sport and singing. In celebration and honour of the announcement of our nation's patron saint, the camp was centred on the theme of 'Saint Paisios: Patron and Protector of Australia'. The children learnt about different periods of his life and specific virtues that he embodied.

For the Divine Liturgy, the Very Revd. Geronda Eusebios, Abbot of Pantanassa Monastery, not only celebrated the Liturgy with the children but brought belongings of St Paisios for them to venerate.



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