

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS VISITS HIS BEATITUDE

On 9th April 2009, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Dimitri Christofias and his wife is Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, at the Patriarchal See.

In a ceremony which took place in the Throne Room His Beatitude awarded the Great Cross of the Church of the Apostle Mark, with a star, to His Excellency. "We thank Cyprus, which always with humanity and good will aids and supports the missionary efforts of the Patriarchate of Alexandria throughout the African Continent", noted the Venerable Primate. "We pray that the Cyprus issue will be solved during the Presidential tenure of Mr. Christofias. I know that he has power in his word and strength of heart". He also spoke of the peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Egypt and expressed his gratitude for the support and protection afforded the Patriarchate.

Mr Christofias spoke with admiration of the missionary efforts of the Second Throne Patriarchate which ease the living conditions and spiritual needs of our suffering brothers and sisters on the African continent. He added that Christian teaching is based on love, peace and equality between people. It is for the predominance of these values in Cyprus that he strives too. He ended by telling His Beatitude: "By implication we have equality of vocation". His Beatitude awarded the Cross of St Mark to Mrs Christofias for her philanthropic work.

An official lunch was then hosted in the Great Patriarchal Refectory in honour of the President of the Cyprus Republic, and was attended by His Grace Gabriel, Bishop of Mareotis, His Grace Spyridon, Bishop of Kanopou, His Grace Gennadios Bishop of Nilopolis, His Excellency the Ambassador of Cyprus to Egypt, Mr. Konstantinos Leontiou, His Excellency the Minister of Trade from Cyprus Mr Antonios Paschalides, the Government Representative Mr Stephanos Stephanou, the Director of the Presidential Office Mr Vasos Georgiou, other high-ranking Government Officials from Cyprus, the Honourable Consul General of Greece in Alexandria, Mr George Diakofotakis, the President of SAE Mr Stephanos Tambakis, the Chairman of the Hellenic Community Mr Haralambos Katsimbris, the Chairman of the Cyprus Brotherhood Mr. Haralambos Haralambides and others.

It is also to be noted that on 7th April, His Excellency Mr Christofias, accompanied by the Minister of Petroleum in Egypt, Mr. Sameh Fahmi, visited the centuries-old Monastery of St George in Old Cairo, where he laid a wreath at the tomb of the late Patriarch Petros VII, his cousin.