

## FLOWERS OF GRATITUDE TO PARTHENIOS THE SIMPLE

On June 18th 2020, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa officiated at Orthros and the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Chapel of St Joseph the Betrothed, within the catacombs of the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of St George Old Cairo, together with their Eminences Nicodemus Metropolitan of Memphis Patriarchal Vicar of Cairo, Niphon of Pilousion and His Grace Germanos Bishop of Tamiathus.

Prior to the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy His Beatitude the Patriarch, in an atmosphere of emotion and indescribable love, performed the consecration and enthronement of the new Abbot of the Holy Monastery of St George Old Cairo, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Damaskinos Al-Azrai.

During the consecration His Beatitude addressed the new Abbot and emphasized: *"My dear child, Damaskinos, I wanted to prepare this humble gift, on the day that we will consecrate St Parthenios, today when in a short while we will go down to my spiritual father, whose blessed hands passed on to me the grace of the Hierarchy 30 years ago. Damaskinos, I know while the elder was ordaining me so simply, so humbly, with very few people, and yet his face shone, in his memory I wanted to read to you a small prayer, so that you can start your new journey here in Saint George, in succession of our worthy brother Niphon of Pilousion. As fr. Cosmas wrote: "If you take a blade and scratch on the walls of our Patriarchate, you will see the sweat and blood of the heart of Patriarch Theodoros," in the same way if you take a small knife you will see the struggles and the efforts which we undertook at that time with Niphon of Pilousion, who is proud of the works of his hands, who did everything through my prayers but above all, through the intercessions of Saint George. So today, Damaskinos, so God willed, I consecrate you to be father and Abbot here at Saint George, because so humble and in silence and mystery was Saint Joseph the Betrothed, in whose chapel we find ourselves today. He endured so much poverty and so many difficulties together with our All-Holy Virgin and the infant Christ. But above all, your Eminences, he bore the cross of foreign lands, that of a refugee. He then came here as a refugee from Jerusalem to Egypt, to protect all the poor and the refugees. So Damaskinos, as Parthenios did, humbly and simply, I read this small prayer for you and returning this evening to Alexandria, I know, that together with our other brother, fr. Joachim, to whom I wish to express the gratification of the Church, to protect the bastions for the continuation of Orthodoxy, Egypt, Greece and Cyprus at this blessed monastery and may my prayers always be with you. Also today, Damaskinos, I will bless your mother in whose memory you renovated Saint Catherine and may the blessing of your Patron Metropolitan Damaskinos of Didymotihos, Orestiadou and Souflion, the great benefactor of our Patriarchate always be with you".*

After the Divine Liturgy, the Patriarch did the sanctification of the inauguration of the Holy Chapel of the Venerable Parthenion, Bishop of Lampsakos.

In conclusion, the Alexandrian Primate went in procession together with the Bishops and Clergy to the catacombs of the Monastery, where all the Patriarchs lie in rest and sang the Trisagion for his elder, the late Patriarch Parthenios as well as for Patriarchs Nicholas and Petros.

Filled with emotion, His Beatitude stated: *"I place these flowers on the tomb of the Patriarch who ordained me 30 years ago. I leave my gratitude and thanks with these flowers, for all that I was taught when I accompanied him either to our Patriarchate or on his endless journeys through Africa. Venerable Patriarch, Venerable Elder, I thank you for everything. Right next to you Patriarch Nicholas VI lies in rest. I thank him. I received his blessing and left Crete to go as*

*Patriarchal Vicar to Odessa in Russia and Ukraine and with his blessing I began my journey at the Patriarchate of Alexandria. And finally, here in the Church the late Patriarch Petros, my predecessor, lies at rest, for whom after a short while I was his Patriarchal Vicar and left for the missions in Cameroon and Zimbabwe only to succeed him on the Patriarchal Throne of the Apostle and Evangelist Mark. I pray wholeheartedly that God will grant them rest and their enlightened examples, to be a light for all of us, Holy Hierarchs, my children. Each shrine of a deceased Patriarch here, is a link, just as this Byzantine chandelier which sheds light on this edifice called the Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa. May their souls be at rest. I thank them."*