



Group photo of the contributors and attendees of the Symposium.

St Andrew's Inaugural Theology Symposium 2015 A Great Success!

With the blessing of our College Dean, His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos of Australia, St Andrew's held its Inaugural Theology Symposium on the 9th and 10th October, 2015. The theme of the Theology Symposium was, "The Earth is the Lord's: Environmental Theology and Ethics", a topic centred on our Church's theological foundations on creation - more specifically, the world's sacredness and its consequences for the way we live our life.

His Eminence opened the Symposium with prayer and greeted the 130 attendees briefly introducing the three internationally renowned keynote speakers and thanking in advance the remaining twelve presenters for their willingness to present their latest scholarship at the Symposium. It goes without saying that the College is profoundly grateful for His Eminence's guidance, oversight and blessing without which both the Patristic and Theology Symposia would not be possible.

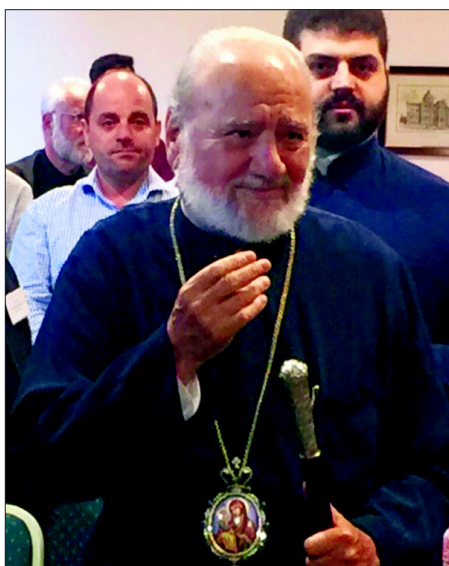
The three keynote speakers contributed to the topic from their own unique perspectives. These were:

1. The Revd Dr John Chrysavgis, Archdeacon of the Ecumenical Throne and Theological Advisor to the Ecumenical Patriarch on environmental issues. As is well known, Fr John has played a leading role in presenting the Orthodox Christian vision on ecological issues as evidenced in his numerous publications but also the countless presentations that he has given worldwide on this topic. The faithful in Australia are especially proud of Fr John's achievements as he was not only born and bred in Australia but was also the Founding Sub-Dean of our Theological College. The title of his paper was, "On Earth as in Heaven: The Theological Roots of our Ecological Crisis."

2. Professor Revd Denis Edwards, who is a Professorial Fellow in Theology at the Australian Catholic University in Adelaide. He is Australia's leading Roman Catholic theologian on environmental issues. His paper was entitled: "Earth as God's Creation: a Theological Exploration of Pope Francis's Recent Teaching." His paper offered an analysis of Pope Francis's new encyclical exploring its central teachings and application for our daily life.

3. Revd Dr Michael Trainor's address was entitled, "Heaven on Earth: Ecological Nuances from Luke's Gospel." Fr Michael is Senior Lecturer in the School of Theology at Australian Catholic University. In highlighting certain passages from the Gospel according to St Luke, Fr Michael's paper brought to the fore the ecological resonances throughout this Gospel.

The remaining twelve presenters were: Dr Mario Baghos (St Andrew's), Dr Graham Buxton (Tabor Col-



The College Dean, His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos of Australia

lege), Protopresbyter Doru Costache (St Andrew's), Dr Guy Freeland (St Andrew's), Dr Deborah Guess (University of Divinity), Professor James Harrison (Sydney College of Divinity), Dr Philip Kariatlis (St Andrew's), Revd Canon Professor Dorothy Lee (Trinity College), Dr Ian Mitchie (Macquarie University), Professor Neil Ormerod (Australian Catholic University), Sr Mary Tinney (Sisters of Mercy) and Professor Garry Trompf (University of Sydney and St Andrew's). The quality and clarity of all papers played an important role in the Symposium's success.

In reflecting on the keynote addresses - and more specifically on the first, it must be said that not only did Fr John remind us of our indissoluble link with all of God's creation, but also highlighted ways that we ought to relate with the world. In so doing, he provided three images to further identify this relationship which he designated as iconic, eucharistic and ascetic. In the same way an icon is a window into God's eternal kingdom, so too, according to Fr John, ought God's creation be seen as a sign of God's kingdom. Indeed, his paper reminded us of the importance of, "aspir[ing] to the in-

ner vision of all, the world as created and intended by God." Giving thanks to God for the whole of creation was the second point raised. Indeed, Fr John said: "walking on this planet and kneeling in church are tantamount to the same thing". It is precisely the divine Liturgy - the Eucharist - that should remind us to have an attitude of gratitude of all things, for all people and of course gratitude to God for his inestimable love for us. Thirdly, Fr John underlined that humanity's relationship with the world ought to be an ascetical one where we learn to deny ourselves a little - in this way being freed from our egocentricism - in order to value God's creation. This paper set the tone for all other papers, providing what the Eastern Orthodox tradition would see as the most important theological principles informing the way we ought to conduct our day to day life in this world.

