

THE PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA BESIDE THE NEW GENERATION IN SOUTH AFRIC

Next stop for His Beatitude Theodoros II Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa was the Greek School SAHETI, located on the outskirts of the city which was built at the expense of members of the Greek Community of Johannesburg and surroundings in the early 1970s. The school, which is one of the best schools in South Africa, today has 1,300 children of various nationalities and at all levels of basic education, the Greek language is compulsory.

The Patriarch makes sure to visit the school every time he travels to South Africa in an effort to be close to the Greek children and Greek-speaking children of South Africa.

His Beatitude the Patriarch was welcomed by the Chairman of the Board of SAHETI School Mr. Katakouzinis and the Headmaster Mr. Warwick Taylor.

Present were His Eminence Damaskinos Metropolitan of Johannesburg and Pretoria, the High Commissioner of Cyprus Mr. Antonios Mandritis, the Charge d' Affaires of the Greek Embassy Mr. Stefanos Ioannidis, the Chief Secretary of the Patriarchate Archimandrite Nikodimos Totkas and the Very Reverend Archimandrite Athos Papaevrypiadis.

In the grounds of the school, the Primate of Alexandria, was welcomed by children from various classes, which had prepared for him a moving celebration to show their gratitude in this way for the visit of their spiritual father.

Addressing the students, His Beatitude expressed his unlimited joy, on being with them. He imaginatively transported them to cosmopolitan Alexandria, talking to them about the great men and women born in the country where the Patriarchate is located, as well as guiding them to the rich library of the Patriarchate with the invaluable treasure of ancient writings and manuscripts.

He told them about his journey from Crete to Africa. He also did not hide the pride he feels for the work of education offered by the Patriarchate throughout the black continent, since there are about two thousand schools in total. He advised the Greek children not to forget mother Greece, especially this year, when we celebrate the two hundred years of Greek revolution, while his encouragement to the student body was to always remember their school life, which equips them for the future.

After wishing everyone for the imminent Feast of the Nativity, His Beatitude congratulated the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the School Mr. Katakouzinis, and in his person the entire board of directors, as well as the teachers, for the impeccable and exemplary operation of the school.

Finally, His Beatitude discussed with the President and the Director of the school issues concerning the school and as usual, walking outside the school, admired the elegant buildings and manicured gardens.

Afterwards, His Beatitude attended a lunch offered in his honor, at the premises of the neighboring Greek Sporting Club, which is located in an area in the suburb of Senderwood. This area, which fell into Greek hands in the 1950s, is the seat of the sporting and social life of Hellenism in Johannesburg.

In the afternoon, the Patriarch and his entourage went to the Aspen company, which specializes in the manufacture of antiretroviral drugs and vaccines, which makes it a key player in the global medicinal market.

Mr. Stavros Nikolaou, CEO of Aspen, welcomed the Patriarch as an official guest, but also all the guests. He then reviewed the work of the Patriarchate and noted the affinity of the philosophy of the Patriarchate with that of the Aspen company, in terms of helping people especially in the field of health. He also pointed out the importance of the award of President Ramaphosa by His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros, for his management, regarding the issue of the coronavirus.

His Beatitude attended a lunch on the premises hosted in his honour, with the presence of the Ambassadors of the Orthodox Countries in South Africa. Present at the lunch were Their Excellencies the Ambassadors of Egypt Mr. Ahmed El Fadly, Lebanon Mr. Frangieh Kabalan, Bulgaria Mrs. Maria Pavlova Tzotzorkova-Kaymaktchieva, Georgia Mr. Beka Dvali, Romania Mr. Marius Boranescu, Russia Mr. Ilya Rogachev, Serbia Mr. Goran Vujicic, Ukraine Mr. Liubov Abravitova, Belorussia Mr. Alexander D. Sidoruk and the High Commissioner of Cyprus Mr. Antonios Mandritis, as well as representatives of the Greeks Abroad.

On Saturday, 20th November 2021, His Beatitude Theodoros II, met with representatives of the National Association of Greek Students and Youth of South Africa (N.A.H.Y.S.O.S.A.), an organization formed in 1981 at the University of Cape Town which quickly spread, uniting Greek youth from Greece and Cyprus at all the universities in the country. With the slogan "**Unity, Knowledge and Culture**", the organization is the voice of Hellenism for the youth of the Diaspora in South Africa.

After welcoming the youth, the Patriarch stressed the importance of the organization and the fact that they are tied to Hellenism, tradition and the Church. Continuing, he stressed that he is always beside them and spoke to them about the importance of missionary work in Africa, historic Alexandria and its famous library, as well as the library of the Patriarchate and encouraged them to pay a short visit to Alexandria and the Patriarchate. He also announced the granting of two annual scholarships by the Patriarchate for studies in higher education to one boy and one girl.

Afterwards, the Patriarch, accompanied by His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos of Johannesburg and Pretoria, visited the Greek Community of Germiston, to bless the work of the Congress of the Hellenic Federation of South Africa, which meets annually with the presence of all communities and associations in the country. The Federation presented the Alexandrian Primate the Greek flag they had made on the occasion of the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Greek Revolution.

The President of the Federation, Mr. Ioannis Spyridis, offered a gift to the Primate of Alexandria, thanking him for his presence at the Congress.

Filled with emotion, he recalled his first trip to South Africa, accompanying the late blessed Patriarch of Alexandria, Parthenios III, and his first steps as a young priest.

In an emotionally charged atmosphere, he prayed for the work of the Conference and urged the participants to prevent the departure of Greeks from the country. "**Make sure that Hellenism remains prosperous in this country,**" said the Primate of Alexandria, while comparing it with Egypt, where Hellenism is declining, presenting a sad picture in relation to the past and reiterating the Patriarchate's support for Hellenism and in particular for its youth.

In his speech, the Patriarch warmly thanked His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos of Johannesburg and Pretoria who was present as well as His Eminence Sergios Metropolitan of Good Hope, for their moral assistance to the flock during the duration of the pandemic.

He then left the premises of the Conference to officiate at Vespers at the Holy Metropolitan Church of the Entrance of the Theotokos (Pantanassa). It is noted that the Temple was built and has been operating since 1980, serving the faithful living in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg.