

“LIGHT OF CHRIST”, SHINE IN AFRICA

On 15th February 2017, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa travelled with his entourage to the “Ss Kosmas and Damian” hospital of the local Church, in Manika, Kolwezi, where he inaugurated the new wing, blessed and spoke with the patients and the medical staff. The spectacular opening ceremony was attended by the Minister of Health of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Mayor of Kolwezi, the representative of the Governor and the President of the Governing Council, the Health Inspector of Kolwezi, various state officials, the hospital’s medical and nursing staff and many guests. In his address to those present, His Beatitude thanked His Excellency the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Mr. Joseph Kabila for his support of the efforts of the Orthodox Church in the country, congratulated the local Metropolitan Meletios on the important work which, as he said will contribute through the ultramodern medical equipment available, thereby alleviating human suffering. He called on everyone to contribute to the smooth operation of the hospital, as this task was undertaken for the health service of the residents in the broader region. After the end of the ceremony, His Beatitude the Patriarch visited the adjacent convent of the St Nektarios, where a female Sisterhood lives under the guidance of the Mother Superior, Sister Makrina. After prayers in the Church of the Convent, the Alexandrian Primate gave paternal advice and guidance to the Sisters, saying that: “...monasteries are a great blessing for our Patriarchate, because just as our bodies need life-giving oxygen to live, in the same way our Church needs Monasticism. We need saintly monks and nuns! And my pray to Gos is, that this blessed continent may be filled with monasteries, so that the Name of the Holy God may be praised and glorified. I bless you with my whole heart. I want you to know that your Metropolitan Meletios loves your convent very much, because above all he is a good monk. Indeed, you have the privilege of being next to the Metropolis hospital. I call on you and ask of you, to support it through your contribution and with your prayer and to give courage to suffering people...” His Beatitude the Patriarch then returned to the Missionary Centre of Kolwezi and presided over a lengthy meeting, with the presence of the local Metropolitan His Eminence Meletios of Katanga, His Eminence Metropolitan Nicephorus of Kinshasa, His Grace Innocent Bishop of Burundi and Rwanda, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Daniel Biazis, Chief Secretary of the Holy Synod and the Honorary Consul General of Greece Mr. Gerasimos Dounis, during which all the matters relating to the future of Missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were discussed in detail and the basis for the smooth progress in Christ was put into place. Immediately thereafter His Beatitude went by car to the Tsamoudede Louilou district, to visit the newly-established and large Parish Community of the Great Martyr Saint Kyriaki. Following the Doxology prayers in the Church, the Patriarch addressed loving words to the faithful, supporting them in their Orthodox faith and life. On 16th February, presided over by His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, a General Priests Synaxis was held for the Clergy of the Metropolis of Katanga in the Church of St George in Kolwezi. During this Synaxis His Beatitude spoke with paternal love to the Clergy, referring to his personal acquaintance with the most revered late elder Fr George Kapsanis, Abbot of the Monastery of St George on Mount Athos and the fraternal relationship which binds him with his spiritual brother Metropolitan Meletios. He also spoke of the great Missionaries Fr. Chariton Pneumatikakis and Fr. Cosmas Gregoriatis, and the fact that with the latter he was a fellow student at the Rizarios Ecclesiastical Academy in Athens. He gave paternal counsel to the Clergy and listened to their concerns. Immediately after the Priest’s Synaxis the Alexandrian Primate attended a festive celebration put on by the Holy Metropolis of Katanga during which he had the opportunity of seeing at first hand and to bless more than 30,000 pupils of the schools of all levels and of the schools belonging

to the Holy Metropolis. The pupils marched before the Patriarch in an atmosphere of enthusiasm and at the end, His Beatitude, who was visibly moved by the presence of thousands of pupils, spoke to them paternally. His Beatitude the Patriarch then attended a lunch with the Hierarchs and the 80 Clergy of the Holy Metropolis of Katanga. On the evening of the same day, at the Holy Church of St Nicholas in the Missionary Centre of Kolwezi, an official festive Patriarchal Vespers was served in honour of the Great Martyr Saint Theodoros of Tyre, on the occasion of the name day of His Beatitude Theodoros Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa.