



MARONITE EPARCHY OF AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND AND OCEANIA

Press Release

Our Lady of Lebanon Co-Cathedral Marks the Feast of the Assumption with Solemn Mass and Community Celebration

Sydney, August 17, 2025- On Thursday, 14 August, His Excellency Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, Maronite Bishop of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania, presided over a solemn Mass at the Our Lady of Lebanon Co-Cathedral in Harris Park to mark the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was assisted by Father Danny Nough, Dean of the Co-Cathedral, and many other priests from across the Maronite Eparchy.

Many parishioners came to attend the Mass, joining dignitaries and clergy in marking the Feast of the Assumption, as the celebration concluded two weeks of spiritual activities that began on 1 August, including daily Masses, Rosary prayers, Eucharistic adorations, and community events.

The Mass was attended by distinguished guests, including: The Hon Ms Donna Davis, Member for Parramatta, Temporary Speaker, representing the Premier of NSW, the Hon Chris Minns; Ms Julia Finn, Member for Granville, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and for the Arts; Mr Pierre Habshi, Vice-Consul for Economic Affairs at the U.S. Consulate-General, Sydney; Councillor Martin Zaiter, Lord Mayor of the City of Parramatta; Councillor Michael Zaiter, Deputy Mayor of Cumberland City Council, and the religious sisters of the Maronite Holy Family.

In his homily, Bishop Tarabay reflected on the spiritual significance of the Assumption, saying: "Come in peace, O Temple of the Holy Spirit; you are the dwelling place of God the Most High! ... She is the ladder which bridges heaven and earth so that angels may descend to earth, and we humans can climb to heaven."

He also emphasised the importance of hope in this Jubilee year, announcing new initiatives such as the Maronite Teresa Centre and the Maronite Centre for Evangelisation, aimed at supporting families and strengthening faith formation across the Eparchy.

Bishop Tarabay added: "May this Feast of the Assumption renew in us a deeper love for Our Lady, the Mother who always leads us to her Son. As we lift our hearts to heaven with her today, let us commit ourselves to living her example of faith and service."

Father Danny Nough spoke of the deep meaning of the feast for the faithful, and said, "This feast reminds us of the hope we carry, that one day, we too may be in heaven with Our Lady, the angels, and all the saints. Her Assumption, body and soul into heaven, is a promise from Our Lord that we are offered the same opportunity: to share eternal life with Him."

Following the liturgical celebration, the community gathered for a vibrant festival featuring traditional Lebanese food, music, and fellowship. A highlight of the evening was the serving of "Hrisseh," a dish prepared by parish volunteers.

One of the volunteers, Ms Therese Jelwen, who arrived in Australia 60 years ago, shared her heartfelt connection to the feast, "The Feast of Our Lady is very important to us. The Virgin Mary is our mother, the mother of all. She brings us together, uniting our families and our children. These spiritual celebrations help keep our youth and future generations connected to their heritage and traditions. Today, we gather to celebrate this special feast and prepare the traditional dish of hrisseh for everyone to enjoy."

The Feast of the Assumption continues to be a cornerstone of Maronite identity and devotion in Australia, bringing together generations in faith, culture, and community.

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