

## **THE 67th BIRTHDAY OF THE PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA**

**Today is a special day for His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, as today he celebrates his birthday.**

It was November 25, 1954, when Nicholas, later Primate of the Alexandrian Church, Theodoros II, saw the light of day. The Patriarch of Love, the Missionary Father of the entire African continent, the ecclesiastical leader with vision and hope in his heart, is turning sixty-seven today, on the day of the feast of St. Catherine, the All-wise of Alexandria, whose commemoration coincided with his birth, functioned as a "God elected point" for his later course, since, although he was born in the soils of Crete, he was conquered by the land of Africa and based in renowned Alexandria he travels all over the continent doing his work.

Likewise, another "point" is the name of his mother, the late blessed Cleopatra, who supported the Patriarch until the end of her life.

This day, as the last of his missionary tour in South Africa, His Beatitude dedicated to the expatriate Greeks in the Johannesburg area, celebrating with them and drawing strength from their love, before his return to the See of the Patriarchate in Alexandria and his arduous but blessed work.

On Thursday, November 25, 2021, a Patriarchal Divine Liturgy was celebrated, presided over by His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa at the community Church of the Holy Forerunner in Germiston, concelebrating with the local Metropolitan Damaskinos of Johannesburg and Pretoria, the Chief Secretary of the Holy Synod Archimandrite Nicodemus Totkas and clergy of the Holy Metropolis.

Present also were the Ambassadors of Egypt Mr. Ahmed El Fadly, of Serbia Mr. Goran Vujicic, of Ukraine Mr. Liubov Abravitova, of Belorussia Mr. Alexander D. Sidoruk and of Cyprus Mr. Antonios Mandritis, the Charge d'Affaires of the Greek Embassy Mr. Stefanos Ioannides and the Consul General of Greece in Johannesburg Mr. Ioannis Hatzantonakis.

During the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude awarded honorary distinctions to distinguished members of the Greek community.

The Alexandrian Primate consecrated as Archon Officials of the Alexandrian Throne according to "Patriarchal sense of honour and choice" as a reward for services to the Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa.

In particular, the Patriarch consecrated the Most Honorable Mr. Nikolaos Giokos, Mr. Ioannis Baladakis and Mr. Ioannis Filippou, Archon Office Bearers, of the Apostolic and Patriarchal Throne of St. Mark, for their contribution to Orthodoxy and Hellenism in the great and hospitable land of South Africa.

He then awarded the Holy Cross of St Mark to Nikitas Korfias former Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Benoni, Basil Giannoulis Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Springs, Costa Carastavrakis Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Johannesburg, Alexandros Iakovides, Dr Azar Jamine for his contribution to the Church of St Nicholas of Japan and Nikolaos Ekonomakis sponsor of the Church of St Theodore of Tyre in Stilfontein.

At the reception held in honor of His Beatitude at the Germiston Community Hall, in the presence of members of the diplomatic corps, Mrs. Giokos, wife of the former President of the Hellenic Community of Germiston, addressed the Patriarch warmly.

The Serbian Community honoured the Missionary Patriarch with dances and gifts for

his birthday.

A wonderful lunch followed, during which the Patriarch, filled with emotion, cut the birthday cake contributed by the Greek community and accepted the wishes of those present.

Prior to his departure His Beatitude addressed a message via internet to the Greek youth, the transmission of which was undertaken by the Hellenic Federation of South Africa.