

Archbishop Stylianos (Harkianakis)

BIOGRAPHY

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When asked to write about Archbishop Stylianos of blessed memory, there was a hesitation. How could I really write about this person who was my second father, and, by God's grace, guided the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia for forty-four years through vulnerable and critical times? On thinking about it, I felt it my obligation to write about some of my personal experiences with this saintly giant of the Church, especially since I served as his personal deacon for seven years.

We know that he was born in Rethymnon, Crete on December 29, 1935. He was the son of a great war hero and rightly took his heroic name: Stylianos Harkianakis. The example of his father made this child strong and resilient, ready to fight every battle. In World War II his father was one of the leaders of the local resistance against the invading Nazi forces. This heroic father would only visit the family home in the early hours of the morning so that he would avoid the German curfews and surveillance. Young Stylianos would be sleeping, so his father would leave an unloaded pistol on his pillow for him to awake and be glad that his brave father had visited and was protecting him and his country. Eventually, the Germans caught his father with some other fighters too, and made them dig their own graves. Before they were about to shoot him, he jumped out of his grave and killed the leader of the Germans with his small Cretan dagger before being martyred for his country.

Archbishop Stylianos was from the Cretan village of Adele which is located near Arcadi, the famous monastery where revolutionaries and heroes against the oppressive Ottoman Turks were fighting and died in

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the 1860s. He had a simple village upbringing. He was certainly inspired by his brave parents. He loved his poor family but never allowed family to take precedence. His widowed mother's great love always gave him strength and inspiration. He loved his mother. She died at the same time St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College in Sydney started its life in February 1986. Archbishop Stylianos was the founder and inspiration of this Theological College, and his dedication to the work of the Lord through the opening of the College did not allow him to go to his mother's funeral in Greece.

The family's poverty made him focus on the matters of virtue and faith. He strove to find a way to live in dignity. Circumstances made it clear to him he had to be the top student at school and later at university, so he could receive scholarships to continue and complete his education. His hardworking nature and God-given sharp intellect meant he went to Holy Trinity School in the Cretan city of Hania and the Theological College of Halki in Constantinople. Late in 1957 he was ordained to the diaconate. His saintly Spiritual Father (Γέροντα) Metropolitan Iakovos of Ikonium was his dean at Halki. Stylianos wrote about his Γέροντα: "The most complete person that I have been blessed to meet, and who contrary to all anticipation—was literally able to 'allure' me to the priesthood."¹ In other words, if it was not for Metropolitan Iakovos, Stylianos would not have continued his studies at Halki. Fortunately, Iakovos and other hierarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate saw the great potential of this young man to lead. They helped him to understand that it is the manly and brave thing to be a leader in the Church. No doubt, running through his mind he would have questioned being a celibate clergyman and would have had thoughts of marrying, or being a captain of one of those ships that went past the Princes' Islands in Propontis, Turkey, or even to become a medical doctor. Metropolitan Iakovos would say to him the Church leadership does not want weaklings "fed with butter" (βουτυρόπαιδα) but brave and lively men. These words

1 Archbishop Stylianos of Australia, *In Memory of Metropolitan Iakovos of Ikonium* (Sydney: St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College, 1994), 13. The original Greek text appeared in *Ἐστία Θεολόγων Χάλκης*, Athens, 1980.

from his Γέροντα and other great hierarchs at the time gave his person great direction.

Upon graduating from Halki and being ordained to the priesthood in 1958 he received a scholarship from the Ecumenical Patriarch to complete postgraduate studies in Systematic Theology and Philosophy of Religion at the University of Bonn in Western Germany (1958-1966). He submitted his doctoral dissertation entitled *The Infallibility of the Church in Orthodox Theology* at the Athens University in 1965, and at the same time, he was starting his great literary career as one of the most genuine modern existential Greek poets and literary critics in all the Greek diaspora. After Stylianos had completed his mainstream studies, he was elected as Abbot of the historical Vlatadon Monastery in Thessaloniki, where he created the important Patriarchal Institute of Patristic Studies (1966), and was unanimously elected Metropolitan of Militoupolis and Exarch of Mt Athos. The Patriarchal Institute was set up for people to study and be inspired by the Church Fathers. Eventually, he also buried his beloved Γέροντα Metropolitan Iakovos there as well.

