

SANCTIFICATION BY THE HIS BEATITUDE AT THE PATRIARCHAL ACADEMY OF ALEXANDRIA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR

On 8th October 2023, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, officiated during the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Monastery of St Savvas the Sanctified in Alexandria, after which he performed the Sanctification Service at the “St. Athanasios” Patriarchal Academy of Alexandria for the beginning of the new academic year 2023-2024.

During his short speech His Beatitude addressed paternal admonitions and blessings to the young African students, whom he assured of his personal care during their further journey and, God willing, their future priestly ministry, after their graduation and their return to their birthplaces.

He also thanked the Very Reverend Headmaster, Archimandrite Isaac Tsapoglou and the lecturers for their painstaking and conscientious service to the students, “*who are the future of our Church on the continent of the future, the continent of Orthodoxy, much-suffering Africa*”, as His Beatitude pointed out.

In his speech, the Headmaster Fr. Isaac related:

«Your Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of alexandria and All Africa,

–Your Eminences,

–Erudite Educationalists and Colleagues,

–Our dear children.

The moment has arrived when, with the prayer and blessing of His Beatitude, a new educational period of tutoring courses and seminars begins at the “Athanasios the Great” Patriarchal Academy of the Throne.

Which you envisioned and created, Your Beatitude, following in the footsteps of your great predecessors who from over time founded the famous Alexandrian Schools, greatly sought after at their time.

Responding to your call, all of us, teachers, clergy and staff of the School, will provide the necessary knowledge to our students, with the facts and needs that prevail today, in the local Churches and Missions in the African countries.

These young hopefuls, here in the center of the Patriarchal Court, where the heart of the coordinating work of the Mission beats, will acquire the necessary explicit and implicit knowledge, which, while explicit, has to do with the written and spoken word, delving into the Word of of God and in the writings of the fathers of our Church, and the unspoken ones, with the acquired experience in the ritual acts.

A basic condition is that they learn Greek. Not in the sense of a national upheaval and arrogance or a colonial invasion on the part of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, humiliating and leveling the culture, manners and customs of every tribe and country of the African Continent, but continuing in some way the peaceable work of Alexander the Great, grafting our education into their education, with our Lord’s exhortation “Teaching all nations”.

It is no coincidence that the Greek language worldwide has the most recorded words and concepts, in correspondence with others. This is the only way to explain why human history recorded in Greek all the scientific concepts concerning mathematics and geometry, music and poetry, medicine and biology, astronomy and the universe,

physics and chemistry, flora and fauna, it formed the art of rhetoric by delving into philosophy, it was able to explain the incomprehensible and approach the divine, it even managed to break down the partition between life and of death, and analyzing all of the above with respect and the potential evolution of everything, we find that the center of everything is man and all of these are a gift from God to man who also has the management of everything.

The Greek language enables us to interpret God's being and God's will. This is how the doctrines and rules that make up the Constitution were established, not in the sense of a theocratic regime, but of a reality that lies in God's relationship with man, that has to do with God's revelation to man.

Here each approach is the point that unites us and at the same time distances us from the "being" of God. The fathers were able to interpret this "being", because they had knowledge of Greek education and writing.

The limitation of the concepts has resulted in some scholars, not insignificant in their knowledge, not being able to interpret and understand the mysteries of God and thus moving away from the truth of the Gospel and the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

These students, coming here to the center of the Alexandrian Church, are invited to study and understand, to the extent of their abilities, the Father's teaching through Greek education. That is why leniency and exhaustive treatment on the part of teachers is necessary.

These students are called on to dive into the depths of the spiritual life with the daily Services, to be taught the Typicon and the way of worship of the Eastern Church.

They are called to understand the Dogma and conviction of the Orthodox Church.

They are called to defend and preserve the sacred inheritance and the holy things of the faith.

They are called to live in a dynamic tradition that evolves in a fast-paced world.

They are called to live in a world, with many more weaknesses and problems that limit any concept of freedom and weaken any peaceful coexistence. Individual, which has to do with man himself as a person, and global, which violates every concept of human dignity by targeting selfish, unlawful interests.

Allow me, Your Beatitude, in this difficult moment for our Patriarchate and I am referring to the spiritual invasion by a sister Orthodox Church, that the School becomes the nursery where these young hopeful and promising students, will get to know, love and receive from the center the undivided backing and support that should be, and is, appropriate, so that they do not deviate from their mother Church.

We know your anxiety. We know the pain this invasion causes, first to you as Primate and Father, as well as to all in the sept body of the Hierarchy.

However, we know your trust in the benevolent God of mercy and justice, and through your prayers we hope that there will be a happy ending, as long as those who have gone astray understand that the Alexandrian Church is the safe harbor, here there is safety, the shepherd is watching, not for the sake of temporary ephemeral perishable material things and selfish interests, but for the sake of the truth that leads to the salvation of the soul.

