

# A VISIT OF SOLIDARITY BY THE PRIMATES OF ALEXANDRIA AND CYPRUS TO THE CHURCH OF ANTIOCH

On 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2013, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, arrived in Beirut, Lebanon, in order that together with His Beatitude Chrysostomos Archbishop of Cyprus, to pay a fraternal visit of solidarity towards the sorely tried ancient Church of Antioch on the one hand, and on the other to intensify the pressures for liberation of the two abducted Metropolitans.

On 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013, the two Primates were welcomed at the Holy Patriarchal Balamand Monastery by His Beatitude Patriarch Ioannis I. During the meeting as well as during the media interview which followed, the Patriarch of Alexandria expressed his support for those Christians in Syria who are between the hammer and the anvil and called on them to maintain non-extinguished the flame of their optimism and hope for the resurrection of humanity, despite the severe shocks of inhumane circumstances.

He assured the Patriarch of Antioch of his undying personal interest in the fate of the Clergy who are hostages, which is always practically and repeatedly expressed to all the agents who more or less influence the developments. Besides, His Beatitude is a personal friend of the Antiochian Primate and his brother in the flesh, from the time that they were students at the Theological Faculty of the Aristoteleian University of Thessaloniki.

At the same time he placed on the table the issue the coordinated activity of the ancient Throne of the East in order to proclaim the self-awareness of the Orthodox Church that man, as an image of God, has heavenly roots, incomparably superior to the humble instincts which spark the observed and unfortunately escalating illogical violence.

His Beatitude addressed words of love and support also to the students of the Balamand Theological Faculty. He called on them to think about the fact that the Triune God for two thousand years deems the faithful worthy of living in the Middle East, the primordial birthplace of Christianity, and to be witness to another system of homeland, according to the terminology of Origen, which is none other than the Kingdom of God as an expectation and as a viable reality.

His Beatitude is accompanied in Lebanon by the Exarch of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa in Cyprus, the Reverend

Protopresbyter Athinodoros Papaevripiades.