Upon completing his post-doctoral dissertation under the title *The Dogmatic Constitution De Ecclesia of the Second Vatican Council* (Thessaloniki) in 1969 he became Associate Professor at the University of Thessaloniki in the same year and taught at the University of Regensburg, West Germany in 1973. In the years that followed he taught at Faculties and academic institutions in Greece and abroad. For his outstanding contribution to European Culture he was nominated by the distinguished philologist of the University of Vienna, Professor Albin Lesky to receive the prestigious international award Gottfried von Herder in Vienna, 1973. In 1980, he was nominated by the renowned writer Pantelis Prevelakis to receive the award for poetry from the Academy of Athens. The University of Lublin, Poland, conferred on him an Honorary Doctorate (1985), while the Sydney College of Divinity and its then Dean Dr Raymond Nobbs conferred on him the first ever degree of Doctor of Theology *Honoris Causa* (2001). In Dr Nobbs' citation he mentions the reason for the conferral: to coincide

with the 25th Anniversary of his enthronement and to acknowledge his “outstanding contribution to the church and the Australian community, and to honour him for the quality of his theological scholarship.”² Dr Nobbs also highlighted his many qualifications, his teaching, his publications theological and poetical, his establishment and growth of parishes, his many ordinations of priests and bishops, his efforts of dialogue with the Anglicans, Catholic and Uniting Churches and the establishment of many benevolent institutions and schools. In 2005, he was acknowledged as a Professor, the first one by an independent academic panel of the Sydney College of Divinity. In 2014, he received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Crete. He accepted the above nominations as they were relevant to his person, however, what needs to be noted here is that he was offered other doctorates and orders but refused them. His focus was not on personal accolades or publicity but how he could project the truth of the Church. It was this attitude that he tried to imbue in all of his students and clergy.

Daily Life

He was always inspired by theologians, monks, great writers, poets, and artists of his time, and of course, by those he read from previous epochs whose works he used to always read and appreciate. But most of all he was inspired by the ordinary self-sacrificed person in pain. He always took notice of you! Even waiters who served him on an official table noticed he would make a point of acknowledging them, and thanking a particular waiter for the slightest thing he/she would do for him. Yet another example of his deep appreciation: when young people performed traditional dancing or a play in front of him, he would stop everything to watch them perform to cast focus on them not on himself.

Archbishop Stylianos had a habit of going for a daily walk. This was precious time for him to try and keep fit and relax. What was amazing was that he would acknowledge everyone who walked past him. There was no exception, everyone was important to him. Walking the

2 Cited from the electronic version of Dr Nobb’s citation.

same path for many years meant he saw the regular strangers as friends. One memory of our walks was that on a daily basis we would see a young schoolgirl all alone at the bus stop every morning. We would always say hello. After months of acknowledging her and bidding her good morning she eventually found the courage to talk to us and we found out she was an orphan from a Greek Orthodox family. From that point onwards she became like an adopted daughter and Archbishop Stylianos made sure she had whatever she needed. Another instance was when an epileptic bike rider fell in front of him on the road having a severe fit. Archbishop Stylianos stayed as this person was kicking and pushing while I went to call the ambulance in a house nearby. He was moved by any person or any other part of God's creation in pain.

In his everyday workplaces, in his office, and in the buildings of the Archdiocese in general, he saw everyone under him not as his employees, but as valuable coworkers with whom he was open and ready to share. He would never say: "who are you (a priest or a lay person) to tell me what to do?" He was always willing to listen and see the good in a person of good intentions. When people were hypocritical, deceitful or pompous, Archbishop Stylianos' fury was great and would be heard and felt. It was like a tornado. I remember one such occasion when a large parish community hall installed gambling machines. Archbishop Stylianos heard about it and he rang the parish priest and said, "if they are not out by tomorrow, it will lead to you being defrocked and the closure of your Church!" They were out the next day. This firm and uncompromising example as a genuine Orthodox hierarch meant the Church and its people were protected. There was no room for political or material favours and manoeuvres.

