

HIS BEATITUDE MEETS WITH THE PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA

On the afternoon of 23rd June 2009, in a particularly warm atmosphere, His Excellency Mr. Dimitri Medvedev the President of Russia met in Cairo with His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa.

The Venerable Primate of the Throne of St Mark welcomed the Russian President in the historic monastery of St George in Old Cairo, within the framework of the official visit of the Russian leader to Egypt .

Addressing him in Greek and Russian, His Beatitude spoke of the history and missionary work of the Alexandrian Church throughout Africa . He also spoke of the harmonious co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Egypt as well as of the support which the ancient Patriarchate receives from the Land of the Nile and its President Mr Hosni Mubarak.

On his behalf, Mr Medvedev emphasized to His Beatitude that “ Russia supports the efforts of the Patriarchate of Alexandria”, mentioning also his satisfaction for the fact that Egypt assists the efforts of the Orthodox Church in Africa .

Also, His Excellency Mr Medvedev invited His Beatitude to officially visit the Kremlin.

Just before the tour of the Greek Orthodox Monastery began, His Beatitude awarded the Great Cross with Star of the Apostle Mark to the Russian President, and Mr Medvedev gave His Beatitude Theodoros a precious icon of St Sergius of Radonezh, the patron and protector of Russia .

His Excellency the President visited the magnificent Church of St George , venerated the icon and the relics, walked through the Greek cemetery and arrived at the Holy Church of the Theotokos where, according to tradition, the Holy Family stayed during their time in Egypt , when being sought by Herod.

At the meeting between His Beatitude the Patriarch of Alexandria and the Russian President, present also were His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece in Egypt Mr Ioannis Alexis Zepos, His Excellency the Ambassador of Russia in Egypt Mr Igor Bogdanov, His Garace Nikodimos Bishop of Nitria Patriarchal Vicar in Cairo, Archimandrite Leonid Gorbacev Patriarchal Vicar of the Russian Church in Cairo, and Archimandrite Nyphon Tsavaris, Hegumen of the Monastery of St George.