

## **HIS BEATITUDE PAYS AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO UGANDA**

From 11<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> March His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa will be paying an official visit to Uganda and Kenya.

On 11<sup>th</sup> March, His Beatitude, accompanied by the Very Reverend Meletios Koumanis, Hegumen of the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of St Savvas the Sanctified in Alexandria, arrived at the Entebbe Airport in Uganda. A short stay at the airport in Nairobi, Kenya, had preceded their arrival, where the Patriarch was met by His Eminence Makarios of Kenya and the Chargé d' Affaires of the Embassy of Egypt in the country.

At the Entebbe Airport in Uganda His Beatitude was welcomed by the local Metropolitan Jonah of Kampala, His Eminence Ieronymos of Mwanza, His Excellency the Ambassador of Egypt Mr. Sabry Magdy Sabry, state officials and other dignitaries.

An official welcome followed at the Missionary Centre of the Holy Metropolis, where a Doxology was sung at the Holy Church of St Nicholas, in the presence of the above-mentioned Hierarchs the clergy, the official representatives of the country – among whom were the local Orthodox Parliamentarian Mr. Theodore Ssekikubo and the Erudite Professor Mr Theodoros Kato, a graduate of the Theological School of Halkis – the students of the educational institutes of the Holy Metropolis of Kampala and many faithful.

His Beatitude was addressed by His Eminence Jonah who expressed the great joy of the faithful at his presence at the local Church of Uganda.

In his reply His beatitude expressed his emotion at this visit and thanked all for the warm welcome. He also spoke of his two previous visits to Uganda accompanying the late Patriarch Parthenios III and as the newly elected Patriarch, because, as he emphasized, he regards this ecclesiastical Province of the Patriarchal Throne as the nucleus and the beginning of the Orthodox Missionary effort in Africa.

In the afternoon of the same day, he conducted the service of the Salutations to the Most Holy Theotokos at the Holy Church of St Nicholas, after which he distributed gifts and blessings to the students present. During the prayer gathering it was moving to have the presence of the centenarian African Priest Father Eirinaios Magimbi, who studied at the Ambetios School in Cairo, through the providence of the late Patriarch Christoforos of Alexandria (1939-1967) and was ordained to the Priesthood in 1958 by the late Metropolitan of Eirinopolis and subsequently Patriarch of Alexandria Nicholas VI (1968-1986).

An official dinner was then hosted during which His Beatitude awarded the Gold Lion of the ancient Patriarchate to the surgeon from Rethymnos Dr Antonios Liaskos, who volunteers his valuable mediacal services to the Holy Metropolis of Kampala and was the first volunteer colleague of His Beatitude, during the years of his pastoral service at the Holy Metropolis of Cameroun.