

HIS BEATITUDE MEETS WITH THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND POLITICAL LEADERS

At noon on 8th December 2009, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa met with the Minister of Education and Religion Mrs. Anna Diamantopoulou.

During the meeting they discussed issues pertaining to the ancient Patriarchate and Mrs Diamantopoulou was given information regarding the humanistic and missionary work in Africa. Following the meeting she said: "The visit by the Patriarch is a great honour. The Patriarch and the Metropolitans who work with him are doing very important work for Christianity, for Hellenism and especially for the people of Africa. We will continue a lengthy collaboration and we are sure that Greek universities can contribute in many ways to this very significant work".

She then ended by saying "On this basis we will organize new collaboration with the Patriarch".

His Beatitude expressed his joy at the visit to the Minister of Education and said he was assured of the support of the Ministry of Education for the Alexandrian Church in matters in its capacity.

On the afternoon of the same day His Beatitude received in succession the President of SYRIZA Mr. Alexis Tsipras, The President of LAOS Mr. George Karatzaferis, the Secretary General of PASOK Mr. Xinides and the Secretary General of KKE Mrs. Aleka Papariga.

The President of SYRIZA, Mr. Alexis Tsipras, visited His Beatitude at 17h00 and in a very cordial climate, they discussed issues pertaining to the Patriarchate. Mr. Tsipras expressed his satisfaction on being informed of the "significant work of the Patriarchate of Alexandria in Africa, work that is of vital importance, especially in times when social inequalities, poverty and differences between the developed world and the so-called third world are increasing".

Immediately thereafter His Beatitude received the President of LAOS, Mr. George Karatzaferis, who stated after the meeting: "The contemporary light house of Alexandria is the Patriarchate. As much as Greece tries, as much as it searches, it will never find a better goodwill Ambassador for the more than fifty countries in Africa, than the Patriarchate. His Beatitude continues an exceptional line of Patriarchs and I am certain that the support of the Patriarchate will help us to have better results not only spiritually on the African continent, but also diplomatically. I believe that the sum of the political world will take cognizance of its responsibilities and the possibilities of the Patriarchate, in a Greece which seeks allies all over the world".

His Beatitude mentioned: I told the President about the work we have undertaken and the difficulties which we face on the African continent, the continent of the future...I know well, Mr. President, that you are a man of the Church, your heart hurts and beats for us all who guard Thermopylae in strange lands, far away, for a better future for those people who have nowhere to lay their heads. I thank you for hearing me intently and I know well that all that we discussed, you will support this humble work, done by the few which is so important for the continent of the future. I pray for your health and joy, both personal and of your colleagues".

He next met with the Secretary General of PASOK, Mr. Socrates Xinides, who

addressed the Patriarch, saying: " Your Beatitude, it is a special joy that I am meeting you in person; I have heard so much about the missionary work which you have undertaken".

His Beatitude replied: The Prime Minister also asks with great love and interest about our Patriarchate, which is the future of the world. It is a storehouse that the great powers will one day turn their eyes to Africa".

He also met with the Secretary General of the KKE, Mrs. Aleka Pappariga, who said that the meeting was very joyful and very interesting, information about the role of the Patriarchate in all of Africa, an area, a continent where people are suffering, as are little children and women, and I believe that through this information, we fell more for the people and citizens of Africa".

His Beatitude addressed Mrs Pappariga: I express a very great thank you for the love which she showed for our great social effort throughout Africa, for the people who are hungry and thirsty for justice, for a better tomorrow. The world and the great powers do not have the right to deny them".

That evening, His Beatitude and His Beatitude Ieronymos visited His Excellency the Ambassador of Egypt in Greece who hosted a dinner at the Ambassadorial residence in honour of the Patriarch. The ambassador addressed the Patriarch and expressed his joy at the significant visit of the Primate of the Throne of St Mark and in reply His Beatitude thanked the Ambassador for the fervent welcome and through him thanked His Excellency the President of Egypt Mr. Mubarak for the protection and cooperation afforded the Patriarchate of Alexandria.