

Pope told Cyprus' Christian heritage under threat



Pope arrives to celebrate a mass at the Church of the Holy Cross at the UN-controlled buffer zone of the divided capital

CYPRUS last week told Pope Benedict its Christian heritage was under threat from its decades-old division, a conflict harming Turkey's bid to join the European Union. Benedict wrapped up a three-day visit to the Mediterranean island on June 6, where St Paul preached 2,000 years ago. It is now split between its Greek and Turkish populations since Turkey invaded its north in 1974.

"It is particularly disturbing that for 36 years our cultural and religious heritage in the occupied areas is being destroyed, and this constitutes a loss for mankind in general," Cypriot President Dimitris Christofias told Benedict during a meeting. Benedict only visited the south of the island, territory run by Cyprus' internationally recognised Greek-Cypriot government. He stayed at a Franciscan monastery in the buffer zone, no-man's land splitting Cyprus east to west and patrolled by United Nations troops. The pope has said his visit was not political and mostly skirted around the highly complex issue of Cyprus' division.

But in a speech to Archbishop Chrysos-

tomos, head of Cyprus' Orthodox Church, Benedict said he hoped all "could find the wisdom and strength to work together for a just settlement". He urged all to "strive for peace and reconciliation and to build for future generations a society distinguished by respect for the rights of all, including the inalienable rights to freedom of conscience and freedom of worship". Cyprus' more than 500 churches and monuments have been destroyed since 1974. On a visit to a museum, Benedict was shown priceless mosaics dating from the 6th century hacked-off the walls of a church in northern Cyprus and then sold on the black market. The Cypriot Church won them back in a court battle in the United States. "A great part of the spiritual and cultural heritage of Cyprus continues to be under the occupation of the Turkish army," said Christofias. The main purpose of the pope's trip to Cyprus was the release of a working document for a synod of Catholic bishops from the Middle East to be held at the Vatican in October.

ATHENS NEWS

Inflation hits 13-year high

CONSUMER inflation jumped to a 13-year high in May, straining household budgets and efforts to restore competitiveness as Greece struggles with its worst recession in decades.

Fuel, tobacco, alcohol and fuel tax hikes, agreed as part of a multi-billion euro "pain-for-gain" rescue plan, pushed consumer price inflation to a higher-than-expected 5.4 percent annual pace in May, its highest since August 1997. Growth in the consumer-driven economy, which makes up about 2.5 percent of the eurozone, is central to efforts to raise more tax revenue and cut its 300 billion euro debt pile.

The inflation jump came after a 4.8 percent gain on the year in April. The Greek Statistical Agency's figures show inflation was fuelled by spikes in prices on alcohol and tobacco products, which jumped by 16.9 percent compared to May 2009, and a 20.3 percent increase in transportation costs due to higher fuel and VAT taxes.

Consumer prices rose 0.8 percent in May month-on-month. In the same month a year earlier the annual rate of inflation was 0.5 percent.

"That's bad news all across the board," said Diego Iscaro, an economist at IHS Global Insight. "Domestic demand is already being hit by high unemployment, tight credit conditions and very low confidence. Now you have prices increasing at very high rates ... which hit private consumption even more."



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Mr Theo

14/06/2010

Mr Peter Theo CIAM

President

NSW Intercommunities Council

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia

242 Cleveland Street

REDFERN NSW 2016

Dear Mr Theo.

Thank you for your letter of 20 April 2010 to the Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, concerning the possible inclusion of Modern Greek in the Australian Curriculum. The Minister has asked me to reply on her behalf.

The Australian Government is committed to languages education in Australian schools and recognises the importance of young people learning a language, including Greek. Greek is one of Australia's major community languages, a reflection of the significant contributions the Greek-Australian community has made to the cultural and social development of Australia.

Under the National Education Agreement (NEA) the government is providing significant funding to the states and territories for languages education in government schools and community language schools. The NEA allows state and territory education authorities the flexibility to target resources according to individual jurisdictional priorities and educational needs. Funding can be used to support Greek language programs.

The Government is also providing \$56.4 million over 2009 to 2012 through the Schools Assistance Act 2008, to support the teaching of languages, including European languages, in non-government schools.

As you are aware, the second stage of national curriculum development being overseen by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) will include languages, along with geography and the arts. An initial shaping paper for languages will be released in mid 2010 for public consultation.

In its work to date to develop the Australian Curriculum, ACARA has drawn upon the considerable curriculum expertise in the states and Territories. ACARA has also engaged in extensive consultations with the education community, including parents, teachers, principals, professional organisations, academics and representatives from the business and industry sectors.

It is anticipated that public consultation about languages education may cover issues such as:

- which languages should be selected for the development of language specific curricula;
- how to cater for the diversity of language learners that their distinctive pathways (such as heritage and background speakers); and
- how to address transition and continuity of language learning

This consultation will assist in shaping the future direction of a national curriculum for languages.

I would encourage you and other members of the Greek-Australian community, to provide feedback on the Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages paper once it is released. You may wish to monitor the ACARA website at www.acara.edu.au to keep up to date on progress in the development of the language curriculum.

I would also encourage you to communicate your views on the importance of the inclusion of Greek in the Australian Curriculum to ACARA. For your information, ACARA's contact details are:

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
Level 10
255 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000
PHONE: 1300 895 563

I trust this information is of assistance. I thank you for your commitment to languages education in Australia.

Yours sincerely

Dr Georgina Webb
A/g Branch Manager
National Curriculum Branch

24 May 2010