The second keynote address by the Revd Prof. Denis Edwards provided a timely reflection on Pope Francis' recent teaching on the sacredness of the world in his most recent papal encyclical, *Laudato Si*. After outlining the convergence of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches on this issue, he turned his attention specifically to Pope Francis' teaching in which the inherent value of all things within creation - not just humankind - is affirmed. Created by God and therefore sacred, all of God's creation, according to Fr Denis, ought to be an opportunity for us to give thanks and glory to God leading us, in this way, to an encounter with God. The third of our keynote speakers, Revd Dr Michael Trainor's paper brought to the fore an often overlooked aspect of the New Testament; namely its attention and affirmation of the sacredness of creation. In specifically focusing his attention on the Gospel according to St Luke, Fr Michael reminded us of the importance of seeing the subtle ecological resonances running throughout the Scriptures.

The remaining presenters, together with the keynote speakers, provided an opportunity for all who attended to rethink the way that they relate with God's creation. Indeed, a common thread running through all the papers was their emphasis and call for human beings to become partakers/communicants - and not consumers - of the world together with a call to become the world's gentle carers so as to bring the entire created realm into God's kingdom. In this way, far from being merely speculative and abstract presentations, all papers sought to examine ways in which Christianity's theological vision of the world has practical consequences for the way we live our life here on earth - truly a transformative experience for all who attended.



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In addition to the presentations, we were especially blessed to be able to enjoy a byzantine music recital by the Melisma Ensemble, conducted by Dr Dimitri Koubaroulis with a selection of hymns directly related to creation. Of equal significance was the launch of a book entitled *Alexandrian Legacy: A Critical Appraisal* edited by the V. Revd Doru Costache, Dr Philip Kariatlis and Dr Mario Costache. The book was launched by Professor Carole Cusack from the University of Sydney. The volume brought together fourteen contributions relating to a range of aspects of the Alexandrian patristic tradition.

In their concluding remarks, the convenors of the symposium compared what they had experienced over the two days with the Gospel account of Christ's transfiguration. It was observed that in the same way that the apostle Peter said to the Lord, upon beholding him transfigured on Mt Tabor - with his face shining like the sun and his clothes dazzling white - that it would be good for all who attended the Symposium to remain within the transfigured atmosphere created over the two days. It truly was a transformational experience changing the way we behold and relate to all of God's creation. For this reason, the College would like to express its immense gratitude to all who presented - especially to the keynoted speakers - but at the same time to all who worked behind the scenes to make the Symposium a success. Finally, the College would like to express its gratitude to all who attended; indeed the College valued their presence, happy that it was able to host an event of mutual benefit to all who struggle to live their life on a daily basis doing what they do for the glory of His name and the salvation of their souls.

I'd like to end these thoughts on our College's symposium with three poems by our College Dean, Archbishop



From left to right: Dr Philip Kariatlis and Prof. Jim Harrison (Co-convenors) Revd Dr John Chrysavgis, Revd Dr Michael Trainor and Revd Prof. Denis Edwards (Keynote Speakers) and Prof. Neil Ormerod.

op Stylianos which are indicative and suggestive of our Church's vision of creation's sacredness:

A Ballad of a Tree

It was a tree, and I could see the tree
as it monopolised the horizon
and covered the sky.
But again there was something deeper than the tree
that made my soul want to embrace
its branches
caress its leaves
admire its colours
smell its roots and the soil.
It was, therefore, the tree that
made me behold heaven

Ashfield, Sydney
20.5.87

The Ever-Virginity of Life

A torn shoe has its own story:
the love affair with the road

the daily farewells
and the renewed meetings with the foot
but above all the distant memory
almost dissolved in the liquids of tanning
that one day this dyed hide
was a skin which suffered and felt cold

Ashfield, Sydney
20.5.87

Deeper Communication

Collecting shells on the beach
you shake hands silently
with the Invisible.

Great Keppel Island
15.11.87

Dr Philip Kariatlis

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St Andrew's Theological College

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

2015 CHRISTMAS CAROLS

SUNDAY DECEMBER
20TH, 7.00PM

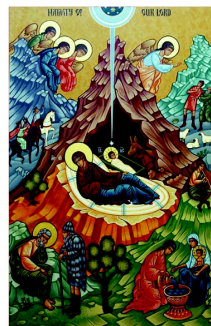
In the presence of His Eminence
Archbishop Stylianos of Australia

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese
242 Cleveland St, Redfern

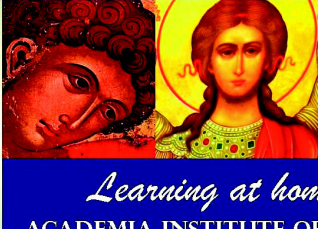

(Please note there will be no parking on the
grounds)

Free Entry & All Welcome

Loukoumades, popcorn and light re-
freshments will be sold during the
carols



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