



MARONITE EPARCHY OF AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND AND OCEANIA

MEDIA RELEASE

Maronite Eparchy celebrates ten-year anniversary of Eparch's Episcopal Ordination

Sydney Australia, 26 May 2023 - The Maronite Bishop of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania, Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, has marked the tenth Anniversary of his Episcopal ordination.

A Thanksgiving Mass was held at Our Lady of Lebanon Co-Cathedral in Harris Park (NSW) on 26 March, to celebrate the occasion, in the presence, of His Grace Archbishop Robert Rabbat, Eparch of the Melkite Eparchy of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania and President of the Australian Middle Eastern Churches, Metropolitan Basilios Kodsieh, Metropolitan of the Antiochian orthodox Church in Oceania and Reverend Monsignor Basil Sousanian, Head of the Armenian Catholic Church in Australia, Msgr Marcelino Youssef the Vicar General of the Eparchy. The Occasion was also marked by the presence of Bishop Tarabay's family including his mother Mrs Maria Tarabay, from Lebanon.

In his address to the congregation, which comprised Superiors of Maronite religious orders in Australia, Clergy from across the Eparchy, Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family, representatives of Maronite organisations and faithful from Maronite Parishes across the State, Bishop Tarabay said, "It is because of the love that emanates from each one of you that we continue to grow as a community, united in our shared mission to proclaim the Good News and to live out the Gospel in our daily lives."

In 2013, Bishop Tarabay was appointed as Maronite Bishop of Australia by Pope Francis and was ordained by His Beatitude and Eminence Mar Bechara Boutros Cardinal Rai, Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, on May 25 of that year. He was formally installed as fourth Bishop of the Maronite Diocese of Australia during a ceremony held at St Maroun's Cathedral in Redfern on 3 June, 2013.

Following his ordination, Bishop Tarabay wholeheartedly embraced his role as a leader and servant, under his chosen motto of “Faithfulness and Openness”.

As the first Eastern Catholic Bishop ever to be elected to the Permanent Committee of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference and to the Bishops' Commission for the Plenary Council of Australia, Bishop Tarabay's leadership has been characterised by a deep commitment to service and a dedication to the growth of the Maronite community in Australia. Importantly, his focus has also been on promoting and preserving the rich Maronite history, heritage and traditions now and for future generations.

Indeed, during a visit in May 2017, His Eminence Leonardo Cardinal Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for Oriental Churches spoke of the great richness and the treasures of liturgy and spirituality that the Maronite Church, along with other Eastern Churches, brings to Australia, after presenting Bishop Tarabay with a medal from His Holiness Pope Francis.

Under the leadership of Bishop Tarabay, the Maronite Eparchy has seen seven new parishes flourish around Australia, 20 new priests ordained to serve, two new aged care homes, and the expansion in 2021 of its boundaries to include New Zealand and all countries in Oceania, at the request of the Maronite Synod of Bishops and with the advice of Cardinal Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for Oriental Churches.

In all, said Bishop Tarabay, “One of the greatest highlights of my journey has been my connection with the wonderful Maronite youth of our Eparchy, whom I consider the joy of our Church. And this year, celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the official establishment of the Eparchy with all the graces it has already brought and the blessings to come.

“There is still much work to be done, many lives to touch, and many souls to bring closer to God's love. But let us take comfort in knowing that it is through love that we will continue to thrive and make a difference in the world around us.”

Bishop Tarabay's episcopate has truly embodied his motto - Faithfulness and Openness - reflecting his commitment to his ministry and faithfully upholding the living faith, rich heritage, and values of the Maronite community in a diverse land.

ENDS