

“I WAS ALSO THERE, AT THE RENOVATION OF THE ROTONDA IN CAIRO”

(By His Eminence Anthimos Metropolitan of Alexandropolis)

From Evros,
where the rivers join
and open up into the delta,
we came, the bishops
where “an old god and a road
and a donor and a judge”
brings the bowels of Epirus
to the Mediterranean and calls
from its gates, like another Macedonian,
that we cross.

The first Pope invited us
to enjoy his creative breath,
as this gave breath to something old,
but also new, which is being
born.

In Pharaonic boulders
Rome had enthroned its power
and then came faith
which covered the tower with a
Church rotunda secured there
The corner-stone of the confession
of the Trophy bearer.

And they came,
the enemies of the Nazarene,
waves of conquerors
and the tamer of all,
and they tarnished everything.
Beacon guides few
kept the importance of the place
the frozen fingers
even without the rings.

And the Patriarch,
transformed the impossible dream
into truth,
with people who encapsulated
their wealth in Faith
and offered it
as incense in worship.

And the dream became a vision
And the vision reality:
a rotunda of the east,
A monument to civilizations,
The hope of religions
(The last for coexistence),
A technical achievement,
A course for the millennia,

but most of all, (alas so far),
the testimony of a people
which gave civilization,
symbolisms and hope.

The Cross, the Word urged
Him, whom tradition
prolifically named
judge of the world
to come, as a divine gift,
to grant, to give of himself
to countries, to people and to their cultures.

Not to judge,
but to wash...feet,
to wipe away tears, to sow hope, joy,
and meaning,
to proclaim the message
of a different way of life, to those
who even this one is unbearable.

Everyone rejoiced, all marvelled,
praised, but Theodore's II,
was flying in joy. Yes, he was not treading
on the Rotunda in Cairo.
He was spinning in the past,
he was experiencing it in the present,
He witnessed it from the future.

He was bothered neither by the shouts
of the muezzin, nor by the ignorant
passers-by, who gazed cluelessly
and passed by.

He was not counting his own, but
everyone, all who passed, those there and those
who would perhaps attend tomorrow.
The Patriarch counted, watched,
laughed and flew through the Egyptian sky.

He became again,
The Shepherd of shepherds,
Father of fathers, Archpriest of archpriests.
He was there, to minister
with so many bishops (weak,
like all of us, in our time),
with titles coming from afar,
old states which once were
brilliant, ancient colonies
which in their years lit the darkness,
seasons which forever adorned
civilization, and even
from cloisters, monasteries, dioceses
which carved out their tracks
deeply in the course of the Church.

And we remembered, the time that the Pope

Would write notes of peace
To tall the bishops in the world,
about full moons and equinoxes
For the common celebration of
Pascha for Christians.
A celebration that resurrects
all the fallen and the dead,
a sign of unity for the Church
certainly a great responsibility
and today, it weighs heavy
on the neck of his second stole
regarding the common course
of all brothers.

Boarding the aircraft
for our return, we left behind
brothers and the white Father
with dates, tickets and flights
for all of the dark Continent.
There to sow the word,
To do good works, to build
Faith, often espousing
alien traditions,
so that Christ may reach countries
looted by the insatiability
of nation dealers.

But, once persecuted
by the contempt of brothers
the carefree safety of parishes
and vacant metropolises
from inspiration, joy and hope.

Continue your labors, Your Beatitude,
Pope of nations, cultures, times,
Having now experienced in Cairo
This great wonder
Do not let hesitation stop you.
God lives and is beside you,
You witnessed Him illuminating, guiding,
Opening new and unprecedented
pathways for you,
Dare,
make again the sign of the cross
and carry on. With your army,
your children, bishops
ministering your word,
your way, your place and your dream,
without pride,
all joy, humility and faith.

Via Istanbul we returned to Evros.
From the City, where the miracle culminates,
To our Country, where the miracle is fading.
But Faith goes on and continues to irrigate
And the Church's miracle continues

Its constant voyage, even when the waves hit the sides of the ship.