

## **HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA VISITS SOWETO**

Within the framework of his Pastoral visit to South Africa, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa visited on 20th January 2015, just before noon, in the district of Soweto in Johannesburg, the Jabuvu East Primary School, at which for twenty years, there has been a Greek language learning programme, under the guidance of the teacher, Mrs. Ava Papatheophilou

His Beatitude was welcomed by government officials, the High Commissioner of Cyprus Mr. Petros Nakouzis and Mr. Taso Christoforou, Chairman of the Federation of Hellenic Communities of South Africa, with members of the Executive Council and the Directors of the School.

More than 200 pupils gave His Beatitude a very warm welcome, holding Greek and South African flags in their hands and singing the national anthems of Greece and South Africa.

A festive function followed where the children expressed in their own way to their distinguished guest, their joy and enthusiasm, by singing, dancing and reciting poems, many of them in Greek.

The Minister of Education of Gauteng Mr. Jacob Mamalolo expressed his joy in welcoming His Beatitude and speaking warmly about Greece and its contribution to global culture, urged the children to learn Greek, which is a language of universal range for education, as he said.

On his behalf His Beatitude expressed his admiration and his joy on the very serious effort made by Mrs Papatheophilou at this school, congratulated all the teachers and, addressing the pupils, urged them to continue their lessons with zeal, to cultivate the knowledge offered to them and not to forget that they are the future of South Africa, the children of Mandela whom he loved so dearly, and who endured many struggles for freedom, love and dignity.

The directors of the school had prepared four Vasilopites which His Beatitude blessed and cut together with the dignitaries for the feast. He then distributed to all the children stationery and other gifts, donated by the Federation of Hellenic Communities of South Africa.