

SUNDAY OF PENTECOST IN TUNIS

Pentecost was celebrated with splendor at the Holy Metropolitan Church of St George in Tunis, conducted by His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, together with His Eminence Nikodimos, Metropolitan of Memphis and the local Metropolitan Alexios of Carthage. Present also were the Greek Ambassador Mrs. Anna Kora and all the staff of the Embassy, all Orthodox Ambassadors in Tunis, the Apostolic Nuncio with the Catholic Archbishop of Tunis and the Anglican Bishop, many Greek and Slav faithful.

At the end of the solemn Divine Liturgy, the Patriarch preached the homily, speaking of the great feast of the birth day of the Church, as well as of the small in number yet dynamic presence of Orthodoxy in North Africa, especially in the peaceful country of Tunisia. He was addressed before that by His Eminence Alexios, Metropolitan of Carthage. As a blessing His Beatitude donated a Censer to the Holy Church and an omoforion and stole to the Metropolitan, and with filial respect His Eminence Alexios gave him a pectoral cross on the completion of the first decade of his honourable Patriarchal Missionary tenure.

His Beatitude then went on to award distinctions to the dean of the School of Philosophy of the Manouba University in Tunis, Mr. Habib Kazdaghli, the departing Chairman of the Hellenic Community Mr. Ioannis Boudouroglou for his successful ten year service to the Community and the Church, and to Mrs. Marianna Sehremeli Ouelbani for her general contribution to the Church and the Metropolis. His Beatitude then officiated at the Vespers of Kneeling, following which he unveiled a plaque in memory of his late predecessor and benefactor, Parthenios II, Koinidis, from Carthage, in the Church.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy and following an invitation from the local Bishop, on behalf of His Beatitude, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Tunisia, Mr. Mohamed Moncef el Marxouki, arrived at the Church, and was welcomed by the Patriarch, who addressed him with warm words, emphasizing the great honour for Greeks and all of Orthodoxy which his coming to the Church held for them. The President stressed that all Tunisians were gladdened by the Patriarchal visit and that they will always be a peace-loving nation, which will love and respect the Church in the framework of peaceful co-existence. It was moving to note that the Chairman lit four candles before the icon of St George, for the health of his children, as he said, and for the benefit of the Tunisian people.

The atmosphere was warm and the President spoke with the faithful in the Church grounds, during the reception which His Beatitude hosted.

On the night of Pentecost Sunday, following a kind invitation, His Beatitude visited the home of His Excellency the Ambassador of Egypt Mr. Aymen Mousharafa.