

HIS BEATITUDE THE ARCHBISHOP OF ATHENS VISITS CAIRO

His Beatitude Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece and His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa arrived in Cairo on the evening of 19th June 2009.

The two Primate were welcomed at the Patriarchal Vicariate by the Patriarchal Vicar His Grace Nikodimos, Bishop of Nitria, together with the clergy of the Egyptian capital. They immediately went to the Holy Patriarchal Church of St Nicholas, situated in the grounds of the Vicariate, where His Beatitude, addressed the Archbishop saying: Your Beatitude, this church has a history of many hundreds of years. It was the see of many Patriarchs during difficult years and many are also buried here". He continued, saying, "At this Holy Altar St Nektarios, Bishop of Pentapolis was ordained".

His Beatitude the Archbishop said: Your Beatitude, both I and the Hierarchs with me, have been amazed by the attention given to all these relics which bear witness to the glory of the past. I believe that this is a message to the current age, where individualism and personal benefit prevails, but there are still people who work hard", continued the Archbishop. He also said: Your Beatitude, may we thank you again, rather please allow us to congratulate you on all that you have achieved. Humbly we pray that God will strengthen you with rich blessings, for we do not know what will be the fate and destination of these people. As the late Patriarch Parthenios said, something that sounds so simple, that the future is now in Africa . We pray that you will give this witness, as alive as you can".

His Beatitude then accompanied the Archbishop to the renovated home of St Nektarios where the Archbishop saw many of the personal belongings of the Saint. In the Throne Room the customary gifts were exchanged in commemoration of the visit of the Primate of the Church of Greece to Cairo .

On the next day, 20th June 2009, the Primate visit the National Archaeological Museum of Cairo and the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of St George in Cairo, where the Archbishop was warmly welcomed by Hegumen Archimandrite Nyphon and the young children of the Hellenic community, who were rhythmically beating drums.

The Archbishop went to the Church of St George and, having venerated, listened while Archimandrite Nyphon spoke of the history of the Monastery.

He then went on to visit the tombs of the Patriarchs and conducted a trisagion service for the repose of the soul of the late Patriarch Petros VII.

At noon His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece in Egypt Mr Ioannis Alexios Zeppos hosted an official lunch in honour of the Archbishop of Athens. Also, an official dinner in honour of His Beatitude was hosted by the Chairman and the members of the Hellenic Community of Cairo.

During the visit to the Egyptian capital the Patriarch and the Archbishop discussed issues regarding the External Missions in Africa .

Both His Beatitude and His Eminence Makarios of Kenya thanked Archbishop Ieronymos for the assistance given by the Church of Greece to external missions and about which the Archbishop said: "We need to assist the missions in Africa even more, as they do important work in these difficult times we live in".