

ENTHRONEMENT OF HIS EMINENCE NIKODIMOS METROPOLITAN OF MEMPHIS BY HIS BEATITUDE

On Friday, 10th January 2014, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa conducted the enthronement of His Eminence Metropolitan of Memphis, in the beautiful Cathedral of the Theotokos in Heliopolis in Cairo.

Participating in the ceremony of enthronement of His Eminence were His Eminence Gabriel Metropolitan of Leontopolis Patriarchal Vicar of Alexandria, His Grace Niphon, Bishop of Babylonia Hegumen of the Holy Monastery of St George in Old Cairo, the Exarch of the Church of Russia Fr. Viktor Kulaga, Clergy of the Throne as well as Clergy from Sinai and Greece. Also present were His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece to Cairo, Mr. Ch. Lazaris, the Honorable Consuls General of Greece and Cyprus, Messrs. I Hatzantonakis and F. Fotiou, the Vice Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Cairo Mr. K. Flevotomas, the Chairman of the Arabic Speaking Community of Cairo Mr. R. Hosni, the Chairman of the Cypriot Brotherhood Mr. A. Mavromatis, the Chairman of the Greek Orthodox Club of Arabic Speakers of Heliopolis Mr. Z. Seraphim, the Chairlady of the Philanthropic Society St Mary of Egypt and Lady of the Patriarchate Mrs. S. Kyriazis who, together with her husband Mr. K. Kyriazis funded the entire renovation of the Cathedral of the Metropolis, many faithful from the community as well as visitors from Greece.

During his emotional address, His Beatitude said the following:

Your Eminence Nikodimos, Metropolitan of Memphis and dear brother in the Lord,

The great thinker and Theologian of the Church St Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, whose memory we commemorate today, designated as a united foundation of the Church the emptying of the Son of God and through it the taking up and renewal of mankind.

All who voluntarily accept the Gospel and have aligned their lives with its messages of salvation, become members through faith of the great, and in itself incomprehensible, mystery of the Church of Christ. It is in Church that the true knowledge of God is built and what it is outside of the possibility of human cognitive is revealed; in this manner the rational members of the Church are heartened.

Illuminated by the grace of the All Holy Spirit, but also unwaveringly aligning with the theological view of the Church as a structure, the Church of Alexandria calls on you today to minister the holy service of gathering and building into the body of the Church the faithful of the historic Metropolis of Memphis.

My dear Nikodimos,

In July 2003 you came to the ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria and served under me in sacrifice and love to our African brothers and sisters in Bulawayo, in the Mission of the Holy Metropolis of Zimbabwe. And when the love and providence of the Almighty God wished it, you came to Cairo in 2005, and since then you have served with faith and distinction as Patriarchal Vicar in the capital city of the Land of the Nile.

For eight whole years you have expended yourself night and day with self-sacrifice and witness for the Second Throne patriarchate of the Orthodox Church. Whatever I assigned to you, you handled it with uncompromising obedience, methodical meticulousness and unwavering commitment of duty.

As a companion on my spiritual journey to promote the historical witness, to show the contemporary position and to forge the future prospects of the Most Holy Apostolic Throne of St Mark, you comply strictly with ecclesiastical principles. That is why as Bishop of the once brilliant Holy Diocese of Nitria you actively

made the due contribution to the body of the Church of justice, discretion, meekness, boldness and honesty.

These your virtues were ascertained by the Holy Synod, following my proposal, which rewarded you for your ecclesiastical ethos and your tireless efforts with your unanimous election as Metropolitan of the Holy Metropolis of Memphis, on the basis of the unceasing preservation on the spiritual torch-race of the ages of the light of the preaching of the truth.

Your Eminence,

You are admittedly worthy of also bringing to a successful conclusion this holy mission which the Church of Alexandria has entrusted you with. You are capable of implementing in this field too, through your words and works, what St Nektarios Bishop of Pentapolis taught: Pursue love. Ask God daily for love. Together with love come the entire multitude of goods and virtues. Love that you may also be loved by others. Give your whole heart to God so that you may always remain in love. "He who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him" (1 John 4:16).

In your good fight to serve the historic Metropolitan District of Memphis, you will have at your side your Patriarch next to whom you expended yourself for so many years. You will also have at your side our Hierarchs and our Clergy, the Greek and Arabic-speaking communities of Cairo, with which you have worked harmoniously for so long.

So, be strong and Godspeed and be an Archpriest, remaining always simple in your manner, multifaceted in governance, wise in your words..... Amen!