Throughout the duration of his life he was a tough Cretan, but his heart was like a young child. He trusted people, especially people close to him. He could not imagine that they would do him harm. This was sometimes a weak point of his, to the degree that these people took advantage of him. However, he would always say "It's better for me to make a mistake and suffer than to take someone the wrong way

and let that person suffer unjustly.” The amazing thing was that God always protected him and eventually he would put deceitful people and even whole communities rightly in their place. This meant sometimes isolating people and whole communities for years to allow them to think about their mistakes and repent. This stand-off was painful, but the only way for them to come to their senses.

He was a sponge that soaked everything up. His great talent meant others relied on him να βγάλει το φίδι από την τρύπα (to take “the snake out of the hole,” as he used to say) or to even simply pass their assignments in their Halki study years. Indeed, as his students we are eternally indebted to him for tirelessly going through our essays and teaching us to live and breathe theology. Over the years he built up an extensive theological and literary library of books that he actually possessed and had read. He has donated this library to St Andrew’s Theological College for future generations and it can be seen in the large hall of the College. His well-known markings in pages of almost every book he read show that he could “pick the bones” out of any book. Indeed, sleepless nights from the pressure of keeping patriarchs, bishops, priests and committees, individuals and himself on track meant that he read, prayed and cried well into the early hours of the morning. The beauty of all this struggle was that it gave birth to deep experiential and religious poetry, writings and lectures. We were all in awe when he would bring the challenges of the Church into the classroom for us to learn. This was something that you could not experience unless you were face to face with this great hierarch. Then he would write incredible treatises in ecclesiology and theology where he would solidify his thought. For example, the blueprint for the Modern Synod of Bishops around the world under the Ecumenical Patriarchate was his very idea. Every month we would see amazing articles in the *Voice of Orthodoxy* or the monthly *Vema* of the Church, not to mention all his articles in theological journals! Finally, it needs to be said that on a daily basis he kept a detailed and possibly incriminating diary, a packed page-a-day! It was here that he wrote all the details about his daily life experiences: joys and anguish. Only a few years ago Archbishop Stylianos had

ordered these to be burned by Archimandrite Kyrillos Zisis, his much loved and dedicated personal secretary who cared for the Archbishop day and night.

His integrity, academic achievements and his early elevation to a bishop of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (1970) were revered and feared! The Hand of God acted in his election as the Archbishop of Australia as early as 1975. As with many young, capable and honest people many would have thought 'let's get him away from central decision making', but, on the contrary, he was placed on centre stage from "down under"! He became a shepherd to a turbulent Greek Orthodox community of some 800,000 challenged but focused migrants and their families and sort to bring his flock to feed in green pastures. The previous Archbishop Ezekiel had resigned in the face of this challenge and decided to leave. The Australian Greek community was divided and in turmoil with no support from anywhere. There was no leader.

On his arrival on April 15, 1975 a lot of excited people came to the airport to welcome this young Archbishop and he embraced the people from day one. He was enthroned on Lazarus Saturday April 26, 1975. The faithful had their hopes pinned on him, and rightly so, as this man by the grace of God was to turn the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia into an example to so many Churches and hierarchs around the world. He definitely filled the space in a blessed way and this was without fanfare and mass media.

The Archbishop's faith and strength were tested immediately. As I said, he had to deal with a divided community, schismatic priests and communities, unsupportive Greek and Australian governments, power hungry media moguls against the Church, our own difficult parish communities, no money in the Archdiocese's bank accounts, only part time volunteer staff to work with and certainly no Archbishop's car or residence. To help the reader of this article understand the poor state of affairs it is worth noting that when the Archbishop had to leave for the Roman Catholic Dialogue overseas on a yearly basis he would leave his

personal bank book with Archimandrite Stephanos to pay the wages of the few employees they did have.

Indeed, ever since I have known Archbishop Stylianos, he was basically doing the work of numerous people to keep everything running smoothly. He was called to help patriarchs, bishops, priests and lay men and women around the world. His capabilities were numerous and his pen was the sharpest of swords. He tried to balance everything in this great but difficult and anything but 'easy going' country. As well as looking after a whole continent, he was thrust into with what was happening on the world stage with his inspired knowledge of ecclesiology. He travelled this vast continent on his own with no support staff, not even a deacon. He did this to save on resources. He even avoided having a car for many years to save money. Despite the poverty of the Archdiocese he would not ask for handouts. Once the Archdiocese had eventually bought an old car, one wealthy person had offered to buy a new car. The Archbishop refused and said when the Archdiocese can afford it we will buy a better car. He focused on strengthening the Church spiritually and financially by his own sacrifices.

