

# PEACEFUL VISIT BY HIS BEATITUDE THE SERBIAN PATRIARCH TO THE ANCIENT CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA

With the sound of drums played by the Greek and Arabic-speaking Scouts, the joyful peeling of bells and the presence of crowds of faithful, the ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria welcomed to the historic monastery of St George Old Cairo on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2012 His Beatitude Irenaios Patriarch of Serbia who is paying a peaceful visit to the Second Throne Church of Alexandria.

The Venerable Primate of the Serbian Church was welcomed at the international airport in Cairo by His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, accompanied by His Grace Nikodimos Bishop of Nitria and Patriarchal Vicar of Cairo and they immediately went to the ancient Monastery of St George, where the Hegumen His Grace Niphon Bishop of Babylonos and the clergy were waiting. During the Doxology His Beatitude addressed the Patriarch of Serbia, saying:

“Your Beatitude Irenaios, Patriarch of Serbia, beloved brother and concelebrant of my humility,

Your Eminences holy hierarchs and pious clergy who are part of the honourable Patriarchal entourage,

*“Blessed are You the God of our Fathers and blessed is Your Name to the ages...accept our evening sacrifice...”*

We send up glory and honour to the Triune God who has granted us the blessing and the particular joy of this official communication with our brother Primate, who is most venerable and beloved.

We welcome you today, Your beatitude, in the framework of your Peaceful Visit to our Most Holy and Apostolic Church of Alexandria and All Africa, to reap the benefits of face to face participation. This visit is not just a customary communication, but an essential and fraternal expression of the true love of Christ between us, of unity and understanding in a climate of spiritual gladness.

Your Beatitude,

Me meet with you with great joy, as the Primate of the Serbian Church, a Church with great spiritual heritage from the many holy patriarch, archbishops, priests, monks and leaders, here in the God-walked and centuries old Holy Monastery of St George in Old Cairo.

This holy dwelling place, whose history as a glorious architectural building stems from the pharaonic years, has the particular blessing of being the refuge of the Holy Family in ancient Egypt, when the abysmal fury of King Herod sought the child Christ. This holy foundation was the place of incarceration and martyrdom of the Saint and Victorious Great Martyr George. This monastic dwelling place has been a place of asceticism and prayerful vigils for thousands of monastics of our ancient Church, who through their sanctifying struggles, through the ages made it a fund of grace and blessing. And this is where all our blessed Predecessors rest.

This holy temple of the immaculate Orthodox faith God wanted us to renovate from the foundations with the assistance of the patriotic Greek shipowner Mr. Athanasios Martinos, as the most precious and all venerable pilgrimage of our

Patriarchal Throne.

So we welcome you're here, continuers of the marvellous state of the ascetics, the saints and the great fathers and Patriarchs who watered the fertile land of Egypt with the sanctified perspirations of their struggles and the precious blood of their martyrdom.

Our Second Throne Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa is already in the third millennium of its historic course. A course which began with its Enlightener, the Apostle and Evangelist Mark and continues unabated to this day, maintaining holy tradition unadulterated and the entirety of the sacrificial conviction of the holy persons who graced this Throne. The historic course which is witnessed to by the wealth of its spiritual heritage, which was recorded and guided the path and theological teaching of the One Undivided Church from the first days of its earthly manifestation.

Bearing this witness through the ages it is with joy that we see Your Beatitude and your fine entourage. Our gratitude is expressed from our souls and with mixed emotions of spiritual rejoicing, it becomes externalized and is a prayerful feeling, an urgent request and a passionate prayer that God will grant you strength for your ministry as Primate, for the benefit and progress of the pious Serbian people.

Your Beatitude and most precious holy Brother, we pray that you will have good health and strength to lead your people for many years. We take for granted your prayers for our ancient Patriarchate, as a precious gift from your beloved and sacrificial heart. Many years! Welcome!"

In the afternoon of the same day, the two Primates and the members of the entourage drove to Alexandria where on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2012 they will conduct a Patriarchal Concelebration at the Holy Cathedral of the Annunciation of the Theotokos.