

2nd Episcopal Assembly of Oceania

COMMUNIQUE

The members of the 2nd Episcopal Assembly of all canonical Orthodox Bishops of Oceania welcomed once again the opportunity to meet in Sydney from October 16-17, 2011, under the chairmanship *ex officio* of His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos of Australia.

The Assembly commenced with prayer at the central offices of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, Redfern.

Present were: His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos (Ecumenical Patriarchate – Australia), His Eminence Metropolitan Paul (Antiochian Patriarchate), His Grace Bishop Irinej (Serbian Church), His Grace Bishop Mihail (Romanian Church), His Eminence Metropolitan Amphilochios (Ecumenical Patriarchate – New Zealand), His Grace Bishop Ezekiel (Assistant Bishop), His Grace Bishop Seraphim (Assistant Bishop), His Grace Bishop Nikandros (Assistant Bishop), His Grace Bishop Iakovos (Assistant Bishop), the Very Rev. Father Michael Protopopov (representing His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion of the Russian Orthodox Church, who read a letter of greeting from His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion) and Rev. Father Michael Smolynec (representing His Eminence Archbishop Ioan of Parnassou of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the Diaspora).

The Bishops continued the work of the first Assembly, held in Sydney in October last year, and heard the Reports of the respective Committees.

It was unanimously agreed:

1. To arrange an annual Synaxis meeting of Clergy of all canonical jurisdictions for the purpose of forming brotherly relations and to have collaboration in carrying out the decisions of the Assembly on a local level;
2. To launch an official website of the Assembly that will inform our faithful of its work and provide a source of information, that would include a catalogue of canonical Clergy and thereby knowledge of schismatic groups;
3. To seek legal opinion with regard to the suggested promulgation of a Statute for the Episcopal Assembly of Oceania;
4. To organise a common celebration to mark the 1,700th anniversary of the Edict of Milan in 2013;
5. To respond formally to the Healthcare Chaplaincy Council of Victoria affirming the position of the canonical Churches in relation to Hospital Chaplaincy, without ignoring the pastoral dimension of ministering to all infirm Orthodox, irrespective of national backgrounds; and
6. To bring together prominent Orthodox theologians, medical doctors, psychologists, ethicists, legal and public policy experts to enable the Hierarchs of Oceania to issue responsible joint statements with regard to the ethical dimensions of proposed Government legislation.

The Assembly received a Report on the draft Act of Parliament for the recognition of all canonical Orthodox Churches in New Zealand, and specifically with regard to the registration of Marriage Celebrants.

Another Report was received from the Committee on Campus Ministry, which met under the co-Chairmanship of His Grace Bishop Irinej and His Grace Bishop Ezekiel, the primary focus of which was to develop Orthodox Chaplaincy in tertiary educational institutions. The Assembly confirmed the proposal of the Committee to appoint His Grace Bishop Iakovos of Miletoupolis to Chair the Committee.

The Assembly reaffirms its unity in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in brotherly love, committing ourselves to work together for the good of the holy Orthodox Church and its children in Australia and throughout Oceania.

Dated 17th October, 2011

His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos (Ecumenical Patriarchate – Australia)

His Eminence Metropolitan Paul (Antiochian Patriarchate)

His Grace Bishop Irinej (Serbian Church)

His Grace Bishop Mihail (Romanian Church)

His Eminence Metropolitan Amphilochios (Ecumenical Patriarchate – New Zealand)

His Grace Bishop Ezekiel (Assistant Bishop)

His Grace Bishop Seraphim (Assistant Bishop)

His Grace Bishop Nikandros (Assistant Bishop)

His Grace Bishop Iakovos (Assistant Bishop)