

## **SUNDAY OF PENTECOST AT THE HELLENIC COMMUNITY IN CAIRO**

With patriarchal splendor and enviable grace, the Feast of Pentecost was celebrated for another year in the Cairo community at the Greek Orthodox Patriarchal Church of St. Nicholas in Hamzawi. Fifty days after the Resurrection of Christ the promise of the descent of the Holy Spirit from the God-man to his disciples and to the Apostles remains active for all, waiting for open souls, and hearts long prepared to be instilled.

On such a brilliant day, the birthday of the Church, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, decided to stand as a dynamic intermediary and to share with everyone through the Ecclesiastical typikon, the Divine Grace of Pentecost. He presided over the Liturgy and officiated at the Kneeling Vespers with His Eminence Nicodemus Metropolitan of Memphis and Patriarchal Vicar concelebrating with him, but also with all members of the pious clergy contributing to the culmination of the Divine Service. The Hymns were sung by the new Protopsaltis of the Greek Community of Cairo Mr. Alexandros Rigakis and the Arabic-speaking Chanters Mr. Tony Atala and Paisios Bishoi.

After the end of the Liturgy His Beatitude directed the spiritual emotion in the area of the Holy Church, kneeling and with raised hands he was immersed in soul and body in the emotion of the moment.

"Blessed art You O Christ our God, for You have shown the fisherman as most wise, by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit, through them You did draw the world into Your net, O lover of mankind, glory to You". At that moment everyone bowed, knelt and allowed themselves above all to trust in Divine Providence.

In his homily, His Beatitude opened his heart and shared with everyone his deep experience from the center of Africa, saying: "I lived this mystery of Pentecost ten days ago in Arusha. When two hundred and fifty children from the forests were baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. When five hundred and fifty children at school sang and glorified the name of God. And leaving, when I saw fifty-five children sick with AIDS giving them medication, beds and shelter". And he went on to say "This is the Church, my children, and this is the Church that the Apostles established. They could not read. They were humble fishermen. And yet the Holy Spirit came to enlighten them and since then the Word of God has been preached". Also in his Word he prayed that God would give Enlightenment to the fighters and for peace and love to prevail.

On the festive day of Pentecost the Greek State was represented by the Ambassador of Greece to Cairo Mr. Nicholas Garilides and the Consul General Maria Zisis, the Republic of Cyprus was represented by the Deputy Ambassador Mr. Konstantinos Christofides, and the Hellenic Community of Cairo by the Secretary General Mrs. Chrysanthe Skoufariou. Also in attendance was the Director of the Achilopouleios School Mr. Basil Lagios as well as representatives and members of the Arabic speaking Christian Community in Cairo.

Particularly touching was the moment when His Beatitude the Patriarch welcomed with tender and affectionate words from the Hierarchical Throne the new Protopsaltis of the Greek Community of Cairo Mr. Alexandros Rigakis to whom he wished great and creative progress in his new duties and reminded everyone that everyone, the Clergy and the Hellenic Community would be beside him at every moment of his service in Cairo.

Then everyone was led by His Beatitude to the Throne Room where they enjoyed the

rich treats of the Patriarchal vicariate as well as the pleasant social gathering. It is worth noting that throughout the ritual day, the news website "Lighthouse of the Greek Diaspora" broadcast live.