

THE MOTHER OF GREEKS ABROAD FALLS ASLEEP IN THE LORD

FROM THE HOLY METROPOLIS OF JOHANNESBURG

Late on the afternoon of Wednesday 13th May 2015, and at a ripe age, the Lady of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and Mother of Greeks Abroad, Mrs. Mary Vasiliou fell asleep in the Lord.

Having her origins in Thebes, she came to South Africa after the war and literally dedicated herself passionately to the teaching of Greek folk dancing to the new generations of Greek immigrants to this country for sixty years. Simple in her ways but passionate for Greece, for sixty plus years she taught under very difficult conditions, travelling throughout this African country, whatever is related with Greek civilization, Greek culture, winning the love to a point of worship, from all her students. "She taught us not only dance, theatre, poetry, but above all she taught us to be proud of our Greek heritage. She kept us proud in the roots of our ancestors" says everyone today with tears in their eyes. "I live in a foreign land, but I could never forget my place of birth. And I could not live here for even one day without doing what I am doing, teaching about Greece to the young children. This foreign land is for me a front" she herself said in one of her many interviews.

During the recent visit of His Beatitude our Patriarch to South Africa last January, Mary Vasiliou and her dancers were present at the anniversary function for his ten year Patriarchal tenure, dancing traditional dances in his honour, expressing in this way the great esteem she had for him. His Beatitude also had enormous respect for her and the work she did. He had said "Mary Vasiliou is a great chapter of the Greeks Abroad. She is a true Greek lady".