

ENTHRONEMENT OF HIS EMINENCE NIPHON METROPOLITAN OF PILOUSION BY HIS BEATITUDE

On Friday 19 December 2014, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, conducted at the Cathedral in Port Said the enthronement of His Eminence Niphon Metropolitan of Pilousion. Participants at the enthronement of His Eminence were Their Eminences Gabriel Metropolitan of Leontopolis, Patriarchal Vicar of Alexandria, Nikodemos of Memphis, Patriarchal Vicar of Cairo, as well as His Grace Meletios Bishop of Naukratis, Hegumen of the the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of St Savvas the Sanctified in Alexandria and His Grace Chrysostomos of Berenice. Present were Representatives of the Coptic, Catholic and Protestant Churches, His Excellency the Ambassador of Cyprus Mr. S. Liasidis, the Honourable Consul General of Greece in Cairo Mrs. L. Komini, the Chargé d' Affaires of the Greek Embassy in Cairo Mr. G. Papadopoulos, the Consular Harbour Master in Cairo, Mr. E. Poulakakis, the Chairwoman of the Hellenic Community of Port Said Mr. Ch. Theocharous, the Chairmen of the Arabic Speaking Orthodox Christians of Port Said Mr. S. Issa and of all Egypt Mr. Robert Hosni, as well as the Chairmen of the Communities of Mansura, Damietta, Kantara, Daher and Heliopolis and many faithful from the Holy Metropolis.

During his address, His Beatitude emotionally said the following:

"O the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways" (Romans 11:33).

Your Eminence Niphon, Metropolitan of Pilousion ad dear brother in the Lord, With these words, enraptured by the omniscience of our Great God, Paul, the great Apostle of the Nations addressing the Romans, tries to express the wealth of the emotions which the closeness of God provokes in the human intellect, which cannot be expressed in human words. Then, the weak will simply remain silent or he will raise joyful praises, as did our Apostle.

And indeed! I wonder if there is anything, even the slightest, within our Holy Church, which does not provoke in us emotions of gratitude and praise to the Lord the giver of gifts, who so lovingly watches over our steps, and through His continual presence intersects the eternal presence of our historic coming into being?

However, what provokes even more the feeling of our joyful gratitude, is the benevolence of our Great God. The God of love Himself assures us that "God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through Him" (John 3:17. And in the end judgment will take place in the most amazing manner! By God's identification with the least of humanity, the discarded one, the naked, the hungry, the stranger and the poor. "As you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40).

Often we weak people, make a great mistake in our spiritual life! We forget the fact that we are images of this God, the ecstatic, who comes to meet His creation, and we close up within ourselves, thus ensuring our own personal salvation, in an inexpressible self-sufficiency and just like the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal, we demand God's vindication, as the result of our vain conformity and concentration on some ethical rules, depriving ourselves of the universal joy of salvation.

Your Eminence Niphon Metropolitan of Pilousion,

Following the thoughts mentioned above, allow me not to come to your commendation. You are a genuine "man of Jesus Christ". You offered your existence as a lit candle for love of the Lord and contribution to His living image, the poor and the helpless, the hungry, the disconsolate, the orphan, the widow, the sick and gave of yourself, whatever you could to the ministry of Christian faith and witness. To the love for suffering brothers and sisters! Not only in your twenty-year service at the Holy Metropolis of Peristeri, but also in the nine years of sacrificial presence, as Hegumen of the Holy Monastery of St George Old Cairo. How many suffering and hungry souls found refuge with you, dear Niphon? You had something to give everyone. You had a plate of food for everyone, some clothes, some money, a kind word of relief and hope! He who tries to become more human resembles God more, because according to St Irinaios Bishop of Lyon "the glory of God is a living human"!

These virtues which you have, your humanity, are what convinced the Holy Synod of our Patriarchate, following my proposal, and through their vote, to elevate you from Bishop of Babylonia to Metropolitan of Pilousion, as a worthy successor of the late, innocent, Elder Metropolitan Kallinicos.

My brother Niphon, you are formally elevated, but in essence through your humility, you are coming down! Because of your spiritual maturity, you are already girded with the cloth, to minister with self-sacrifice to your brothers and sisters, in this new bastion in which the Merciful God's providence has placed you. It is this example of practical love that contemporary humans who are in need, want. I know that you will continue to give yourself "to become all things to all men, that by all means you might save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22). You are ascending the prominent position of the Holy Metropolis of Pilousion and you will be "as a city set on a hill", (Matthew 5:14), but this does not mean that you will look down on the life struggles of your flock or that their burning issues will leave you impassive. Besides, as a Church we are participants of the common journey of humanity in this great adventure which is called history and which leads mankind to the perfection of the last, and our Patriarchate particularly, has the privilege of historical presence on the issue of the dissemination of the Gospel on the vast African Continent, the continent of the future, so our absence from the present would be an unforgivable error.

