

## **HIS BEATITUDE VISITS THE GREEK FRIGATE "PSARA"**

A modest but honourable visit to the Second Throne Patriarchate in Alexandria was paid by a delegation from the Greek frigate "Psara", where the Greek officers, led by the renowned Deputy Chief of the Greek Fleet, Rear Admiral Georgios Yakoumakis, were warmly welcomed by His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, at the Patriarchal See on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

Welcoming the high-ranking guests, His Beatitude, emphasized that "please know that we will continue to guard Thermopylae, "as we have always done from the time of the Apostle Mark, 2,000 years ago, and would not allow any Nightmare (Ephialtes) to betray the passage of our nation's Thermopylae. For the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of our churches and our monasteries, the promising future is Africa ... And beside the Egyptian flag, the blue and white flag of Greece waves, which was honoured by Bishops and Patriarchs, such as nine Cretan Patriarchs – Meletios Pegas, Meletios Metaxakis, Kyrillos Loukaris. And so, the sea is what separates us but unite us".

His Beatitude Theodoros also told the Greek delegation about the missionary work of the Patriarchate of Alexandria.

From his side, Rear Admiral Yakoumakis stated: "You make us proud both with your presence as well as your work. More people should see that there are people who are far from their homeland that make us proud, a fact which gives us courage and hope". He continued, expressing his joy that "the Patriarchate of Alexandria performs an enormous task without fanfare. We, as the Greek Navy will continue to be at his side. "

In the afternoon of the same day, His Beatitude the Patriarch, accompanied by the Chief Secretary of the Holy Synod Archimandrite Fr. Panteleimon Arathymos was received with appropriate honours by a corps of 210 officers and non-commissioned officers of the glorious Greek frigate headed by the Skipper in Command of the ship, Commander Polychronis Koulouris, who conducted the service of the sanctification of water, expressing his joy at "being on Greek ground, raising the Precious Cross to give us courage and strength". At the same time, he spoke of the missionary work in which the Orthodox Church of Africa brings the message of peace and justice to children who do not have anything else.

"We are honored by your visit, the ship received your blessing and may God give you strength to continue the sacred work you are doing" and as a small token of respect and affection to him the shield of the ship which symbolizes the flag of Psara during the liberation of the country and handed him an honorary admiral's cap.

Present at this event honouring the Patriarch as the Greek Ambassador to Egypt Mr Christodoulos Lazaris, the Consul General of Greece in Cairo Mr Ioannis Hatzantonakis, the Counsellor of the Greek Embassy Mr Andreas Kotidis. The Defence Attaché Master of the Navy Stelios Petrakis and representatives of the Hellenic Communities of Cairo and Alexandria.