

## **HIS BEATITUDE VISITS THE ST NEKTARIOS MISSIONARY CENTRE IN HARARE**

The St Nektarios Missionary Centre near Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, is one of the most significant examples of the contribution of the Alexandrian Church to the local community of this African country, especially the youth, hundreds of whom welcomed His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa.

His beatitude arrived there on the afternoon of Friday 7th October 2011, on the first part of his long trip to Zimbabwe, thereby marking the seven years of his Patriarchal tenure and he emotionally stressed that it was from there that God called on him to take over the rudder of the 2nd Throne Patriarchate, in 2004.

Welcoming His Beatitude Theodoros, His Eminence Seraphim Metropolitan of Zimbabwe and Angola, emphasized that this active parish, which includes the St Cosmas School that has 280 scholars in the high school being prepared for university, is genuine proof of the concern which the Alexandrian Primate always has for the people of Zimbabwe.

On his part His Beatitude defined this day of his visit to the missionary centre and his first day in Harare as historic, because it coincides with the election of His Eminence Seraphim of Zimbabwe exactly one year ago but also with the anniversary of his own election as Patriarch on 9th October 2011.

Speaking about the missionary centre he did not hesitate to point out that there had been many difficulties at the start of the missions and he recalled the first Pascha and the first Christian Baptisms. However, at the beginning the Patriarch, then Metropolitan of Zimbabwe, had significant support in his efforts, as he pointed out, extending grateful thanks to the lady of the Churches, Mrs Ariadne Psillos, who contributed, as few others do, to the promotion of the operation of this centre. «So, the fruits took root...».

He also thanked His Eminence for his work as well as his predecessor and now Metropolitan George of Accra and donated a Blessing Cross which was made in Egypt to the church and to its Parish Priest Fr Avgoustinos.

He also thanked the Patriarchal Vicar of Cairo, His Grace Nikodimos Bishop of Nitria for his presence, as he too had supported him as Parish Priest in Bulawayo, the 2nd city of Zimbabwe.

He also expressed thanks to Fr Innokentios who, coming from Uganda and as a lecturer at the Patriarchal Academy in Nairobi, will now assist with the firm establishment of the missionary effort in South Sudan. He thanked also the Exarch of the Patriarchate of Alexandria in Cyprus, Fr Athenodoros.

«Orthodoxy is continually progressing and the Christ's message is being spread through the length and breadth of Africa».

Finally, addressing the hundreds of youth who had welcomed him there, His Beatitude told them that they are the future of our Church and expressed great joy that among them are graduates from the «St Athanasios» Patriarchal Academy of Alexandria.

«You must love this place, which with much effort has been built for you and belongs to you. You must love this land. It is yours», he ended.

Immediately following the Doxology he blessed the children of the school who

sang in his honour and gave them scholarships. He also gave 500 families a bag each of Mealie Meal (a basic foodstuff in Zimbabwe) as a token of love from both himself and Mrs Ariadne Psillos, lady of the Churches.