

## **FIRST SOLEMN VESPERS IN ALEXANDRIA**

**On 2nd March 2014, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa** officiated during the first solemn Vespers for the beginning of Great Lent at the Patriarchal Church of St Savvas in Alexandria, together with His Eminence Alexios of Carthage who is in Alexandria and His Grace Gabriel of Leontopolis, Patriarchal Vicar of Alexandria together with the Clergy and many faithful.

Prior to the dismissal, according to old tradition, His Beatitude read the forgiveness prayer for all, and exchanged the embrace of forgiveness, at the same time appropriately wishing them strength, watchfulness and repentance, and stressing in his comprehensive homily the true meaning of fasting and genuine forgiveness, mentioning examples and teachings from the holy Fathers of the desert.