

THE HOLY FORERUNNER “VISITED” ALEXANDRIA

On 7th January 2017, **His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa**, performed the Inauguration and officiated at the Divine Liturgy, in the recently renovated historic Church of the Forerunner, within the once glorious ‘Kotsikeios” Hellenic Hospital in Alexandria, the largest in the Middle East.

Present at the above ceremonies were the Consul General of Greece in Alexandria Mr. Emmanuel Kakavelakis, the Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Alexandria, Mr. Ioannis Papadopoulos who was celebrating his name day, Chairmen of Societies and Members of Hellenic society as well as nursing staff from the adjacent hospital. The Alexandrian Primate in his address spoke at length with particular emotion of the great history and glorious past of a thriving Hellenic community that flourished through the contribution of Great National Benefactors, one of whom was the late wealthy expatriate Theocharis Kotsikas, who in 1931 built the hospital and the Church which was originally dedicated to the Great Saints and Martyr Theodoroi. In its time the above institution treated and supported thousands of needy patients hospitalized there and did unique global medical work. His Beatitude thanked His Eminence Meletios Metropolitan of Carthage from Naucratis, for the efforts he made for the beautification of the Holy Church and with particular gratitude thanked the former Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Alexandria Mr. Ioannis Siokas who funded the entire renovation of the Holy Church in memory of his Grandfather and Great Grandfather, Ioannis and Ioannis, through whose contribution after 43 years “the Forerunner wept, incense left its aroma again, the Divine Eucharist was offered to God again”, as he said characteristically.

After the end of the Divine Liturgy, during the procession of the Icon of the Forerunner around the Holy Church, His Beatitude conducted memorial prayers for the repose of the founders of the Holy Church and prayed for a speedy recovery for all who are patients at the hospital. Before the end of his address, His Beatitude announced the appointment of the Very Reverend Archimandrite Daniel Biazis as Parish Priest and in charge of the Church. Representatives of the medical and nursing staff of the Hospital expressed their joy to the Patriarch on the re-operation of the Holy Church, within which our suffering fellow humans will find solace and refuge. After the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy refreshments were offered to all those present.