

# HIS BEATITUDE IN CAIRO FOR THE FEAST OF THE VENERATION OF THE CROSS

On Friday 16th March 2012 His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa officiated at the Service of the 3rd Stasis of the Salutations to the Most Holy Theotokos at the Holy Community Chapel at the Educational institute of the Hellenic Community of Cairo, which is dedicated to the commemoration of the Entrance of the Theotokos, together with the Patriarchal Vicar of Cairo, His Grace Nikodimos Bishop of Nitria, and in the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Cairo Mr. Ioannis Hatzantonaks, the Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Cairo Mr. Christos Kavalis, the Chairman of the Arab Community Mr. Robert Hosni, the Lady of the Churches Mrs Stella Kyriazis and many faithful.

Addressing the congregation, the Alexandrian Primate thanked the Kyriazis family who have undertaken the renovation of the adjacent Patriarchal Church of the Virgin in Heliopolis (which is dedicated to the "Escape to Egypt"). At the same time, he honoured all the Benefactors who left behind the schools, such as the Spetsopoulios School, in which the chapel of the Entrance is situated, where all services will be conducted up until Pascha (until the renovation works at the above-named chapel are completed).

On the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross, His Beatitude conducted the Divine Liturgy at the Patriarchal Cathedral of St Nicholas in Cairo, his concelebrants being the Patriarchal Vicar of Cairo His Grace Nikodimos Bishop of Nitria, the Hegumen of the Holy Monastery of St George in Old Cairo His Grace Niphon Bishop of Babylonia and the holy clergy. Present also were the Greek Ambassador Mr Christodoulos Lazaris, the Cypriot Ambassador Mr Sotos Liasides, the Consul General of Greece in Cairo Mr Ioannis Hatzantonakis, the Cypriot Consul Mr Fotis Fotiou, the Chairman of the Arab-speaking Community Mr Robert Hosni, the Deputy Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Cairo Mr Kimis Flevotomas, the Lady of the Churches Mrs Stella Kyriazi, representatives of community societies and other dignitaries.

Also, His Beatitude consecrated as a confessor the Very Reverend Archimandrite Ioakeim Skretas, giving him his personal Epigonation, and the homily was preached by the Megas Ecclesiarch the Very Reverend Archimandrite Isidoros Salakos.

During his address the Venerable Primate of the Throne of St mark commemorated also Patriarch Shenouda III of the Coptic Church who has fallen asleep, saying that he will be present at the Funeral Service next Tuesday in Cairo with a representation of Hierarchs "to bid him farewell on his eternal journey", as Shenouda was always present at the funerals of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchs of Alexandria (Nicholas, Parthenios and Petros) and in the mourning of our Church. The Patriarch also prayed that a worthy successor for Shenouda would be elected, whom he would meet soon to work together with him, so that together with the Muslim citizens, there would be peace in the blessed Land of the Nile.

In conclusion he warmly thanked the Chairman of the Arabic Speakers, Mr. Robert Hosni for the enormous financial aid which he personally gave towards the support of the Missionary effort in Sierra Leone.