

PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA «MAY THE CHAMPION GENERAL ENLIGHTEN US THAT THE WAR MAY CEASE»

On Thursday, 24th March 2022, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, officiated at the Service of the Festive Vespers, at the historic Community Church of the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Alexandria.

On the next day, Friday 25th March, His Beatitude the Patriarch officiated during Orthros and served the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy, concelebrating with His Grace Germanos Bishop of Tamiathus and Nikodemus of Nilopolis.

Present at the worship Gathering were the Consul General of Greece in Alexandria Mr. Athanasios Kotsionis, the captain of the Naval Association in Alexandria, Konstantinos Varouxis, the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Alexandria Mr. Ioannis Siokos and Mr. Andreas Vafiades, the Presidents of the Association of Greek Scientists "Ptolemy I" and of the Naval Club Mrs. Lilika Thlivitou, the representatives of institutions and Associations of Alexandria, the teachers and students of the Greek schools of the Great City, Scouts, as well as the faithful believers of the Greek and Arabic-speaking Community.

During his speech, His Beatitude, with very warm words, referred to the meaning of the double feast of the Annunciation and the National Regeneration, the All Holy Virgin, the All-praise Mother, who once again filled the beautiful church of the Annunciation of the Theotokos with believers.

His Beatitude, referring to his recent tour of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where he found that the efforts of the previous missionaries were not in vain, did not forget to refer to the unjust and uncanonical intrusion by the Russian Church, which bears the fruit of foreign spiritual toils and struggles, emphasizing characteristically **"Our hearts became very bitter when our Orthodox brothers entered our space. But, did we not work for so many years? Did our tears not irrigate Africa"?**

Clearly emotional, the Primate of Alexandria referred to the Greek spirit, which is not limited to the geographical borders of Greece, but spread to the ends of the universe, especially in every corner of Africa, where Greek communities keep the torch of Hellenism burning. With the pain in his heart evident, however, His Beatitude made a special reference to the tragic war situation in Ukraine. Specifically, without being able to hide his tears, he mentioned Odessa, the city to which he dedicated ten whole years of his life, serving under difficult conditions in the Greek Church of the Holy Trinity, and which he sees with great pain today, being bombed and tested today.

"In front of the icon of the Most Holy Virgin, I want to declare peace today, my children. I ask the Champion General, the Most Holy Theotokos, to enlighten and give strength to our Orthodox brothers, so that the war may cease and that they may live in love and harmony". With this heartfelt wish, the Helmsman of the Alexandrian Throne closed his speech, wishing everyone many blessed years.

Prior to the dismissal of the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy, the Doxology for the National Anniversary and the usual memorial prayers for those who fought and died during the Nation's struggles, took place inside the Church, as well as the laying of wreaths at the two memorial structures in the Church courtyard. .