It is with these thoughts, dear Niphon, that we enthrone you today on the Throne of the Holy Metropolis of Pilousion, in Port Said, as well as in the hearts of your faithful flock! "Do not fear the small flock" because this handful of few but choice people, in God's hands, "who is able to raise the children of Abraham from these rocks", may appear innumerable. Throughout history God has never allowed His people to rely on their strengths, but always on the power of God who strengthens.

"In your majesty ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness" (Psalm 45:4) my dear child Niphon, Metropolitan of Pilousion!

Your Patriarch and his Holy Synod together with your faithful flock will always be with you, co-travelers in your dutiful efforts!

Many years!

Continuing his address, His Beatitude tearfully commemorated his spiritual father Patriarch Parthenios III, who came from Port Said. He praised his spiritual counsel, which he implements to the letter, which is to cover the weaknesses of mankind and to patiently forgive the ungrateful ones who have been benefitted.

His Eminence Niphon said:

I lift up words of praise and thanksgiving to the Merciful God, because he deemed my humility worthy to reach this important day.

I have been elevated to the historic throne of the most holy Metropolis of Pilousion which was blessed by distinguished Hierarchs. My joy is heightened by the warm and genuine welcome which the clergy and people had for me today, the most honorable leaders of the district.

The throne to which I am elevated is the place and type of Christ. It is the throne on which Christ, the Great High Priest passes on the sanctifying grace and blessings and leads the faithful to salvation.

I am coming therefore to undertake with God's help the duty to replace the emptiness of what is missing in my fellow humans, to become a friend, a brother, a father.

My collaborators in this mission are my beloved priests who are priceless in the common struggle in the ministry of the people.

With much love, Your Beatitude, you enfolded me from the moment I expressed the wish to be numbered in the Ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria, and to dedicate myself to missionary work. You appointed me as Hegumen of the Patriarchal and Historic Monastery of St George Old Cairo where I have served for ten years the call of the times and the pious pilgrims, Christians and Muslims, from the entire world. Also because of your love and interest to the call of the complete renovation works, after almost one hundred years the adornment and the glory of our Patriarchate is being renovated.

With the same unfailing interest and the strength which the Almighty God grants me, I promise that I will labour under your protection and obedience in the new See which you have entrusted to me in your love. Your Beatitude, having your paternal prayers and blessing as a valuable provision and crutch, I begin my new ministry in the field of the province of Pilousion.

Most Holy brother Hierarchs, fervent thanks to you for coming today to this great joy of mine..

Your Eminence Gabriel Metropolitan of Leontopolis, in your person I thank the Holy Synod of the Throne and you particularly because you served as caretaker of the province for an entire year, during which you led it as God would have it.

Fervent thanks are addressed to His Eminence Metropolitan Nikodimos of Memphis because for a decade we have had an excellent working relationship in Cairo.

His Grace Meletios Bishop of Naukratis, His Grace Chrysostomos Bishop of Berenice, the representative of the Coptic Church Mutran Theodoros, the representative of the Catholic Church Abuna Kyrillos, the representative of the Protestant Church Abuna Helmi Kantes His Excellency the Ambassador of Cyprus, the honorable Consul General in Cairo Mrs. Lambrine Komini, the Charge d' Affaires of the Embassy of Greece in Cairo, the Consular Harbour Master of our Consulate Mr. Evangelos Poulakakis, the honorable Chairlady of the Hellenic Community of Port Said Mrs. Chrysoula Theocharous, the honorable Chairman of the Arabic Speaking Orthodox Christians of Port Said Salama Issa, the honorable Chairman of Mansura, the honorable Chairman of Damietta,

the honorable Chairman of Kantara,
the honorable Deputy Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Cairo,
the honorable Chairman of Daher,
the honorable Chairman of Heliopolis,
Dr Nadim Skandar with the scouts from Kasafa,

Wholehearted thanks and deep gratitude to all those who with the grace of God worked hard and led my steps to you as well as to those who are experiencing with me the emotion of this sacred time.

Blessed memory of my dearly departed predecessors Amphilochios, Polyektos, Parthenios, Barnabas, Irenaios and Kallinikos.

I lift up my hand in prayer. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of us! Amen!

In conclusion a lunch was hosted for everyone in the congregation.