Those who are blinded by gold do not see Christ. They are overshadowed by their own shadow and at some point they will stumble.

This is where the Alexandrian Lighthouse must illuminate the darkness. Let us not forget that thanks to the Alexandrian Fathers, the Dogma of our Church was established, and the unshakable foundations of faith were laid.

The great Fathers knew how to interpret and penetrate every word, detail, point and point of the Word of God and illuminated by the Holy Spirit they were able to explain the inexpressible things of God and I made them explicit. Everything is now clear. Anyone who wants to introduce something new is more likely to make noise than benefit.

This is where the Alexandrian Church comes, with this Academy and with your high supervision and blessing to teach what the Church advocates. Difficult but at the same time easy. The difficulty lies in grafting the word of God into the local traditions of each African country.

To overcome every superstition from people's lives and to find ways to deal with the various situations of their daily life.

Long distances, the status quo of each country, illiteracy, insufficient health care, poverty, lack of water, are some of the things that limit the work.

But there is also the ease, which you explain only as a blessing from God, when every worker of the Gospel makes the spiritual account and sees the fruits of spiritual virtues, in every newly enlightened person who now acquires a spiritual existence.

There may not be much possibility of hosting students, but "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough" (Gal. 6:9), Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles says in his Epistle to the Galatians. This little bit within the Church has a dynamic presence and existence. Proof is the preaching and the work of the Apostles.

These few, numbered students have within themselves the power to increase the fruits of spiritual sowing. Returning to their birthplace they will carry the seed and light of the Alexandrian Church.

Your Beatitude, in order for these students to reach us, there were contributions from some people who really fulfill your visions, your anxiety for the future of the Missions and your love for these people where for nineteen years now as Primate and Helmsman of the Alexandrian Church, you stand beside them, and contribute in every way to their Spiritual rebirth and their humanitarian need. Just as before when you plowed the African land and the souls of these people, as a simple and humble Missionary, and who are distinguished to this day for your selfless love and your smile that relieves and spreads messages of optimism.

The Holy Hierarchs from the local Metropolises and Dioceses who entrust their children to you, their father, to get to know the center from up close, and what it will offer them, so that when they return they can transfer their acquired knowledge to the work and the organization of the Mission.

To the Most Reverend Patriarchal Vicar of Alexandria, Metropolitan Narcissus of Pelusium, who is responsible for all the coordination of the arrival and return of the students from their homelands, the anxiety for a safe stay in the Patriarchal Monastery of Saint Savvas and their legal stay in the hospitable country of Egypt.

To the Chief Secretary of the Patriarchate and the Holy and Holy Synod the

Metropolitan Pantelimon of Naucratis, who with his many years of experience and knowledge, processes all the relevant documents concerning the further training of students in other Academies abroad.

To the Most Reverend Metropolitan Germanos of Tamiathus for his spiritual support and great patience in teaching liturgical order, as well as the daily care for the preparation of the daily food and drink and in the ministry of the refectory.

To our Homeland, Greece, where the persons and the presence of the elite teachers in the Greek Schools of Alexandria, gives the possibility, beyond the hours of their burdened educational program, to offer their knowledge and wisdom to those hopefuls who are far away from their homelands to study and learn about the achievements of the Greeks and the wisdom of the Fathers.

But also the Hellenic Navy through the person and presence of Captain Konstantinos Varouxis for his great services.

To all the bodies of this great city, first of all the Greek Community of Alexandria and through its President Mr. Andreas Vafiadis and its people, who embrace our School and our children.

Your Beatitude, bless this new School Year, so that the Holy Spirit may fill the mind and heart of all those who labor in the work of God and Mission. There may be labour, we may face difficulties, unexpected events, but the joy and satisfaction will surely be when these young people are back in their homelands and will bear witness to what they will reap, and will speak a word of gratitude, for all who have contributed to their worldly education and to their spiritual support.

Good strength to everyone. May your years, Your Beatitude, be many and may you have great health."

The Sanctification ceremony was attended by Their Eminences the Metropolitans Narcissus of Pelusium, Patriarchal Vicar of Alexandria and Germanos of Tamiatheos, Head of the Holy Monastery of Saint Savvas, Naval Captain Mr. Konstantinos Varouxis, liaison of the Hellenic Navy with the corresponding Egyptian one, teachers, Chairmen and representatives of Greek Associations and institutions of the Great City.

It is noted that the historical Patriarchal Academy of Alexandria was re-established by His Beatitude during the academic year 2007-2008, after 470 years, in order to promote the indigenous staff of the missionary work of the Patriarchal Throne. During the two-year study cycle, the students coming from the various African states, who receive full scholarships from the Patriarchate, attend courses in theology, nursing, agriculture of tropical climates, information technology, pedagogy, as well as the Greek language.