

## **GRADUATION OF THE STUDENTS OF THE "ST ATHANASIOS" PATRIARCHAL ACADEMY IN ALEXANDRIA**

On Sunday 24th May 2015 following the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa attended the graduation ceremony of the Students of the "St Athanasios" Patriarchal Academy, for the academic cycle 2013-2015, and awarded the diplomas to the graduates.

The ceremony opened with the students, singing ecclesiastical hymns, as well as songs in Greek and African dialects, while the honours student addressed the Patriarch on behalf of the Students. Taking the floor, His Beatitude praised the significance of the education of training indigenous staff in the Metropolises and the missionary echelons of the Church of ST Mark throughout the African Continent.

Addressing the graduates of the Academy personally, His Beatitude emotionally urged them to always remember all that they had heard and been taught during their attendance at the Academy. To always keep in their hearts the Monastery of St Savvas which hosted them for two years and from which the Patriarchs emerge, the new Hierarchs of the Throne are ordained and from where the entire effort of evangelization of the African nations is sourced.

He called on them to continue their ministry and witness in Christ throughout Africa according to the missionary manner of the Apostles, stressing that the Church needs Gospel workers because the harvest is great. He assured them that he would closely monitor their progress in the life of the Church, in their home countries and that he will paternally assist them in their needs. In conclusion he asked them to become ambassadors and preachers of the love which they experienced during their two years of study at the See of the Patriarchate.

His Beatitude gave particular thanks to His Grace Meletios Bishop of Naukratis, Abbot of the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of St Savvas of Alexandria in which the Academy is housed, the Principal the Very reverend Archimandrite Agathonikos Nicolaides, as well as the teaching staff for their tireless efforts to pass on knowledge and ecclesiastical ethos to the African students.

His Beatitude also expressed grateful thanks to the representatives of the Consulate General of Greece in Alexandria and of the Hellenic Community of the Great City, for their valuable contribution to the proper functioning of the Academy, as well as to all the Community for the love with which they surrounded the student boarders of the Patriarchal Academy, and following the awarding of the diplomas a festive reception and lunch for all followed.