

## **PATRIARCHAL DIVINE LITURGY IN CAIRO**

The Greeks of Cairo celebrated Christmas this year, in a pious atmosphere in the presence of His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa. The celebratory Divine Liturgy was conducted today in the historic Cathedral of St Nicholas by His Beatitude, together with His Grace Nikodimos Bishop of Nitria, Patriarchal Vicar of Cairo and His Grace Niphon Bishop of Babylonia Hegumen of the Holy Monastery of St George in Old Cairo.

Present also were high-ranking officials representing the head of the Military Council of Egypt, General Tantawi, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, the Egyptian police, as well as the Primate of the Coptic Church Pope Shenouda who, due to his illness, sent a multi-person party as representatives. All gave wishes to His Beatitude the Patriarch of Alexandria on the great feast of Christianity. His Beatitude gave particular wishes to the Coptic representatives for a speedy recovery for His Beatitude Pope Shenouda. At the same time, he gave wholehearted thanks to Egypt for the support which it gives to the ancient Patriarchate and prayed that peace would reign throughout the world, praying especially that the Newborn Lord would protect the land of the Nile as well as Greece during these troubled times.

The Venerable Primate of the Throne of St Mark awarded Mrs Dionysia Vallianatou, a member of the Hellenic Community, the Cross of St Mark, for her general contribution to the Church of Alexandria.

Present also at the Eucharistic gathering were the Honourable Consul General of Greece in Cairo Mr Ioannis Hatzantonakis, the Honourable Councilor of the Cypriot Embassy Mr Andreas Kouzoupis, the Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Cairo, the Representative of the Arabic-speaking community Mr Farid Hourri, Chairmen of Societies and many faithful. Note that since yesterday representatives of Hellenic organizations arrived at the Patriarchal Vicariate in the Egyptian capital and sang carols for His Beatitude – the Scouts of Cairo and the choir of the Orthodox Spiritual Patriarchal Centre. His Beatitude also visited the Old Age Home of the Hellenic Community of Cairo, as well as the Old Age Home of the Arabic Orthodox Community, distributing gifts to the elderly in care. The festive function ended in the evening with the service of Vespers for the Leave-taking of Christmas which was conducted in the ancient Monastery of St George.