

## **HIS BEATITUDE MEETS WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE CYPRUS REPUBLIC**

**His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa** was very warmly welcomed this afternoon by the President of the Cyprus Republic Mr Dimitris Christofias at the Presidential Mansion in Nicosia.

The Alexandrian Primate thanked the Cypriot President for the support which he gives to the Missionary effort of the Orthodox Church in Africa, and he particularly expressed the appreciation of the Alexandrian Church for the granting of land by the Cypriot government in the Geri area of the capital, for the building of the Exarchate of the Ancient Patriarchate which will serve the needs of the missions and will give information regarding the activities of the Alexandrian Church, to the Cypriot people.

On his own behalf President Christofias told the Alexandrian Primate about the developments on the Cypriot issue and also mentioned the political situation in the broader area of the Middle East, expressing his wish to support the Christian community especially in Syria. Regarding the "political spring" in the Arab world, he hoped that it would not be transformed into a "political autumn" and for this to be achieved, the moderate voices of the Muslim world would need to prevail.

With this opportunity Patriarch Theodoros, who was accompanied by the Exarch of the Second Throne Patriarchate in Cyprus, Protopresbyter Athenodoros Papaevripiades, spoke with the President about the Synaxis of the day before of the Primates of the Orthodox Church of the Middle East and their intention to bring up the problems that the Christians of Syria face to the European Union, the United States and any International forum.

Patriarch Theodoros also spoke of his recent journey to Sierra Leone, as well as of the contribution of Cypriots from all over the world to the African suffering Orthodox Christians, giving him photographs relating to the most significant work done in this far-off area of Africa.

In conclusion the Alexandrian Patriarch – also in statements made to the media immediately following his meeting with President Christofias – thanked the President himself as well as the people of Cyprus for their support of the Alexandrian Church, and gave a small icon of the All Holy Virgin and Christ to President Christofias, praying that the solution to the Cyprus problem would be found during his tenure as President.