

COMPLETION OF SIX YEARS SINCE THE PASSING OF THE LATE PATRIARCH PETROS VII OF ALEXANDRIA

On 11th September 2010, it will be six years since the sudden death of the late Petros VII, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa.

The late Patriarch was a distinguished ecclesiastical personality. He was multitalented, committed to the Gospel principles and dedicated to the missionary service of our suffering brothers and sisters and he was loved and respected by the fullness of the Orthodox Church in Africa as well as the religious and political leaders of the African countries.

He was born on 3rd September 1949 in the village of Sihari in Kyreneia, Cyprus. In 1962 he entered the Holy Monastery of Mahaira and in 1969 he was ordained Deacon by the then Bishop of Konstantia and later Archbishop Chrysostomos of Cyprus.

In December of 1970 he was enrolled in the clergy of the ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria. Following the completion of his theological studies he served at the Holy Metropolis of Johannesburg and Pretoria up until the year 1983 when he was elected by the Holy Synod after being proposed by the late Patriarch Nicholas VI of blessed memory, as Bishop of Babylonos and was then appointed Patriarchal Vicar in Cairo.

In 1990 he was elected Metropolitan of Accra and West Africa, following a proposal by the late Patriarch Parthenios III whom he succeeded on the Patriarchal Throne of the Apostle Mark on 21st February 1997.

He worked particularly on the staffing and administration of the Patriarchate and composed the "Patriarchal order of 16th September 2002" which regulates the manner in which the Patriarch is elected by the Holy Synod. He established the Dioceses of Nigeria, Madagascar, Ghana, Bukoba and Zambia. He also began the renovations of the Patriarchal Mansion, the Monastery of St Savvas in Alexandria, the Patriarchal Vicariate of Cairo and the Monastery of St George in Old Cairo. Also, by Synodal Decree, he restored the canonical order of St Nektarios, Metropolitan of Pentapolis.

Patriarch Petros VII, together with members of his entourage, died tragically on 11th September 2004 in a helicopter accident on his way to Mount Athos, which he was to visit officially for the first time.

Also on board the helicopter were the late Metropolitan Irenaios of Pilousion, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Carthage, Bishop Nektarios of Madagascar, Archimandrite Arsenios, Hegumen of the Holy Monastery of Mahairas in Cyprus and Archimandrite Ekonomos Kallistratos, Deacon Nektarios Kontogiorgis, George Papapetros, brother of the Patriarch, George Mavros legal adviser, Patroklos Papastephanou, technical adviser, George Xenoudakis press adviser, Spyridon Koursaris policeman of the personal security of the Patriarch, Dimitrios Papaspyrou Lieutenant-Colonel-Commander of the 4th Army Air Battalion, Panayiotis Papanastasiou Battalion Commander, Stylianos Raptis Warrant Officer, Panteleimon Hadjivangelis Sergeant and Panayiotis Golegos Sergeant Major.

His successor, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, who was unanimously elected on 9th October 2004, in honouring the memory of his predecessor, completed the building and restoration works which he

had begun. Also, within the Patriarchal Mansion, there is a hall named "Patriarch Petros VII", where vestments and pectoral crosses of the deceased are exhibited, as well as his honorary distinctions which were awarded to him by heads of state and other officials during his seven year Patriarchal tenure.

Finally, His Beatitude performs the memorial service of his predecessor every year, in the presence of his family from Cyprus, the members of the Cypriot Brotherhood of the Land of the Nile and the Christian faithful of the Alexandrian Church. So, this year too, on 11th September 2010, His Beatitude will conduct the six year memorial service of Patriarch Petros and his entourage at the Holy Patriarchal Church of St Savvas the Sanctified in Alexandria.