When Archbishop Stylianos arrived in your city it was as though one of the first apostles had arrived. He did not rely on media to announce, record or disseminate his visit. He made such an impression on you that Christ's light shone in your heart. He had great patience to put up with difficult circumstances. He only wanted the best for the Church and for this reason he would not allow misguided people at whatever level to take advantage of the Orthodox Church in Australia or abroad. This is why his leadership as the Orthodox elected head of the Roman Catholic-Orthodox dialogue for 20 years (1980-2000) gave us all hope.

Let us look at some of the challenges he had to deal with. Abroad, an example was when he was sent as an exarch or auditor to America. After his month-long auditing program throughout all America, he prepared a detailed report for the Patriarchate that would have made all American Greek Orthodox of integrity hopefully think twice about

where they were heading. The seven year struggle to put the Jerusalem Patriarch Diodoros in his place for trying to take advantage of the Church in Australia showed his tenacity to the point of calling a special Synod to bring the patriarch to account.³ He fought with fanatics both in Australia and abroad. Whoever it was, his leadership was as if Christ was present. His integrity and genuine selflessness protected his flock and his priests and their families against governments, church leaders, committees and mass media. He was in these matters uncompromising, and indeed, the guard dog of Hellenism and Orthodoxy. This of course did affect him and his health. Can you imagine doing the Holy Liturgy and having misguided fanatical people demonstrating outside with placards and then coming into the Church while he was giving a sermon and shouting insults? Or can you imagine being degraded unjustly on an almost daily basis in the media so as to sell their newspapers? This was the case with a certain Greek-Australian media personality. Archbishop Stylianos suffered so much. However, be assured God did strengthen him as he did all the saints in difficult times.

Clergy-Laity Congresses and the Parish System

His direction in ecclesiastical matters was prominent from the 4th to 11th Clergy-Laity Congresses where he led the Church in Australia in a positive and creative dialogue with the delegates from each parish-community, politicians from Greece and Australia and representatives from the Ecumenical Patriarchate.⁴ I will not go into the details of these congresses but it is worthy to note Archbishop Stylianos always endeavoured to have them published in pastoral reports. In the congresses there was a democratic election of the Archdiocesan council that worked in synergy with the Archbishop for important decision making.

What is worth mentioning is that when Archbishop Stylianos came

3 Archbishop Stylianos of Australia, 'Minutes of the Greater and Supreme Synod held in Phanar, Constantinople,' *Voice of Orthodoxy* 4:8 (August, 1993).

4 'Archbishop Stylianos of Australia, 'Clergy-Laity Congress and Protesting "Democrats,"' *Voice of Orthodoxy* 10:1-2 (January and February, 1989): 12-14.

to Australia one of his first ecclesiastical landmarks was the introduction of the parish system (Ενορίες). This meant any new communities that wanted to establish a Church did this in tandem with the Archdiocese. A new parish would put all its land and buildings under the ‘safety net’ of the Archdiocese Consolidated Trust which was recognised by an Act of Parliament passed under Archbishop Stylianos’ jurisdiction. This helped to curtail the audacity of politically driven committees and sometimes even priests. All new parishes were now accountable to the parishioners and the people elected by all parish-communities at the previous Clergy Laity Congress who formed the Archdiocesan Council. This meant priests, Churches and committees could now focus on the salvation of their flock. Misguided people could not use our Churches as a political and financial platform. One can only imagine how much resistance there was against this proper ecclesiastical system being introduced and we are eternally grateful to Archbishop Stylianos’ strength and sensitivity to introduce this. Also under Archbishop Stylianos it is worthy of note that many older parish-communities in Sydney and Melbourne came under the Archdiocese either directly under the Consolidated Trust, or indirectly, under the banner of the Archdiocese as they all realised that being away from the true Body of Christ was spiritual isolation.

