

PATRIARCHAL DIVINE LITURGY IN SOUTH AFRICA AT PASCHA

The Divine Liturgy on Pascha Sunday at the Holy Church of Pantanassa Johannesburg was conducted with great splendour by His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa together with His Eminence Seraphim Metropolitan of Johannesburg and Pretoria.

Present at the church which was filled by Greek, Cypriot and local faithful were: the Consul General of Greece in Johannesburg Mrs Vasiliki Gounaris, the Vice Chairmen of the Federation of Greek Communities, representatives of brotherhoods, societies and associations.

All those present, together with His Beatitude, sang the Resurrectional hymns, exchanged the embrace of love and received the traditional Paschal eggs. Following the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy, a festive supper was held in the Parish Community of Pantanassa.

In his Paschal message, the Venerable Primate of Alexandria, emphasized: "...my visit to South Africa this Pascha, where the charismatic figure of Nelson Mandela shines with its wisdom and the witness of its struggle for freedom of thought. And my visit here makes it useful to think of what the people of Africa have achieved through their struggles and even how many more steps must be taken for the complete restoration of human rights.

As I travel from edge to edge of the African Continent, I meet communities which only in name are based on the principle of equality. In reality though basic rights such as the right to life, freedom, peace, education, work, happiness are not protected. If we all realise that Christ suffered, was crucified and rose again for us all, regardless of what their beginnings are, because they have a common goal – their sanctifying elevation as people who are made in the image and likeness of God – then tolerance, understanding, respect and love will find a place in our communities... .

The times when certain people could have dominion over others because of their racial superiority or their monopoly on truth, have passed. The times when certain people could willingly withdraw and selfishly live in comfort have also passed. We now live in an era when the phenomenon of globalisation has not only abolished the boundaries of purchases and profits, but has abolished also the boundaries of the problems and anxieties.

So, it is necessary that we work for the true enlightenment of people. We have to impact with dogmatism and follow the difficult path of faith in the Risen Lord. In Him who founded human values; these values which we forgot and made us lead our world into all kinds of crises, such as those which contemporary society is undergoing now".

During the Vespers of Love, His Beatitude officiated at the Holy Church of the Forerunner in Germiston. He had just received at the door to the Church the Holy Light which had arrived that morning in South Africa from Athens. This was followed by a Paschal Lunch in the grounds of the Hellenic Community of Germiston, where His Beatitude had the opportunity of speaking with everyone present, as his visit to South Africa was ending on Monday in Bright WEEK, 5TH April 2010.