

## **PLIGRIMAGE OF THE PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA TO THE HERMITAGES AND THE SKETE OF THE SOLOVKI ISLANDS**

**On 20th August 2015, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, paid a pilgrimage visit to the Holy Skete of the Saint and Apostle Andrew the First Called, on one of the Solovki Islands, which was built by the Grand Tsar Peter almost 350 years ago.**

There he had the chance of speaking with the Fathers of the Skete, while also taking a walk through the beautiful natural surroundings and enjoying the endless peace and tranquility of the area.

On His Beatitude's return to the main Monastery, a lunch was hosted in honour by the Mayor of Arkhangelsk, Mr. Igor Orlov, in the presence of representatives of the local Parliament and various dignitaries of society.

In the evening of the same day His Beatitude, together with His Grace Meletios Bishop of Naucratis, Hegumen of the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of St Savvas the Sanctified in Alexandria and His Grace Savva, Bishop of Voskresenky, Hegumen of the Holy Monastery of Novospassky in Moscow, officiated at Vespers and Orthros, according to the Russian typikon, in the Church of the Monastery of Solovki on the occasion of the Feast of its founders, the Venerable Fathers Sabatios, Zosimas and Germanos.

Following the holy service, he went to the hermitage of St Makarios which has been converted into a Botanical garden with 1500 species of plants and trees, and was guided by those in charge, while also planting a fir tree (spruce) in commemoration of his visit there.