

## **THE PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA AT THE CHURCH OF THE ARCHANGELS IN IBRAHIMIA, ALEXANDRIA**

**On the 8th of November 2020, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa**, on the feast of the Synaxis of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel and the rest of the Bodiless Hosts, officiated during Orthros and conducted the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy at the celebrating community Holy Church of the Archangels in Ibrahimia, Alexandria.

This Church of the Holy Archangels is also one of the most important in Alexandria, established in 1908 and is in the same building complex as the Kokkinareios, Pratsikeios and Dabarkeios School. The very tall bell-towers, the spacious Narthex and the wooden lecterns give the Holy Church a very impressive look, and the Byzantine iconography was done by the Iconographers K Stratoulis and S Markozanis. During its heyday, a multi-membered European choir sang every Sunday in the Matroneum. Today the Church has a small number of faithful, particularly Greeks who continue to reside in the area of Ibrahimia.

During the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy, the Alexandrian Primate was assisted by the Patriarchal Vicar of Alexandria His Eminence Narcissus, Metropolitan of Naucratis, His Grace Bishop Germanos of Tamiathus, the Chief Secretary of the Holy Synod Archimandrite Nicodemos Totkas, and the Byzantine Choir was conducted by the Elder Sacristan fr. Pavlos Iosifides, made up of the African Seminarians of the Patriarchal Academy.

Present at the Divine Liturgy were the Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Alexandria Mr. Ioannis Siokas, the Financial Supervisor of the Community Mr. Paris Pefanis Makris, the 2nd Vice Chair Mrs. Mary Pavlidou, the Chairman of the Hellenic Chamber of Commerce Mr. Byron Vafiadis and crowds of faithful.

Addressing the congregation, His Beatitude expressed his whole-hearted gratitude to God after many months the Church of the Archangels reopened and the bell was heard in Ibrahimia, emphasizing that, our Churches are always open, waiting for their children.

"... That is why my children, when I held the Holy Chalice, I remembered the immigrants, all those who were born in this blessed place of Ibrahimia and are far away from us. Either they are deceased or in foreign countries".

"Today our Church chose beautiful hymns to praise the two Archangels Michael and Gabriel. We took the Angelic Hosts and named our All-Holy Virgin, more honourable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, to give praise to the Heavenly Archangelic Hosts", said His Beatitude, visibly moved, during his homily and he continued:

"... My children, from the morning when I arrived I cast my eyes left and right. I said my God, these people who passed through the generations of Greeks here in Ibrahimia, toiled with so much love to build and to decorate the buildings and the Churches! I looked at the Icons and the rare iconography on the walls and I commemorated the great iconographers of that time, who did their iconography so that today, all of us could boast about our Churches".

Whole-heartedly thanking all that came to honour the feast and to join in prayer with him, the Patriarch also extended paternal congratulatory wishes to the new Chairman of the Hellenic Community Mr. Ioannis Siokas and to all the Community Committee Members of the Hellenic Community of Alexandria, who during the recent meeting, placed harmony before them for the good of the Ancient Community.

Thereafter, His Beatitude thanked Mr. Paris Pefanis Makris, for the donation and renovation in memory of his father, of the small and hospitable reception hall in the courtyard of the Church, which the Patriarch blessed and inaugurated, following the end of the Divine Liturgy.

In conclusion, His Beatitude sent a message of sympathy to Greece and to everyone, emphasizing:

“... My brothers and sisters, today’s feast of the Archangels we dedicate to our Greek brothers and sisters, who are experiencing again the second difficult wave of the virus, but with spiritual unity, patience, responsibility and prayer, we will again win the battle. Our thoughts and our prayers are with all of you”.