

NEW YEAR AT THE PATRIARCHATE OF ALEXANDRIA

On 31 December His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa welcomed to his private office, according to custom, His Eminence Gabriel, Metropolitan of Leontopolis, Patriarchal Vicar of Alexandria, His Grace Meletios Bishop of Naukratis, Hegumen of the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of St Savvas the Sanctified in Alexandria, and the Clergy of the Patriarchate and the Holy Archdiocese of Alexandria, who sang festive songs and offered their festal wishes. He then listened to carols and received wishes for the new year of Salvation 2015 from the African Students of the "St Athanasios" Patriarchal Academy, as well as the staff of the Patriarchate. His Beatitude gave gifts and blessings to them all.

On the evening of the same day His Beatitude officiated at Great Vespers at the Holy Patriarchal Chapel of Ss Theodoroi, after which, in the Throne Room he presented the proceedings of the past year 2014 and expressed gratitude for the support shown, to the Egyptian and Greek Governments, as well as to the Greek and Arabic Orthodox Communities of Alexandria. Addressing His Beatitude, the Patriarchal Vicar emphasized the significance of the closing year, as a year marked on the one hand by the tenth anniversary of the Patriarch's election to the Throne of St Mark, and on the other hand by the completion of His Beatitude's completion of sixty years of life. Extolling the tireless activities of His Beatitude during this decade, he stressed that, while in the framework of global history the periods of power and majesty are defined as gold, within the framework of church history the periods of witness and martyrdom are defined as gold, according to the words of the Apostle Paul my strength is made perfect in weakness.

Following the blessing of the Vasilopita of the Patriarchate, His Beatitude awarded in praise and recognition of his faithful and conscientious ministry to the Throne of St Mark, through the Commander of St Savvas the Sanctified, the Director of the Office the Very Reverend Apostolos Trifyllis, who from the beginning of the New Year will continue his priestly and educational ministry under the omophorion of His Eminence Stylianos Archbishop of Australia. He also gave an award to Mrs. Zihan Barbara Masapki who for many years has worked beside him as Private Secretary, awarding her the Gold Lion of the Order of St Savvas the Sanctified.

On 1 January 2015, he officiated at the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Alexandria, and conducted the Doxology for the beginning of the New Year, together with His Eminence Gabriel Metropolitan of Leontopolis, His Grace Meletios Bishop of Naukratis, Hegumen of the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of St Savvas the Sanctified in Alexandria, and the holy Clergy. At noon on New Year's Day he visited the elderly at the Hellenic Community of Alexandria Old Age Home, to whom he offered gifts and blessings.