

## **THE PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA SUPPORTS THE GREEKS OF SOUTH AFRICA**

On Thursday 25th January 2018, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa arrived in Johannesburg following his visit to Cape Town and Namibia.

On the following day, 26th January, in the morning, His Beatitude was welcomed at the Chapel of the Holy Trinity and the Evangelist Mark on the grounds of the Metropolis by the Clergy of the Metropolis and then a General Clergy Synaxis was held.

The local Metropolitan His Eminence Damaskinos of Johannesburg and Pretoria welcomed the Primate of the Alexandrian Church on behalf of the clergy expression everyone's joy both on his presence in South Africa, as well as for his paternal love with which he embraces all his spiritual children in the country. Paternally addressing the Clergy, His Beatitude urged them to intensify their liturgical and pastoral activities and to instill the love for God in the Christians, in their local Orthodox parishes in which they minister. He also stressed that they need to work with dynamism for the youth.

He then went to the Consulate General of Greece in Johannesburg where he was welcomed by the Honorable Consul General Mr. Ioannis Hatzantonakis and all the staff of the Consulate. He did the Sanctification of Waters service for the new year and cut the traditional New Year Cake. On 27th January His Beatitude went to the Johannesburg Country Club for the cutting of the Vasilopita of the Lyceum Club of Greek Women of South Africa. He was welcomed by Mrs. Niki Souris the Chairlady and all the members of the Executive Council.

He then left to go to the Convent of St Nektarios, where he was welcomed by Abbess Orthodoxia, together with the entire Monastic sisterhood and their Elder Fr. Apostolos Apostolakis. He had the opportunity of meeting with the Sisters of the Monastery, talk with them and counsel them spiritually, Afterwards, in a pious atmosphere, he officiated at the Vespers for the beginning of the Triodion, wishing them all a blessed Triodion.

On Sunday 28th January he went to the Hellenic Community in Springs, where he officiated at Orthros and conducted the Festive Patriarchal Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of St Basil. Before the end of the Divine Liturgy he consecrated as Protopresbyter the Parish Priest of the Church Fr. Paschalis, wishing him many blessings in his work. Note that Fr. Paschalis is an African Priest, from the Congo, serves with zeal and enthusiasm in the Holy Metropolis of Johannesburg and Pretoria and is loved by all in his Parish.

A festive lunch followed in the grounds of the Hellenic Community of Springs and a celebratory programme of traditional dances from the children of the late Mary Vasileiou, the Mother of Hellenism in South Africa. At both the Divine Liturgy and the function of the Community, present were the Ambassador of Greece, the Ambassador of Serbia, the Consuls of Greece and Cyprus, the Chairman of the Federation of Hellenic Communities and Societies of South Africa Mr. John Philippou, Chairmen of Hellenic Communities and Societies, the Archon of the Patriarchate of Alexandria Mr. Alekos Baladakis and many faithful. On Sunday night His Beatitude had a meeting with the Chairman Mr. John Philippou and the Members of the Federation of Hellenic Communities and Societies of South Africa with whom he discussed issues concerning the presence of Hellenes in South Africa.