

Warm welcome for the Missionary Patriarch to the Democratic Republic of the Congo

On Friday 4th March, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa arrived in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, accompanied by His Eminence Daniel, Metropolitan of Aksum.

At the city's international airport he was welcomed by His Excellency Ambassador Mr. Banza Ngoy, Director of the State Protocol Office and Representative of His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Her Excellency the Ambassador of Greece to the Democratic Republic of the Congo Mrs. Kalliope Douti, His Excellency the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt Mr. Hamdy Shaaban Abdelhalim Mohamed, His Excellency the Ambassador of Serbia Mr. Miroljub Jevtic, the Honourable Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Kinshasa Mr. Gerasimos Dounis and his wife, Paraskeve Triantafyllou, pupils from the primary schools of the Parishes of Kingasani and the Holy Archangels, the schools of the Hellenic Community and of St Mark, Students of the Theological Faculty of the Orthodox University of Congo and the Holy Clergy of the Metropolis.

The procession headed to the Holy Community Church where a Doxology was held in honor of the Primate of Alexandria, attended by Their Eminences the Metropolitans Meletios of Katanga, Daniel of Aksum, Hariton of Kananga and His Grace Cosmas Bishop of Konstantiani.

His Eminence Theodosius, Metropolitan of Kinshasa, in his address expressed the great joy of all for the visit of His Beatitude. He thanked the Ambassadors, the President of the Greek Community, the clergy and the people for the warm welcome of the spiritual father of the Orthodox Christians of Africa. He characteristically said: *"The Orthodox Church rejoices today, the Holy Metropolis of Kinshasa rejoices, the Greek Community rejoices, the faithful people rejoice at the arrival of His Beatitude our Father and Pastor"*.

Primate Theodoros, in his reply thanked His Excellency the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Mr. Felix Tshisekedi for his respect for the Patriarchate of Alexandria, Their Eminences the Metropolitans, officials and all the faithful present for the warm welcome, saying that he came to meet and strengthen his spiritual children, clergy and laity, but also to take strength from them himself. With particular emotion he referred to the late Metropolitan Nikiforos of Kinshasa and his contribution to the Local Church.