

# THE GRADUATION CEREMONY OF THE STUDENTS OF THE PATRIARCHAL ACADEMY OF ALEXANDRIA

On 26<sup>th</sup> May 2011, in the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of St Savvas the Sanctified in Alexandria, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa officiated at the ceremony of the awarding of the diplomas to the graduating African students of the Patriarchal Academy "Agios Athanasios", for the academic cycle 2009 – 2011.

The ceremony began with the singing of hymns by the students. His Beatitude then spoke, praising the tutoring of people especially with specific qualifications as a rule necessary for the Most Holy Church of the Apostle and Evangelist Mark to answer to the increasing pastoral and humanistic needs of the African Continent.

He gave advice and paternal guidance to the graduates as well as praise for their noble efforts. He asked them to be worthy of the great responsibility which their mission service calls them to and assured them that he will always be at their side as a father and a secure supporter in their difficult work. He urged them to put into practice the Gospel extract "*go out into all the world, preaching the Gospel to all creation*" and called on them not to forget that the heart of the Orthodox Church in Africa beats in the Holy Centre of Alexandria, at the ancient Patriarchate.

His Beatitude praised particularly the Dean, the Very reverend Archimandrite Narkissos Gkamo, the Hegumen of the Monastery of St Savvas, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Meletios Koumanis and the teaching staff of the Patriarchal Academy for their efforts and their zeal with which they led the graduates to the conclusion of their educational aims.

Because of this His Beatitude also expressed his gratitude to the Consul General of Greece in Alexandria, Mr George Diakofotakis, the Greek State and especially to the Ministry of Education and Religion for their valuable contribution to the operation of the Academy.

He also thanked the pious faithful for their concern shown to the Patriarchal Academy and the students, which was regularly shown through their contributions.

Following the award ceremony, a festive celebration followed and an official lunch was hosted in honour of the graduates in the Monastery refectory.