

# **160th ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOLY CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS IN ALEXANDRIA**

On 25th March 2016, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, officiated at Orthros and conducted the Divine Liturgy at the celebrating Community Church of the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Alexandria, concelebrating with His Eminence Damaskinos Metropolitan of Johannesburg and Pretoria and His Grace Meletios Bishop of Naucratis, Abbot of the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of ST Savvas in Alexandria, while on the eve of the Feast he officiated at Great Vespers together with the above-named Hierarchs and His Eminence the Elder Metropolitan Gabriel of Leontopolis, Patriarchal Vicar General.

Present at the Eucharistic gathering were the Honourable Consul General of Greece in Alexandria Mr. Emm Kakavelakis, the Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Alexandria Mr. Ioannis Papadopoulos, Chairmen of Hellenic Societies and Associations, the teaching staff and pupils of the Hellenic Schools of the Great City, the Scouts and many faithful Christians from the Greek and Arabic speaking Communities.

During his homily His Beatitude spoke fervently of the meaning of the double feast of the Annunciation and the National Rebirth, particularly speaking of the 160th anniversary since the inauguration of the majestic church of the Annunciation (1856-1916) as well as the 10th anniversary since its renovation and its inaugurations (2006-2016).

Prior to the dismissal of the patriarchal Divine Liturgy, the Doxology for National Day took place in the Church, together with the memorial prayers for those who fought and lost their lives during our Nation's struggles.

On the evening of the same day His Beatitude the Patriarch officiated at the post-festal Vespers for the Feast of the Annunciation and the 2nd Stasis of the Salutations of the Most Holy Theotokos were sung in the same church.

Note that this marble church was built through the initiative of the first Chairman of the Hellenic Community in the city of Alexandria, Michael Tositsas, during the tenure of Patriarch Ierotheos II.

For its beautification, chandeliers were bought from Russia, windows from the Parisian house of Jean Gaudin, sculptured marble icon stands from Constantinople, and the clock on the bell tower was manufactured in London in 1861 by Frederick Dent, who also made the clock in Westminster in London, known as Big Ben.

From then till today, the few remaining Greek gather there, as do all those who visit Alexandria, particularly though the older Egyptian Greeks who reminisce about the glorious days of the prosperity of Hellenism in Egypt.

According to tradition throughout the past decades, it is in this beautiful church that the enthronement of the New Patriarch is conducted because of the large capacity of the church.

The inauguration on the occasion of the maintenance and restoration of the Holy Church of the Annunciation took place on the 25th March 2006, by His All Holiness Bartholomaios the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Alexandrian Primate Theodoros II, in the presence of His Excellency the President of the Hellenic Republic Mr. Karolos Papoulias, and the entire project was realised by the kind and generous donations of the Onassis Public Benefit Organization, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Antony Papadimitriou, a Greek from Egypt.