

Pastoral Visit to Oceania

By the Grace of our Lord, His Grace, Bishop Ambrose of Methone made a pastoral visit, following an invitation and with synodal approval, to Australia and New Zealand.

After a brief layover in Singapore, His Grace arrived by air in Melbourne, Australia on Thursday, May 16, 2008 (Old Style), where Father Stylianos Papadopoulos offered him hospitality at his house.

- On the Sunday of the Blind Man, May 19, 2008 (Old Style), Bishop Ambrose liturgized with Father Stylianos at the Church of the Dormition of the *Theotokos*,

in the presence of at least two hundred faithful, primarily of Greek descent. Bishop Ambrose then had meetings with Hieromonk John (Smelic)—who has aligned himself with His Eminence, Bishop Agafangel of Odessa and Tauris (ROCA-PSEA)—and with other Churchmen to discuss ecclesiastical matters



- The next day, His Grace flew to Auckland, New Zealand, where he was awaited by Father Paul Vermaak, one of our Priests, who recently moved to this country following the course of events in the mission in South Africa.

After being given a tour of some of the country's beautiful natural attractions, Bishop Ambrose met with clergy belonging to the segment of the ROCA that has united with the Moscow Patriarchate. He also had the opportunity to speak with, and hear the confessions of, our small flock on this island.

On Thursday, May 23, 2008, the Feast Day of the Ascension, His Grace served Liturgy in the small wooden chapel build by one of our faithful on his property.

• **Bishop** Ambrose then flew back to Sydney, Australia, where he was met by our clergyman of Serbian descent, Archpriest Dragan Saracevic, and given accommodation at the Church of the Holy Unmercenaries.



On Saturday, May 25, 2008 (Old Style), Bishop Ambrose met with His Eminence, Archbishop Tikhon of Omsk and Siberia, President of the Synod of the “True Orthodox Church of Russia,” who was also visiting Sydney at that time. In the presence of two of the Archbishop’s Priests, he discussed with His Eminence various ecclesiastical matters of common concern.

That afternoon, His Grace officiated at the wedding of Father Dragan Saracevic’s daughter with a young man of Serbian descent, in the presence of a large throng of guests.



On the Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Synod, May 26, 2008 (Old Style), Bishop Ambrose liturgized with Father Dragan Saracevic and Father Stylianos Papadopoulos (of Melbourne) at the Church of the Holy Unmercenaries, with a large number of faithful in attendance.

After the Divine Liturgy, he celebrated the wedding of a young member of the parish with an Australian woman who had previously been Baptized by Father Stylianos. Bishop Ambrose also met with various Churchmen to discuss ecclesiastical matters.

On Monday, May 27, 2008 (Old Style), Bishop Ambrose, Father Dragan, and Father Stylianos went by road to Canberra, the capital of Australia, where they visited the Serbian Church of the Holy Great Martyr George. This large Church, which is located in the downtown area near the Parliament House, has a Priest's residence, school, and large parish hall attached to it. Here, they conversed informally with the parish council regarding ecclesiastical matters and problems. They then visited the Serbian monastery of St. Sava in a suburb of Canberra, which is noted for its beautiful, spacious Church.

Finally, on Tuesday, May 28, 2008 (Old Style), Bishop Ambrose flew from Sydney to Greece, once again via Singapore.

- **This** was a significant, vital, and arduous ecclesiastical mission within the framework of the pastoral responsibility of the Orthodox in Resistance for our faithful in Oceania, both to offer aid and to bear witness to True Orthodoxy in a spirit of humility and love.

Glory to Thee, O God!

