

HIS BEATITUDE PRESIDES OVER GREAT VESPERS AT THE HOLY SHRINE OF PANAGIA SOUMELA ON MOUNT VERMIOS

The holy shrine of Panagia Soumela in Vermio celebrated the 1600th feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos from its establishment as the legendary monastery in Pontos, on 14th and 15th August.

At the same time it is celebrating the 60th anniversary of the resurgence of the historic monastery in Vermio, with the arrival of the holy icon of the Virgin and the depiction and operation of the holy shrine, which today is the reference point for Pontians all over the world.

The festive and worship events were honoured this year by the presence of His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, who on the afternoon of 14th August 2012, officiated at the Vespers of the feast and took part in the first procession of the holy icon of Panagia Soumela.

Earlier, during his arrival at the holy shrine, military detachments attributed honours of State Leadership to the Patriarch of Alexandria.

His Beatitude was addressed firstly by His Eminence Panteleimon, Metropolitan of Veroia, Naousa and Kampania and then by the Chairman of the "Panagia Soumela" Society and in his reply His Beatitude expressed his particular feelings of emotion on fulfilling a promise and coming to receive firstly a blessing from the All Holy Virgin and to kneel reverently in her honour.

He also mentioned that after there he would be in Crete for a day to kiss the hand of his mother and tell her that he venerated the icon from the place where she was born (his mother has Pontian origins).

His Beatitude was accompanied by His Eminence Petros Elder Metropolitan of Aksum and Vicar General, His Eminence Dimitrios Metropolitan of Ermopolis and His Grace Nikodimos, Bishop of Nitria and Patriarchal Vicar of Cairo.