

## **19th ANNIVERSARY OF THE PASSING TO THE LORD OF PATRIARCH PARTHENIOS III OF ALEXANDRIA**

With deep emotion today we commemorate the late Parthenios III Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, as today, 23rd July it is 19 whole years since his passing to the Lord. With God's grace and assistance we propose to dedicate 2016 to his sacred memory, naming it the "year of Patriarch Parthenios", seeing that 20 years will have passed from his passing to the Lord and we can organize various modest ceremonies and events in honour of his memory. I consider it my personal duty to honour my benefactor, my Elder, him who as I gratefully said on the day he ordained me as a Bishop, "taught me to love, to forgive to hope, to forgive, to live freely, to have dignity".

"Gratitude" as a word may not exist in Holy Scripture, Old or New Testament, but the lack thereof from the person of the nine ungrateful lepers cleansed, was condemned as an example by Christ. Recently when I was at the Armenian Patriarchate in Beirut, I tearfully mentioned the name of the late Patriarch Parthenios to the Armenian Patriarch Aram, with whom he was associated in friendship over many years, and deeply moved, Patriarch Aram remembered the person of love, tolerance, simplicity and Dialogue, as he said.

And during my entire return trip from Beirut to Alexandria, I considered the enormity of this man's contribution, who few had understood in his lifetime, but through his genuine quality, his sincerity, his honesty and his deep faith and trust in God, conveyed an ecclesiastical ethos, something which today is often mentioned but unfortunately is "missing" from contemporary ecclesiastical reality.

The late blessed patriarch used to say "the Patriarchate of Alexandria and the Missions will proceed, because wants it!" And his mere presence at any inter-Christian Dialogue he attended, was a guarantee of peace and conciliation.

May these simple thoughts be a candle dedicated to the sacred memory of my Venerable and Blessed Predecessor and Elder Parthenios, Patriarch of Alexandria, the Patriarch of "Dialogues" as history has ruled.

May his memory be eternal. Amen!