



Opening of the Law Term Service in NSW

Service conducted by Archbishop Stylianos at the Cathedral of the Annunciation of our Lady



*Left: Chief Justice of NSW the Hon. Tom Bathurst, His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos, His Grace Bishop Seraphim and Judges during their entry to the Cathedral.
Right: Judges in the Cathedral of the "Annunciation of our Lady" during the Service for the Opening of the Law Term 2017 in NSW.*

On Monday 6 February 2017, at the Cathedral of the "Annunciation of our Lady", His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos conducted the Service for the Opening of the Law Term 2017 in NSW.

Dignitaries present were His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church of Australia, the Very Reverend Father Miodrag Peric, representing His Grace Bishop Siluan of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Australia and New Zealand, His Grace Bishop Seraphim of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, the Hon. Mark Speakman SC, Attorney-General of NSW, the Hon. Tom Bathurst AC, Chief Justice of NSW, from the Supreme Court of NSW, Justice Natalie Adams, Richard White and Francois Kunc. Present from the Land and Environment Court were Justice Brian Preston, Chief Judge and Justice Terry Sheahan. From the District Court present were Chief Judge Derek Price and Justice John Hatzistergos, from the Local Court Chief Magistrate Judge Graeme Henson, from the Law Society of NSW the President Ms Pauline Wright, from the Bar Association Mr Noel Hutley (President) and Chrissa Loukas (Treasurer).

Also present were Dr Stavros Kyrimis, Consul-General of Greece and Mr Paul Floricel Mocanu, Consul General of Romania and Mr Branko Radosevic, Consul General of the Republic of Serbia, and many others.

In his address, His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos stated the following:

Your Honour, the Chief Justice Mr Tom Bathurst, other distinguished Justices, Judges, Members of the Judiciary and various Servants of the Law Profession, Reverend Clergy, sisters and brothers,

It is indeed with great spiritual pleasure that we meet once again in our Cathedral in order to pray with each other for a blessed, peaceful and fruitful Legal Term.

The Gospel reading that we have just read is, I believe, a sufficient reminder of the links between religion and law. Jesus went into the Synagogue, as it was His custom on the Sabbath, and read from the book of the Prophet Isaiah. All these elements and details: the time – Sabbath day, the place – Synagogue, the custom as the norm, and the action – reading from

the Prophets, are categories of law. For law is order. And order is harmony. And harmony is peace. And peace is the well-being of people and the glory of God.

Both Testament people, Jews and Christians, have always experienced religion in the form of law. At the same time, they have always respected law as a moral order coming immediately from God, even in the cases where forensic law is inspired immediately from natural law. The very concept of Testament is a genuine legal notion. At the same time, however, law as an expression of a moral will is a religious concept.

I do not think I need to elaborate more on religion and law in order to make clear how the Church understands the links between the two. The already mentioned interaction reveals a deep relationship between religion and law based on the faith that this visible universe has a Creator who is not indifferent towards its adventures.

If law and justice always deal with interpersonal relations as far as their legal and moral responsibility is

concerned, then it is quite clear that law and justice are placed on the same sacred level as religion. If the ultimate purpose of religion is the salvation of humanity and the glory of God, then it becomes obvious that the glory of God can be achieved only after and through the salvation of the human person. And this salvation is not a category concerning the life beyond. It begins already here and now. And our Lord Jesus Christ has passionately stressed the truth that the Kingdom of God is within us. In this Kingdom and for this salvation, your services are of unique importance. We know and we appreciate deeply the fact that quite often you must render justice under manifold pressures and dangers, even at the risk of your own life.

This is why we always pray for you. And this is why we shall always be immensely grateful to you on behalf of the whole community which loves peace, order and justice. God bless you, God enlighten you, and God save you now and throughout your whole life.



Left: Chief Justice of NSW, Tom Bathurst AC, during his speech. Right: Distinguished guests and students from St Spyridon College who attended the Service