Philanthropy

The amazing thing about Archbishop Stylianos was his sensitivity to his fellow human beings. He was always grateful for the great and small things you did for him. He welcomed anyone to discuss a problem if you were genuine. He would encourage you and support you in your endeavours. He had great attention to detail and he would always use the famous quote: “the devil is in the detail.” To underpin those in need he worked with Priests and lay people to allow the Greek Welfare Centres around Australia to flourish. These Centres would offer great comfort to many people around Australia in a systematic way. Now the Greek Welfare centre in Sydney alone employs scores of people.

It was his initiative to establish ProviCare (‘providence’ of God

and human ‘care’) to assist with growing numbers of victims of alcohol, drug abuse and homeless. This endeavour was later incorporated into the work of the Greek Welfare centre.

He personally would never keep anything for himself. Whatever people gave him personally he would give out to people soon thereafter. All gifts given to him personally he would pass on. He would support financially poor organisations in the Church, especially St Andrews Theological College. He even sponsored children in Africa. He encouraged myself and others to raise money for Africa, especially for the Congo, and attended our fundraisers. He rarely asked people for money. Also, very rarely would he accept gifts as he knew the obligation of accepting a gift meant he had his hands tied to pastor and guide the giver. And as I said he was a very proud man and preferred to do without rather than to have things easy. However, I do remember his rare personal *σταυροφορία*, sitting for hours on the telephone to raise money to buy the rental property on the Kingsway, Caringbah to support specifically St Andrews Theological College for generations to come.

Archbishop Stylianos would even support the priests in new and financially unstable parishes or a priest’s family who may have been going through a crisis from his own wages or the central Philoptochos. He helped not only clergy but lay people asking for help in Australia and overseas. This I experienced with my own eyes and ears as I was his personal deacon for seven years and I would see the receipts generated in the office from his personal donations from gifts people or parishes had given him. Also, when he ordained someone, he made sure he was allocated full-time to a parish and endeavoured to secure the necessary wages for his family. At every Clergy-Laity conference one of his greatest concerns was the welfare and wages of his priests not for his own remuneration.

He was a great example to other hierarchs and priests. Indeed, he was always careful to keep his vestments simple and few and

encouraged his bishops and other clergy to do the same so as not to scandalise the people with expensive crowns, antiques or ecclesiastical robes. He refused to be driven in too expensive cars and never allowed his priests to drive expensive brand cars. He was sensitive to the needs of those in need. He lived with the bare necessities. He hardly ever watched television. He did not have a personal TV, computer or mobile. At Ashfield, he lived on the top story of the offices of St Basil's. He did not have his own home. He eventually moved to a small unit at Brighton Le Sands for many years. The Archdiocese wanted to put this unit at Brighton in his name, however, he refused. His thoughts were embedded in the Jerusalem on high. Everything was focused on the Church. He wanted no property in his name, like a true *ἀνάργυρος* (unmercenary)!

He had a sense of charity because of his love for his fellow human beings and all of the natural creation. He would find beauty in a small ant or a dead tree. It was once recounted to me that in one of our churches on a Holy Thursday, during the stillness of the seventh Gospel, a rat come out of a crack in the floor in open view of all the congregation and went straight to the foot of the cross. It sniffed around the cross and then went directly to the Archbishop's throne and sniffed and scratched around his staff and then disappeared straight down his little hole. The Archbishop had the sensitivity to say, "Even the rats want to get a blessing"! Another instance was when we were serving at another church with a great crowd of people, the children were very loud, and the committee came to escort them out. From the throne the Archbishop shouted out to the committee "Stop! Leave the children where they are, their crying is indeed their pure offering of prayer."

He was a man with a big heart. He would expose himself in his writings and sermons to the point where misguided people misunderstood him. The reality was that he made you feel comfortable next to him and that he was a down to earth, genuine human being with both feet on the ground. He had nothing to hide. This is why he helped so many people. He was well informed and well read and with the grace of God was able

to help people of all walks of life and find solutions that others could not imagine. This had to do with his unique creativity as an inspired poet and his great love for his fellow human beings and all of creation.

Youth

At the National and State Youth conferences that he initiated, he would always use his creativity to give an appealing name and motto to a conference. He would write the keynote paper in an inspired manner or invite inspiring guest speakers from overseas to have a positive and creative dialogue with young people. You never felt that he was preaching to you. Whatever he said, you knew he put into practice. He was not a fake. He would always endeavour to publish the papers delivered at the youth conferences so that young people could have a record. He encouraged our clergy to set up parish fellowships and each assistant bishop to liaise with him for the Central Youth Committees (CYCs) in each State.

