

VISIT AND DIVINE LITURGY BY THE PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA IN DAMIETTA

On Friday 9th December 2016, **His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria** and All Africa visited the Greek Orthodox Community of Arabic speakers and conducted the Divine Liturgy in the Holy Metropolitan Church of St Nicholas and St George in Damietta, to commemorate the memory of St Nicholas Bishop of Myra in Lycea, together with the local Metropolitan Niphon of Pilousion, the Parish Priest Fr. Panteleimon Bantely and Clergy of the Metropolis of Pilousion.

Also present were the representative of the Governor of Damietta Mr. Magydi Hattab, the Deputy Director of the Police Mr. Hisham el Hefnawr, the Chairman of the Arabic Speaking Orthodox Community of Damietta General .Samir Boushra, Parliamentarian Mr. Evirem Poutros, the Maritime Attaché in Port Said Mr. Stavros Evangelides, representatives of the Coptic Church and of the Islamic Community.

Addressing the large congregation, His Beatitude the Patriarch spoke of the life and times of St Nicholas.

He mentioned the excellent cooperation and the exceptional relations which he has with **His Excellency the President of Egypt Mr. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi**, whom he thanked for his support of the ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria.

He then went on to speak of the important official visit which is being undertaken by the Primate of the Coptic Church Twandros II, following an invitation by the Church of Greece. He stressed the excellent friendship and the exceptional cooperation between the two Patriarchates in Egypt and underscored that this visit will contribute to the better coexistence and the development of a climate of love between the Christians of Egypt.

He thanked the local Metropolitan Niphon of Pilousion for the significant works he is doing in his province, as well as the Parish Priest Fr. Panteleimon, whom he congratulated on his Parish work, giving him a blessing Cross. In his reply, His Eminence thanked His Beatitude for his love, which as he said, facilitates the efforts which he makes.

In conclusion a commemorative pectoral cross was given of the presence of the His Beatitude, a reception followed and the Parish hosted an official lunch.

Note that the See of the Patriarchate was housed in the Damietta region, during the 17th century, three Alexandrian Primates have been buried within the Holy Church of St Nicholas, and it was once the See of the once glorious Diocese of Tamiathos.