

## THE PATRIARCH OF LOVE AND OF ORPHANS

On 9th October 2004, Theodoros, Metropolitan of Zimbabwe, was unanimously elected by the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa to the Apostolic Throne of St Mark, to continue the evangelization of the Nations of the African Continent which began in the years of the Apostles and continues without ceasing right to this day.

On the occasion of the anniversary of the election of His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa and our spiritual Father, eleven years ago, the Alexandrian Primate very emotionally and with great joy conducted in Harare, Zimbabwe, the sanctification of waters for the completion of the Hellenic Academy of our community.

The Hellenic Academy, a pioneering effort by Members of our Community, with the moral and material support of our Patriarchate, and the Governments of Greece and Cyprus comprises and nursery school, primary schools, Elementary and High Schools.

There are 1000 children who attend, of which one hundred and twenty are Greek children, and among the curriculum taught are Greek and Orthodox Teaching of the Church.

Prior to the Service of the sanctification of waters on the grounds of the Hellenic Academy in the newly-built Church of the Holy Virgin Chrysoyroussas Potamitissas of Cyprus (of which the Alexandrian Primate had laid the foundations during a previous pastoral visit), a Patriarchal Divine Liturgy was held by Theodoros II, the Alexandrian Primate, together with His Eminence Seraphim Metropolitan of Zimbabwe and His Eminence George Metropolitan of Guinea, the Priests Fr Athinodoros, exarch of our patriarch in Cyprus, Fr George, Vicar General of the Metropolis of Zimbabwe, the indigenous priests Fr. Augustine, Fr Dimitrios, Fr Ioannis and Fr Nektarios and the Deacon Fr Savvas.

Hundreds of pupils from all the classes, the teaching staff, parents and members of the Community welcomed the Alexandrian Primate with great love, and he called on them all to pray for his strength from Christ for his multifaceted Missionary and pastoral work which is pleasing to God, for his humble ministry for the salvation of our souls and for the improvement of the living standards of African Peoples, especially for the protection of the poor and orphaned children.

The homily was preached by Metropolitan Seraphim who spoke of the well-known multifaceted work of the Alexandrian Primate, Theodoros, which consists of the election of most worthy clergy from the 34 operational Hierarchs of the Alexandrian Throne, as well as the doubling of indigenous clergy who minister today in many countries in Africa with the establishment of new Metropolises and Dioceses for the better coordination and ministry of our African brothers and sisters and the Orthodox faithful who live on the African continent and originate from Greece and Cyprus and other Orthodox countries, such as Russia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Lebanon, Poland etc.

The work of the Alexandrian Primate extends to the building and renovation of Churches, the building of schools and small clinics and the opening of wells for drinkable water to counteract the enormous death rate among children from contaminated groundwater (every twenty minutes a child dies and several of these are in Africa).

He successfully completed the buildings of our Patriarchate in Alexandria and in Cairo, improving the efforts for better administration of the Missionary

activities of our Patriarchate for the African continent.

The Alexandrian Library of our Patriarchate was successfully organized, as was the operation of two remarkable ecclesiastical Historical Museums in Alexandria and in Cairo, with the parallel operation of ecclesiastical educational institutions such as the Church Academy of Athanasios the Great in St Savvas in Alexandria and Orthodox Universities in the Holy Metropolises of Central Africa in Kinshasa and in Madagascar.

Renovation and restoration was done on the Historic Holy Monastery of ST George in Cairo, as well as renovation and building reinforcement in the Patriarchal Dependency at St George in Kypseli where the Exarchate of our Patriarch is established.

The publications and translations into local African dialects of our Patriarchate became reasons for the Alexandrian Primate to proceed to the organization of valuable publications which profitably contribute to the better organization of the catechetical and missionary efforts of the patriarchate of Alexandria.

His Eminence Seraphim Metropolitan of Zimbabwe completed his homily by mentioning the contribution of Theodoros II, the Alexandrian Primate for the strengthening of Orthodox unity, as well as his discreet interventions for the strengthening of inter-Christian and inter-religious dialogue, for peace and prosperity for all People to prevail.

He spoke also of the contribution of the Theodoros, the Alexandrian Primate during his meetings with Heads of State and Religious Leaders to address common social problems to tackle the scourge of hunger and to offer equal opportunities for health, food, and education to poor and orphaned children.

His Eminence George of Guinea spoke on the Historic Ecclesiastical Institution of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa and the person of the Alexandrian Primate, who addressed the biography of His Beatitude and referred to the great virtues which define him as a devout, humble Hierarch of Prayer, Love and Humility who ministers night and day to destitute people and especially to poor and orphaned children, who is already called by the pious People the "Patriarch of Love", as the "Patriarch of Orphans".

Among the many in attendance were the Diplomats of Greece, Russia and Cyprus, as well as the Leaders of our Community.

His Beatitude Theodoros II, gave the Hellenic Academy the icon of Athanasios the Great, emphasizing the significant role of our teachers and parents for the formation of devout souls so that in the hearts of the youth fertile ground can be found for the presence of God's love, and so that our children can be ready in the future to form responsible Christian families and vocational rehabilitation with the perspective of social solidarity and philanthropic mutual support, asking that we do not forget him in our prayers so that the Holy Spirit can strengthen him to minister with self-sacrifice to our African brothers and sisters and to continue with his weak human powers to handle the multifaceted historical work of his Predecessors through catechism, Missionary, philanthropic, educational and social service of our Patriarchate.

In their addresses His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece Mr. Leonidas Kontovounisios called on the Alexandrian Primate to pray for the issue of concord and unity of all in Greece and in Cyprus and where Greeks live in overseas countries so that our Nation can progress.

The Honorary Consul of Cyprus Mr. Nestor Nestoros thanked His Beatitude for his love for Greeks living abroad and for his sensitivity for the vindication of the People of Cyprus with the ending of the barbaric Turkish invasion.

On behalf of our Community the Chairlady of the Federation of Hellenic Communities and Associations, Mrs. Eleni Koumidou, who recently lost her son, the late Paul, due to a heart attack at the age of 52, addressed Theodoros the Alexandrian Primate and stressed the following: "Your Beatitude we want you to know that your coming here fills us all with unspeakable consolation and joy. Your presence causes joy, warms our souls, strengthens us and uplifts us. With your arrival here you came to bestow on us your paternal blessings and to once again give courage and a ray of light and hope to our tired community in a country in which the major part of the population is suffering. So we regain new strength to continue the difficult and unequal struggle of our earthly life".