



MARONITE EPARCHY OF AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND AND OCEANIA

MEDIA RELEASE

Maronite Eparchy announces Golden Jubilee for 2023, unveils emblem

Sydney Australia 19 December 2022 - In 2023, the Maronite Eparchy of Australia will celebrate its Golden or 50 Year Jubilee under the theme - *The Maronites in Australia: A Journey of Holiness and Openness*.

The establishment of a Maronite Eparchy or Diocese, and the election of the first Maronite Bishop on 13 July 1973, was a historic event in the life of the Maronite Community in Australia. It also pointed to the significance of the Antiochian Syriac Eastern identity of the Maronite Catholic Church.

The Jubilee Year is set to begin on Thursday 9 February, on the Feast of St Maroun, the Spiritual Father of the Maronites, and centres around a National tour of his relics, along with the relics of Saint Charbel, Saint Rafqa, Saint Nehmetallah, and Australia's first Saint, Mary of the Cross MacKillop.

Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, Eparch of the Maronite Catholic Church in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania said, "What better way to celebrate a Golden Jubilee in the country which has provided us Maronites with hope and opportunity for over 170 years, than to come together as one community, to venerate these saints who remain our inspiration. It is a chance for us to know more about their lives and follow in their footsteps.

"This Year is also an opportunity for us to seek to imitate the virtues of the Holy Family of Nazareth, and to celebrate our unique religious and liturgical Antiochian traditions and cultural heritage."

The Maronites' story of migration and dispersion across the world, including Australia, speaks to the unwavering spirit and strength of a people who – despite challenges – remained grounded in deep faith in God, and worked to preserve and promote Maronite faith traditions.

“It is time to reflect on and give thanks to the Lord our God, who has gathered us in faith and communion,” added Bishop Tarabay. “It is my prayer that this Jubilee Year will awaken our faith to a deeper level, energise our spiritual fervor, and move our hearts to repentance and conversion. I also hope the Year will warm our parishes with a renewed commitment to our faith in God and to our spiritual Antiochian Aramaic heritage as reflected in the life of the Church fathers and saints.”

The program of celebrations for the Golden Jubilee has been revealed along with the official emblem for the Golden Jubilee in 2023, the design and elements of which embody the essence of faith and spirituality. The logo reflects, in the colours and symbolism of the emblem, the journey of the Maronites across the seas to this vast land, Australia.

The Golden Jubilee Year of the Maronite Eparchy of Australia, which in 2021 was expanded to include New Zealand and Oceania, will include multiple cultural, religious and community events to unite communities and raise awareness of the richness of Australia’s diverse heritage and the beauty of Eastern Catholic traditions.

The Year will culminate in a visit from His Beatitude and Eminence Mar Bechara Boutros Cardinal Rai, Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, Cardinal of the Universal Church, in September.

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Please note

A Jubilee media resource booklet has been provided at the link below. The booklet includes:

- Golden Jubilee prayer
- Message from Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay regarding the Jubilee
- A brief history of the Maronite Church in Australia
- A chronological snapshot of our Maronite Eparchy from 1973-2023
- A calendar of planned events for 2023
- Golden Jubilee emblem and explanation

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/170m2C-SCO7mXPt_hl0uIkAtYDJdO6SN9?usp=sharing

Images supplied upon request.

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