In NSW he gave direction to the Christian Brotherhood of Ἐνωσις and Κύκλος to set up balanced education and training of their members and to help with teaching in Sunday Schools. He also encouraged them and the Holy Monastery of the Mother of God, Pantanassa to prepare materials for teaching in Special Religious Education in Public Schools (Scripture). These materials have become an amazing resource and you can follow their progress online.

The child in him would always connect with children and young people. As mentioned above, when he went to plays or dancing performances where young people were performing in parishes he was genuinely interested and his face would light up in front of the joy of the young people performing before him. When he came to my parish, St Stylianos Church, Gympie in Sydney, after presiding at the Holy Liturgy he would then participate in feast day celebrations and be genuinely focused on the young people performing and the young people noticed this. He encouraged any uplifting creative arts and performances as he

knew this is what would mould their character and help them in this hard world. He emphasised the freedom of the human person and did not try to compartmentalise people into ghettos or exclusive 'christian' communities. He even established the two-hundred member Millennium Choir of the Archdiocese that sang at the Sydney 2000 Olympics. He always tried to be on the wavelength of young people. He encouraged them to be bilingual and not forget their roots. He himself would always speak bilingually. He did allow English to be used in Services wherever it was required and established catechism courses for those who wanted to convert to Orthodoxy. When Greek governments were supportive he arranged group excursions for hundreds of young people to see and experience Greece. Indeed, I was one of those young travellers who was mesmerised in one of these trips to Greece.

Clergy

With his clergy he taught by example and never dictated to those who had good intentions. When he arrived in Australia, it was normal for clergy to wear suits and few had beards. This changed under his direction and love for the clergy so that they could give a good clerical witness. As I mentioned above, he would endeavour to help his clergy to be dedicated parish priests so that they could serve their parishioners full time and also look after their families. He encouraged married clergy, their wives (πρεσβυτέρες) and their families. Indeed, one year he ran a whole national conference on 'Women in the Church'. He was careful about ordaining celibate clergy as he knew it was difficult for them in the world. He knew how lonely a road it was. He encouraged clergy to have a clean presence and even their hands and fingernails to be clean. He regarded their fingers to be like burning Paschal candles and that they have no right to have dirty hands; nor did they have the right to take their hand away from people to kiss and get a blessing.

He loved monasticism and gave the blessing for monasteries to be established in Sydney, Geelong and Perth. The significance of having a Spiritual Father was paramount to him. In his Halki days he

related to us the unique experience of the confessor coming from Mt Athos to guide him and the young future leaders in the Church. He was responsible for bringing out to Australia as early as in 1977 Saint Paisios and Archimandrite Vasileios Gontikakis, the then Abbot of Stavronikita. This great modern day saint and the inspired Abbot were his friends! This then started a yearly pilgrimage of monks from Mount Athos to come and hear confession of the flock from Stavronikita, Iviron, Koutloumoussi, Simonopetra, Great Lavra, Vatopedi and Agios Pavlos Monasteries. This unique experience of balanced confessors coming from Mt Athos helped Greek-Australians immeasurably and we look forward to this continuing.

Nursing Homes, Estia Foundation, Day Schools, St John's Care, Retreat Centre and Government

Archbishop Stylianos was the driving force behind the establishment of St Basils nursing homes. Through his leadership the bequests of Sister Dorothea and Mr Lourandos started our humble beginnings and then the Church developed an array of nursing homes and aged care services. Today St Basils has some of the best and awarded nursing homes in Australia and supports hundreds of elderly people in a genuine caring nonprofit manner. I am sure others in this edition will comment on this great organisation of the Archdiocese.

Another blessed organisation that was established by Archbishop Stylianos to serve disabled people is the Estia Foundation. It started from St Andrew's parish, Gladesville and has developed into an organisation serving hundreds of people with disabilities in a very special way.

The vision and establishment of six bilingual Greek Orthodox day schools in Australia is another of his incredible achievements. These are full time primary and high schools around Australia. These have been a great blessing for our children and will continue to be. We are eternally grateful for this inspiration and pray through his prayers that these continue to expand.

