

# **THE PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS, IN JOHANNESBURG**

**His Beatitude Theodoros II Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa officiated at Orthros and served the Divine Liturgy, on Sunday, November 21, 2021,** at the celebrating Holy Metropolitan Church of the Entrance of the Theotokos Pantanassa Johannesburg, concelebrating with His Eminence Damaskinos Metropolitan of Johannesburg and Pretoria.

The Church of the Most Holy Theotokos Pantanassa, built in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg with the prospect of attracting young people through the use of the English language, first opened in 1980 and is one of the most popular churches in the community.

The Missionary Patriarch, as he is called in Africa, served in the packed church, in the presence of the High Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus Mr. Antonios Mandritis, the Charge d' Affaires of the Greek Embassy Mr. Stefanos Ioannidis and the Consul General of Greece Mr. Ioannis Hatzantonakis.

After the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude did the memorial service in memory of the benefactress A. Pourouli and her daughter Salome.

In his sermon, the Primate of Alexandria referred to the rage of the Coronavirus that decimates the Greek communities, emphasizing that, "The absence of loved ones is a sad phenomenon in recent months, but in our souls hope and faith should reign that with God's help we will ultimately manage.

At the end, the Patriarch decorated Mr. Stavros Nikolaou, CEO of the pharmaceutical company Aspen, with the Supreme Order of St. Mark, for the help he has offered to his fellow human beings to deal with the coronavirus.

Afterwards, the Patriarch attended a lunch given in his honor by the Parish. The President of the parish welcomed the Primate of Alexandria with warm words.

Then, Mr. Stavros Nikolaou spoke and referred to the policy of Patriarch Theodoros, for free access to health and in this context commented on the award given to the South African President Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa to the , as out of the ordinary, due to his contribution towards tackling the Covid-19 virus and recognizing its positive impact on the African Union. He referred to His Beatitude's meetings with South African politicians in the Johannesburg and Pretoria regions.

A programme of traditional dances by the Mary Vassiliou group followed. In an atmosphere of euphoria and enthusiasm watching the flawless execution of the programme, the Patriarch expressed his joy at being beside the Greeks of Johannesburg and his pride in watching the Greek children of the Diaspora dance Greek traditional dances with such zeal.

**The next day, Monday, November 22, 2021, His Beatitude, the Pope and Patriarch,** visited the Holy Monastery of St. Nektarios, St. Nicholas and St. Paisios of Mount Athos in the Hartebeespoort area.

His Beatitude was welcomed by His Eminence Damaskinos Metropolitan of Johannesburg and Pretoria, the Elder of the Monastery, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Apostolos and the Abbess together with her Sisters.

The construction of the Holy Monastery was carried out in the 2000s at the request of the then Metropolitan Seraphim of Johannesburg and Pretoria (now of Zimbabwe and

Angola), while the plot was purchased on the initiative of Fr. Athinodoros Papaevrypiadis, with an amount that was collected in part from donations from Greeks.

With the provision of Pope and Patriarch Theodoros II, during the Hierarchal tenure of the current Metropolitan Damaskinos, in 2017 the first Monastery of Sisters in South Africa was established there, consisting of five nuns originating from Crete. The monastery is considered the spiritual child of the Patriarch who visits it regularly during each of his visits to South Africa.