In his reply, His Eminence said:

"Where there is the mystery of a shout, there is the peace of God" the holy martyr and God-bearer Ignatios, Bishop of Antioch calls out in prayer and theologizes in faith. As the holiness of the moment reflects on my humble face and the unspeakable blessing of God mysteriously shakes my entire being, I feel that truly "all is granted by the Holy Spirit", meaning that divine Grace which heals all the weak and fills what is missing". It grants it all in wisdom, heals in love and replenishes all in goodness.

It is this, Your Beatitude Father and Master, respected Hierarchs, Honourable Priesthood, Deacons in Christ, most honourable leaders, chosen people of God – it is this, I say, that every member of the clergy, particularly during the offering of the bloodless sacrifice, during the breaking of the holy Body of Christ for the feeding of this people, which is the centre of our life and our responsibility, is obvious and a blessing to feel. Allow me though please at this holy moment of my official elevation to the throne of the church of Memphis, to testify to this emotion as a personal experience. Bringing to mind the blessed moment which I think is humanly understandable, the journey of my humble self within the Church, from that awesome moment of my monastic enrolment, up until today, as it becomes mixed with the wholehearted acceptance which St Basil the Great places on the lips of the priest during the Anaphora "we have done nothing good upon the earth", I can do nothing other than confess in the stillness of God and much humility by grace, to preach the mercy and not hide the benevolence.

Promoter of this joy is You, Your Beatitude Father and Master, Pope and Patriarch of the Great City of Alexandria, Libya, Pentapolis, Ethiopia, the entire land of Egypt and All Africa, above all Shepherd and Teacher, compassionate and merciful educator in Christ, and therefore after the Triune God and Saints Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and Nektarios of Pentapolis, I address to You this word of gratitude and from the bottom of my heart to my last breath I will be grateful to You. From the first moment of our communion in Christ, my calling and reception as a member of the clergy of the Alexandrian Throne, you welcomed me into your paternal embrace, when at the time you were the Prelate of the Missionary Metropolis of Zimbabwe. Later as head of the Alexandrian Church you trusted me, you educated me with grandeur, you infused in me the zeal of God, you cultivated the dry earth of

my heart with a missionary conviction, with your words which were always seasoned with salt, and particularly with the example of your life on the Dark Continent which is a field of thorns and weeds. You taught me that the clergy of Africa, whether a deacon, priest or Bishop, if he genuinely wants to preach the Cross and Resurrection of Christ in an environment which ranges from indifferent to often hostile, he needs to have as the pinnacle of his ecclesiastic service, the Lord's words: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me"; and "whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be your slave". With great love I address these words to the clergy of my historic district, and on them I promise with love and humility to walk on, by the Grace of God, as its Prelate.

The anvil of missionary service polishes the hearts of those who labour in the Lord. Here, nothing is given; nothing is obvious; nothing is found, if you will allow the expression, on automatic pilot, which perhaps occurs in other churches. Every new day which our holy God allows to dawn is a new opportunity for effort, both in the spiritual as well as in the material. Each clergy or lay colleague who is active in the missions, as well as every baptized Orthodox Christian who lives and works on this land, which are God-walked and have given birth to saints, needs to take of that which floods your heart and which is reflected on your cheerful and grace-filled face in order to take courage. Out of love for man generally, as created in the image of God, and to all Christians, working in his likeness. May this be the message from my paternal heart to the flock of my ecclesiastical district. It is a message of reconciliation, tolerance towards diversity, patience with all.

I turn in gratitude to my mother Vasiliki and commemorate the soul of my late father George, filled with emotion. Their Eminences the holy Hierarchs Metropolitan Nicholas of Ermopolis, Nippon Bishop of Babylonia, especially to His Eminence Gabriel Metropolitan of Leontopolis and I greet and embrace the venerable Hierarchy of the Throne who honoured me with their vote. My brother clergy and bosom and genuine friends Archimandrite Nikoloas Liolios and Archimandrite Ignatios Saxambanis, who came from afar to witness my joy, the honourable leaders, the ambassadorial and consular authorities of Greece and Cyprus, the community leaders both Greek and Arabic speaking, and all the members of the community who have come to this joy, I embrace you all with my gratitude.

In conclusion, calling on the grace of Holy God I ask for the prayers of you all for a pastoral ministry well-pleasing to the Lord for the building of His Holy Body.

His Eminence was also addressed by Metropolitan Gabriel of Leontopolis, on behalf of the Holy Synod of the Throne and His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece to Cairo, Mr. Ch. Lazaris. A festive gathering followed the enthronement service, during which the appointment was announced of the Very Reverend Archimandrite Dimitrios Mansour from Syria as Parish Priest of the Holy Church of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel of the Arabic-Speaking Greek Orthodox Community of Cairo.