

HOLY METROPOLIS OF GOOD HOPE: 50 YEARS OF PRODUCTIVE ORTHODOX MINISTRY AND HELLENISM, AT THE SOUTHERN TIP OF AFRICA

On **20th January 2018**, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, with memories of the past, enthusiasm for the present and hope for the future, was received by the Holy Metropolis of Good Hope, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation.

After having arrived at the reception hall, the Alexandrian Prime Minister was able to greet and chat with all the guests, friends and families of Greek expatriates and South African Orthodox Christians.

Among others, present were the Consuls General of Greece and Russia Mr. Thomas Matsoukas and Mr. Abarov, the Honorary Consul of Cyprus in Cape Town Mr. Babis Philippou, the Honorary Consuls of Greece and Cyprus in Durban Mr. Ioannis Ioannou and Mr. Savvas Stylianou, the Chairmen of the Hellenic Communities of Cape Town, George and East London. The whole event was celebrated with beautiful hymns by Efi Saridakis, Marianna Simos and Michael Ioannou.

His Eminence Sergios Metropolitan of Good Hope, presented in slides the historical course of the 50 years of Greek Orthodox presence, showing all the Communities and Parishes of the Metropolis. He stressed that the light of hope, emitted by the 'Lighthouse of Alexandria', illuminates the Holy Metropolis of Good Hope, and that the Greeks, every moment of the presence of their Communities, remember the Church's contribution towards unity. He also presented photographic material from the missions, to the Zulus and Xhosa of Swaziland and distant Namibia. Christ, he said, is present in every race, colour and corner of the earth. He then finally also mentioned the first Metropolitan of Good Hope, the late Pavlos Barnabas, for his contribution to the first steps of the establishment of the Metropolis.

His Beatitude on his behalf, stressed that we must, as Greeks, preserve our language, faith and Hellenism. He said that it is extremely important to teach our children to read Greek, to speak Greek and to count in Greek. He then thanked His Eminence Metropolitan Sergius, for his contribution during the past 18 years and the wonderful work he has continued from his predecessor, offering him a personal commemorative gift, to honour him and to thank him.

Similarly, His Eminence Sergios gave His Beatitude Theodoros a leather-bound Bible as a token of honour and respect for his upcoming name day.

On **Sunday 21st January**, His Beatitude officiated at the festive Patriarchal Divine Liturgy, con-celebrated by the local Metropolitan Sergios of Good Hope, Priests and Deacons of the Holy Metropolis. The choir was directed by Dimitrios Zitianelis.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy Memorial Prayers were sung, for the repose of the late first Metropolitan Pavlos Barnabas of Good Hope.

In his homily, His Beatitude addressed his spiritual children in Cape Town, stressing the importance of the Church, the Greek language and the Community. The Church expresses our unity, the Greek language is our common definition, and the Community is our family. All of these must coexist in order to be productive and thus to preserve our identity as Greek Orthodox Christians by passing them on to the next generations. He prayed that God will keep the Holy Metropolis safe, and, making a symbolic move, removed his stole from his neck, offering it as a gift of love to the Church. In conclusion, he thanked His Eminence Sergios for his hospitality and love.

On his behalf, His Eminence Sergios gave His Beatitude a new stole (epitrachyion) in commemoration of his visit to the Holy Metropolis of Good Hope.

Immediately afterwards, the Hellenic Community, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Fotis Sousalis, hosted an official lunch at the Community Club "Sea Point". His Beatitude arrived at the venue, where the entire Hellenic Community was waiting for him, to meet with him and to receive the blessing of their spiritual Father.

In his speech, the Chairman Mr Sousalis welcomed His Beatitude to the Community of Cape Town. He noted that the Cathedral of St George is one of the oldest Greek Orthodox Churches in South Africa and was built by the Greek Community which was founded in 1900. He mentioned the difficulties which the Greek Communities overcome when Church and Community work together, for the promotion of the ideals of Orthodoxy and Hellenism. He also thanked Metropolitan Sergios for his dedication and example to the Community, helping to overcome many obstacles. Finally, he stressed that Nicolas Giamouridis plays an important role in the Community, bringing closer to the Church and the Community, children, the youth and the elderly. Concluding his speech and greeting, he gave the Patriarch on behalf of the Hellenic Community of Cape Town, a painting by Mrs. Fula Paxinos.

His Beatitude Theodoros thanked the Hellenic Community for their contribution to the Church, giving them the seal of the Patriarchate of Alexandria to remind them that they will always be in his heart and in his prayers.

On the evening of the same day, the Greek Consulate of Cape Town and the Consul Mr. Thomas Matsoukas, hosted a reception in honour of the Patriarch. There, the Alexandrian Primate had the opportunity of meeting the former President of South Africa and holder of the Nobel Prize Mr. F. W. de Klerk. Also present was his Greek wife, Mrs. Elita Georgiades. The President and the Patriarch discussed various issues, among other things the political situation in the Middle East and in Egypt, as well as that in Greece.

Completing his visit to Cape Town, His Beatitude greeted and thanked everyone for their hospitality.