

ORDINATION OF THE NEW METROPOLITAN CHARITON OF KANANGA

Wednesday 2nd February was a hopeful and bright day for the Missionary Church of Africa. The new Metropolitan of Kananga, Chariton Mussungai, was ordained according to the Alexandrian order at the Holy Cathedral of St. Nicholas in Hamzawi, Cairo.

Another gold link was forged by the hands of the Pope and Patriarch Theodoros II of Alexandria and All Africa, in the long chain of successors of priests of the African continent whose life motivation nests in the "I" which he shares, generously offering love and reciprocity and is transformed into the "we" that reflects the Light and the example of a different law of life.

His Beatitude the Patriarch of Alexandria officiated at the Divine Liturgy together with Archbishop Damianos of Sinai and concelebrating with His Eminence Metropolitan George of Guinea, His Eminence Metropolitan Nicodemus of Memphis and Patriarchal Vicar of Cairo, His Eminence Metropolitan Meletios of Katanga, His Eminence Metropolitan Theodosius of Kinshasa and the newly-ordained Bishop of Konstaniani His Grace Cosmas. The Chanters were the Protopsaltis of the Hellenic Community of Cairo Mr. Ioannis Kountrias with Mr. Symeon Muyaya of the Church of Congo who came to honour his friend and to chant on this auspicious day.

As he was preparing for his ordination, we introduced ourselves and asked for a few words about the NEO FOS and ekkairo.org. In the brief but indicative conversation we had, his charming character immediately emerged, as well as his special sense of humour. He told us about the difficult living conditions on the African continent and about the great missionary work been done in all the Dioceses. When we asked him how it is that he speaks Greek so fluently, he revealed that he studied at the Theological School of Athens and continued diligently completing his postgraduate Theological studies with a scholarship from the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The new Metropolitan Chariton of Kananga was honoured on the day of his ordination by the Ambassador of Greece to Egypt Mr. Nicholas Garilides, the Consul General of Greece Mrs Maria Zisi, Mr. Salem Kasis Chairman of the Church of the Archangels in Daher, Mrs Arlet Monsef ChairPerson of the H.O.C. and the pupils of the Achiloupoulios Greek School accompanied by their teachers.

Friends and priests from the Congo also attended. His brother Dr. Konstantinos Mussungai, a gynecologist who lives in Thessaloniki with his Greek wife Efstathia and their two children, was by the side of His Eminence videotaping the whole ceremony. Veronica and Alexandros, who literally stole the show, sometimes holding the large silver cross in front of the priests during the procession of the Blessing in the Church, and at others hiding amongst the Hierarchs playing with their vestments.

Addressing His Beatitude the Patriarch, His Eminence Chariton Metropolitan of Kananga, spoke from the heart, saying that at this time he feels weak because the sanctity and brilliance of events frighten him, considering that he is becoming "a successor of the thrones" of the Holy Apostles.

"God wanted me to be born into a Christian Orthodox family from parents who thirsted for Truth and Orthodoxy". With these words he began a tender retrospection of his life from the days when, as he said, he grew up with his brothers and the other children of the Church in the courtyard of the Orthodox Missionary Center, in the shadow of the "White man" as we called him even as small children and his eyes watered with emotion as he mentioned the man who was the first notch on his journey. The late blessed missionary, the great man of Crete as he called him,

Father Chariton Pneumatikakis.

He also mentioned with tender words of remembrance the years in Greece, his studies and the open arms of the Holy Dependency of the Ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria but the affection and care he felt from the brotherhood of Theologians "SOTIR" but also from the student hostel "MEGAS VASILEIOS".

Finally, he thanked His Beatitude the Patriarch, but also all the Hierarchs who voted for him. There was also a warm reference to his family in the flesh and especially of his parents Veronica and Evarestos who unfortunately could not attend this great day in his life.

After his ordination was completed, His Beatitude the Patriarch spoke and addressed with emotion and genuine paternal care His Eminence the Metropolitan and said with feeling:

My child, Chariton, following the commandment of Christ, go out and teach all the nations, we do the same as successors of the Holy Apostles. We pour out into the whole universe to scatter the joy and light of the Gospel of Christ to every corner of Africa.

And continuing his speech he referred to his virtues and especially those of humility and obedience that, as he said, "adorn you and will help you in your difficult and laborious work. You are a student of the great Missionary, the late blessed Metropolitan Ignatius of Pentapolis, whom you served with self-denial and love until his end and you were taught a lot".

And at the end of his homily he tenderly urged him to have as an example the life of Saint Nicholas in whose church, as he said, today you receive the grace of a Hierarch. And he wished that he be a worthy successor of the great missionaries Ignatius and Nicephoros the Hierarchs; Chrysostom and Chariton the hieromonks, whose souls I am sure rejoice in heaven especially today.

Clergy and people exclaimed "Axios" with joy filling the heart of His Eminence Metropolitan Chariton with joy and hope for the beginning of his difficult and demanding work.

After the wishes he exchanged with those present and the commemorative photos, he headed with his relatives and friends to the Throne Room, where His Beatitude welcomed him and gave him a wonderful pectoral cross which he said he gives to all his children after following their ordination and it depicts the "flight to Egypt" so that they can keep in mind the refugees of the world, the foreigners, the poor Africans; he also gave him an elegant staff by Khan El Khalili to hold it when he travels in Africa.