

HIS BEATITUDE VISITS PRETORIA IN SOUTH AFRICA

On 21st may 2008, the day of Mid-Pentecost, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa attended the Divine Liturgy at the Metropolitan Chapel in Johannesburg .

Immediately thereafter he traveled to Pretoria where he visited and blessed the new monastery of the Holy Trinity, which is another place of worship in the Pretoria area and gave father Elias a blessing for his work there.

He then went on to the Russian Parish Community of St Sergius, where he was warmly welcomed by the Parish Priest Father Ioann Lapidus as well as by their Excellencies the Ambassadors of Russia Mr. Makarov, Serbia Mr. Nenic, Bulgaria Mr. Neykov, and Ukraine Mrs. Sanuilova. A doxology was sung, following which the Parish Priest gave His Beatitude a Gospel Book in the Russian Language.

In his speech, His Beatitude spoke of his recent visit to the Church of Russia and of the fraternal relations between the two Churches. He also asked for a blessing on the Russian people and their new president.

At the official breakfast which was hosted in honour of His Beatitude His Excellency Mr. Makarov the Russian Ambassador stressed the excellent relations between the two Patriarchates.

His Beatitude then conducted a memorial service at the Greek cemetery in Pretoria in memory of all Greeks buried there.

On the evening of the same day he honoured with his presence the celebrations for the 100th anniversary of the Hellenic Community of Pretoria.

The celebrations started with a doxology at the beautiful Cathedral of the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Pretoria, in the presence of His Eminence Seraphim and Elder Metropolitan Paul of Memphis, their Excellencies the Ambassadors of Greece in South Africa Mr Aristeidis Sandis, in Zimbabwe Mr Loukakis, the High Commissioner of Cyprus His Excellency Mr Argyros Antoniou, the Vice Chairman of SAE Mr Harry Gouvelis, members of the Federation of Hellenic Communities of South Africa and other dignitaries.

His Beatitude spoke about the contribution of Greeks abroad throughout the world and asked the Greeks of Pretoria to continue their efforts to maintain the customs, the values and principles of Hellenism and Orthodoxy.

He awarded the Office of Archon of the Churches to the former Chairman Mr John Kallinikos. He gave awards also to others for their assistance to the ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria and to the Greeks in the area.

Before the end of the ceremonies, the Patriarch of Alexandria inaugurated the new centre, called the "Kykkos Centre" which was donated by the Monastery of Kykkos of the Church of Cyprus , to which he expressed his gratitude for their contribution to the ongoing missionary work for the people of Africa .