

HIS BEATITUDE'S CONSECUTIVE MEETINGS IN CYPRUS

On the morning of 19th March 2008, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa visited the Greek Embassy, "the home of Greece in Cyprus", accompanied by His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos II of All Cyprus and had the opportunity to meet and discuss with the Ambassador of Greece Mr. Dimitrios Rallis and all the members of the Greek Embassy.

Mr Rallis extensively informed His Beatitude regarding the Cypriot issue and initiatives for the beginning of new talks, the meeting of the leaders of the two communities and the prospects for a solution.

His Beatitude on his part then informed the Ambassador about the work of the Patriarchate on the Dark Continent , emphasizing that "the flame, the light given to us by the Apostle Mark, we pass on and spread to the ends of the African Continent".

"The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate has been there for 2000 years and everything reminds us of Greece and Orthodoxy. Praise be to God as Greece and Cyprus assist us in maintaining all that is there, which is not only architectural monuments but also all that is holy in Hellenism".

His Beatitude also expressed his concern as well as his hope regarding the "ethnic Cypriot issue". "May God grant that there be a solution to this problem".

Finally, addressing Mr Rallis, he said: " Mr Ambassador, we thank you very much for all that Greece gives to my Missionary efforts, to the ancient Patriarchate, to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa, to the hospitable nation of Egypt and I pray that both Greece and Cyprus will have health and joy so that we can give a dynamic presence to the current world".

The Greek Ambassador expressed his joy at the presence of the Patriarch of Alexandria in Cyprus and said that "it is an honour for the Greek Embassy to have him visit. "We thank you for your visit and we will always be there for you".

The two Primates then went to the Egyptian Embassy and met with HIS Excellency the Ambassador of Egypt, of Alexandrian descent Mr Ahmed Ibrahim Ragheb, with whom they exchanged views regarding the dialogue between different religions, the contribution of the Egyptian government to the struggles and efforts of the Patriarchate of Alexandria as well as the very cordial relations between Cyprus and Egypt.

"His Excellency President Mubarak always assists me with my work and wherever I am in the world, I always express my gratitude to Egypt and its President", said His Beatitude Theodoros II.

Later, His Beatitude had a private most cordial meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus, Mr Markos Kyprianou.

Addressing the Minister, His Beatitude said: "Thank you for listening to me with so much love when I mentioned the Cypriots abroad who live throughout Africa , among the many thousands of Greeks. The 80% are from Cyprus and they assist us greatly with our missionary efforts and our humanitarian work".

"I told our Minister about the huge effort of our Patriarchate in the hospitable land of Egypt over the past 2000 years. It is an effort that spans 54 countries in Africa , with institutions, orphanages, schools, and humanistic help. I leave tomorrow for my Patriarchate, but I leave stronger. I thank Cyprus because as in the past many assisted us so it continues to this day. I thank you, I

appreciate you and I pray for all that is good, but above all, I pray for justice and peace for Cyprus ”.

In his report following his meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Beatitude expressed “gratitude to Mr Kyprianou, who welcomed him with much love”. He wished him strength for his work and his service to Cyprus . He is a young man, full of strength and has much to give and I wish him strength”.

Mr Kyprianou expressed his joy on meeting the Patriarch saying that it was a special honour for him and that they had discussed many interesting issues especially the missionary efforts of the Patriarchate in Africa and the ways in which Cyprus can assist.