

MEDIA RELEASE
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PLENARY COUNCIL JOURNEY ONE FOR 'DUSTY, PATIENT PILGRIMS'

Maronite Archbishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay OLM has spoken about the significance of the Eastern Catholic Churches and the Latin Rite Church coming together as “pilgrims” for the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia.

Archbishop Tarabay, who celebrated Thursday’s Mass for the Plenary Council, said while the journey to the Council began in 2016, “maybe it was prepared for us from the beginning of time”.

“If so, then we need to be aware of our position and, above all, I suggest, to be humble and grateful,” he said in his homily.

“There cannot be gratitude without humility, any more than there can be humility without gratitude; for pride knows no debt to anyone else, while ingratitude hardens the heart and despises a kind word.

“Only if we are humble and grateful, do we see that we have nothing to offer which does not come from our Master, which is not directed to his worship, to following His will here on earth. And we find a perfect example of this humility and gratitude in the Virgin Mother, Our Lady of the Rosary, whose feast we celebrate today.”

Celebrating Mass in the Maronite Catholic rite, Archbishop Tarabay spoke about how the Plenary Council has brought all Catholics together.

He said: “The Eastern Catholic Churches have been making this journey in unity with all of you, our brothers and sisters of the Latin Catholic Church, not as if we were princes travelling to a feast in our honour, but as dusty and patient pilgrims, helping each other to renew our faith, to strengthen our hope, and to approach the mystery of love, through that inner conversion which was called *metanoia*, the change of mind which only prayer and the discipline of the Spirit can bring about.”

Drawing on the Gospel of the Day, the Parable of the Faithful Servant, Archbishop Tarabay offered a prayer for all those participating in the Council, that they be guided by the Holy Spirit.

“I also pray for our Church in Australia to continue giving witness to the Gospel of life. But one cannot presume. We cannot simply say ‘the Spirit is speaking’ and make it so. That would be pride,” he preached.

“No, for this Plenary pilgrimage, we - like the servant in today’s Gospel - need humility and obedience to the Word of God, the Word of the Master who seems far away, and we must tend to His other servants with charity and love, from the fullness of our hearts.”

In addition to the Maronite Catholic Church, the other Eastern Catholic Churches represented at the Plenary Council are the Chaldean, Melkite, Syro-Malabar and Ukrainian Catholic Churches.

The leaders of those Eastern Catholic Churches in Australia are members of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

Access the archived version of this morning’s Mass [here](#).

Find out more about the Plenary Council at www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au

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