What was amazing about Archbishop Stylianos was that the State and Federal governments trusted and revered him. He knew well the responsibility of the church in political matters.⁵ He remained Archbishop in the company of prime minister after prime minister, and premier after premier. He was trusted to be at the helm of the Church. He avoided asking for money or favours. However, when there was a real need his integrity meant they were willing to support the projects of the Archdiocese at his rare request. This applied not only to the Estia Foundation but also St Basil's nursing homes, our Day Schools, St John's Community Care in Queensland, other welfare and education organisations and even the Youth retreat centre at Bribie Island in QLD.

St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College

St Andrew's was founded in 1986 as an Orthodox Christian tertiary institution with accreditation from local civil education authorities. During the Fourth Clergy-Laity Congress (1981), the delegates adopted Archbishop Stylianos' urgent proposal for the establishment of a Theological College. In May 1984 Archbishop Stylianos set up an Interim Committee to facilitate the future operation and curriculum of the College and on December 13, 1984, at a meeting of the Archdiocesan Property Trust, three committees were appointed to move forward: Building, Administrative and Academic. The opening of the Theological College was important for the overall mission of the Church in Australia. Indeed, the other Theological Colleges from different Christian confessions looked forward to what St Andrew's could offer in terms of the great scriptural commentaries, the writings of the Greek Fathers and Mothers, the Orthodox liturgy, iconography and spirituality. The College opened on February 23, 1986. This fine tertiary education facility has maintained from that point onwards high quality accredited awards in theology and related areas. The long standing affiliation with the Sydney College of Divinity has given direction and stability to St Andrew's. It has become a centre for

5 Archbishop Stylianos of Australia, 'The Responsibility of the Church in Political Matters,' *Voice of Orthodoxy* 10:5 (May, 1989): 55-56.

research and scholarship in Orthodox theology with a wide selection of tertiary courses, one of the biggest Orthodox libraries in the world, a peer reviewed journal, *Phronema*, notable other publications, a translation committee responsible for translations of services, and annual symposia. The College also invites national and international guest lecturers, contributes to conferences and departmental research seminars of various tertiary institutions in Australia and overseas and works in synergy with benevolent institutions of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. With God's grace and with the support of many around him, this was certainly the jewel of Archbishop Stylianos' achievements. About this great achievement and other achievements he would say: "Whatever good we have done is God's, the only thing that really belongs to us are our weaknesses and our sins." Indeed, he was not afraid to display his weaknesses for all to see and hear so as to keep himself humble.

On a personal level, it would suffice to say that he was the reason 'to lure' myself and my wife Eleni to come to Sydney to study theology. I was one of those first students at St Andrew's on February 23, 1986. Indeed, all of his students will always remember what he did for us all. All of us are so thankful to him with all our hearts. Once we saw this man, heard his lectures and experienced him we were captivated by God's grace.

Poetry and Writings

He had a deep, poetic, eloquent, sensitive and precise approach in word and writing. He was a master of etymology. He was well acquainted with other languages including German and English, and knew some Turkish and Latin of course. His knowledge of Ancient, Biblical, and 'Learned Greek' (καθαρεύουσα), but also demotic and modern Greek and his own Cretan idiom, was probably unique among our educated hierarchs in the world. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, his poetry, literary critiques and all other writings unlocked a world around him that was transfigured by God's grace. His pastoral, theological and poetic works

will continue to inspire people in all walks of life for decades to come. In particular, his poetry is a hidden treasure chest for all of us to open and my hope is to see it republished in a complete edition with a good English translation too.

Conclusion

My venerable Father of blessed memory, forty-four years ago you were called to be a captain of a sinking ship, a whole Continent surrounded by the Pacific, Indian and Antarctic Oceans. There was a gale blowing. The seas were rough and you walked on the water to meet the Saviour. The Saviour calmed the seas through you! You steered the ship to a safe harbour. Your legacy has allowed St Andrew to give his witness through all those you taught. We will never forget your bravery and your white martyrdom. You are a true 'Aussie hero', that the Mother of God took close to Her on the day of Her Annunciation. Please intercede for all of us Stylianos of Australia!