

THE EXPATRIATE GREEKS OF SOUTH AFRICA DONATE THEIR HISTORY TO THE PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA AND ALL AFRICA

On the morning of Saturday 13th November 2021, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, was at the Alberton and West Park Cemeteries, where he performed the trisagion for the repose of the souls of the late blessed Archons and Benefactors of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, Messrs George Bizos and Alexandros Baladakis.

"I arrived from Alexandria in Egypt and my blessed journey begins with the memorial service today of a man who glorified Greece, who glorified Hellenism, glorified the creature of God called Man," said the Patriarch, referring to the late George Bizos and added: "I am convinced that he is resting justified for the struggles he waged with Nelson Mandela for a more humane, freer, fairer and more peaceful Africa."

On the evening of the same day, the Patriarch attended a large function, organized in his honor at the Greek Community of Germiston, in which the Consulate General of Greece in Johannesburg and the entire Greek community in the Gauteng region and its environs, as a whole, celebrated the completion of the third volume of the Consulate General entitled: **"The Greeks: A Tribe of South Africa"**.

It is noted that the Community of Germiston was founded in 1956, although the Greek presence in the area dates back to 1920. The premises of the Community host the Hellenic Federation of South Africa, the Cretan Brotherhood of South Africa, the Imbrian Association, the Lemnian Brotherhood and EPNEK.

Present at the function which took place with the kind care of the Cretan Brotherhood, the Peloponnesian Association and the Ithaqesian Association, were His Eminence Damaskinos Metropolitan of Johannesburg and Pretoria, with the clergy of the Metropolis, the High Commissioner of Cyprus His Excellency Mr Andreas Mandritis, the Charge d' Affaires of the Greek Embassy Mr. Stefanos Ioannides, the Consul General of Greece in Johannesburg Honorable Mr Ioannis Hatzantonakis, the Cultural Advisor of the Consulate General Dr. Marilena Griva, the President of the Hellenic Federation of South Africa Mr. John Spyrides, the Chairman of the Cretan Brotherhood Mr. Michael Pavlakis, the Chairman of the Peloponnesian Association Mr. Angelos Poulos, as well as crowds of people who rushed to kiss the hand of the Spiritual Leader of Orthodoxy in Africa.

The Consul General of Greece in Johannesburg, Mr. Hatzantonakis, reserved as a gift to the Primate of Alexandria the bilingual three-volume edition entitled **"The Greeks: A Tribe of South Africa"**, prepared by the Cultural Counselor and Ambassador-Counselor, Dr Marilena Griva on behalf of the Consulate General.

The project, which is under the auspices of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, is included in the official program of the 2021 Commission for the 200th anniversary of the Greek Revolution and has the moral support of the Hellenic Federation of South Africa. Its realization is due to sponsorships of Greek businessmen in the Johannesburg area. The two volumes of the publication will be available for release in December, while the first will be published soon by a Greek publishing house.

Filled with emotion, His Beatitude the Patriarch in his speech, congratulated the Consul General for this initiative and the four-year effort that the Consulate General continued fearlessly during the pandemic. He also stressed the importance of mapping the activity of the Greek Orthodox Church, of the communities, associations and all institutions of Hellenism in South Africa from the end of the 19th century until today, which are pockets of traditions, language, but also of

our religion, outside of Greek borders and added that the Patriarchate of Alexandria always encourages and stands by such initiatives, trying to pass intact the history of Christianity and Hellenism to future generations.

His Beatitude prayed that there would be other such efforts, which would boost the morale of Hellenism everywhere and save the history of Greece and Cyprus in the remote and inaccessible regions of Africa. In closing, he said that the presentation and completion of this edition is an ideal occasion to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the proclamation of the Greek revolution.

The Patriarch went on to award Dr. Griva the Cross of the Saint, Apostle and Evangelist Mark, in recognition of the work of the mapping of the most remote Greek community in Africa and attended a dinner with members of the Greek and Cypriot communities.