

## **HIS BEATITUDE VISITS THE HOLY METROPOLIS OF GOOD HOPE – INAUGURATION OF THE NEW METROPOLITAN CHURCH**

**On the afternoon of Friday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2012 His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa** arrived at the Holy Metropolis of Good Hope accompanied by His Eminence George Metropolitan of Accra, his Representative in Athens and Reverend Father Athinodoros Papaevripiades, Patriarchal Exarch in Cyprus, for the ceremony of inauguration the Holy Church of Ss Raphael Nicholas and Irene which was built by His Eminence Metropolitan Sergios of Good Hope, in the grounds of the Holy Metropolis. The foundation stone had been laid by His Beatitude during his pastoral visit to Cape Town in 2005.

At the Airport in Cape Town His Beatitude was met by the local Metropolitan His Eminence Sergios, the Clergy of the Metropolis, the Consul General of Greece Mr Konstantinos Soulios, the Chairman of the Hellenic Community Mr Nasos Vartalas, the Honorary Consul of Cyprus in Durban Mr Savvas Stylianos and other community dignitaries. Immediately after his arrival, His Beatitude went to the Metropolis and from there in procession transferred the relics of the Saints to the Church and officiated during the festive Great Vespers of the Inauguration.

A festive function followed where the choir of the Holy Metropolis sang church hymns and Greek folksongs.

**On the morning of Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2012,** His Beatitude conducted the service of inauguration during which he explained the relevant details of the ceremony and then officiated at the Divine Liturgy, together with His Eminence Sergios and His Eminence George of Accra.

During his address Metropolitan Sergios warmly welcomed the Venerable Primate of the Throne of St Mark, spoke of the enormous renovation works he has undertaken in Alexandria and of his many missionary journeys throughout Africa, as well as the history of the building of the new Church. He then gave the Patriarch a commemorative gift of a gold-embroidered stole.

In his reply His Beatitude prayed to the Lord who deemed him worthy to officiate at the inauguration of the Church for which he himself laid the foundation stone seven years ago and called on all Orthodox Christians from the beautiful city of Cape Town to always be close to the Mother Church which is a refuge, comfort, hope, light and salvation. He also praised the efforts and the pastoral work of His Eminence metropolitan Sergios to whom he gave a silver chalice and paten in remembrance of the inauguration.

Following the Eucharistic gathering orphaned African children who are cared for by the local Church, presented a festive programme of traditional dances and songs and a festive programme also followed by children of the Bulgarian community of the city.