



Maronite Catholic Society of Australia Inc.

Media Statement

Maronite Catholic Society Responds to Controversial Mardi Gras action

Sydney, Australia – March 6, 2025 –The Maronite Catholic Church expresses concern over a recent footage and images of a drag performer at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, which many interpret as mocking Jesus Christ and His crucifixion, causing significant distress among many people of Christian faith. Such depictions deeply offend those who hold their faith and religious figures and events sacred, hurt individuals and communities and undermine the shared values that allow us to coexist harmoniously in a pluralistic society.

While we respect the right to freedom of expression, the portrayal of religious figures and events in this manner challenges the spirit of mutual respect and tolerance that is essential in a diverse society like Australia. This is particularly so when offensive words or imagery target beliefs that are deeply sacred to millions of Australians and billions of people around the world.

His Excellency bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay said: ‘The Church has long condemned actions that disrespect religious figures or events, as they can undermine the shared values that allow communities to coexist in harmony and tolerance’. "We call on all to consider the impact of their actions on others, especially when it comes to matters of faith that constitute the foundation of many people's lives.’

Mr John Chedid, president of the Maronite Catholic Society said: ‘While we recognise the complexities of today’s society, freedom should never come at the cost of the dignity of others or the sacredness of religious beliefs. And while many Christians felt hurt by this action, we choose to respond not with anger or condemnation, but with a heart open to healing and reconciliation, with hope that such mockery of our faith will not happen again’.

To be clear, our Church also affirms its unwavering commitment to inclusivity and compassion. We continue to stand by our belief that all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, are beloved children of God. However, our commitment to love and acceptance does not mean we condone actions that mock or disrespect deeply held religious beliefs.

We encourage a respectful dialogue across diverse communities, fostering a deeper understanding of the impact that expressions, particularly those targeting sacred symbols or events, can have on others. We call for a renewed commitment to mutual respect and responsibility, where freedom of expression is balanced with a recognition of the importance of protecting sacred beliefs. Australia’s diverse society thrives when we uphold the dignity of all and mutual respect for the values and beliefs that different communities hold dear.

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