

# **ADDRESS BY PATRIARCH THEODOROS II OF ALEXANDRIA ON THE BIRTHDAY OF HIS HOLINESS PATRIARCH KIRILL OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA**

On 20th November 2016, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, during the official function which took place in the great amphitheatre of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow in honour of patriarch Kirill of Moscow, addressed the celebrating Patriarch before all the invited Primates, the representatives of the local Churches and thousands of clergy and people, as follows:

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*“for the fruit of the Spirit is found in all that is good and right and true” (Ephesians 5:9)*

Beloved and Most dear Brother and Con-celebrant,

The responsibility of every pastor both to God who entrusted his reasonable sheep, as well as his flock, who are seeking indicators to salvation, is not limited to words. Besides, words are meaningless if they are not accompanied by works. Works reflect the flame that burns in the heart. Works give form to faith which our Creator aroused through His Only Begotten Son in our existence, being motivated only by His love for us.

The works of your life, as a witness to Christ, reflect this

love of God and warm the hearts of your flock, because they put into practice the exhortation of the Apostle of the Nations.

Because they are proved to be the agents of the fruit of the Spirit: kindness, justice, truthfulness. These are the virtues which adorned your path during the stony years of political oppression and the spiritual repression of the Russian people. These are the virtues which adorned your path during the difficult years of ecclesiastical reorganization and spiritual recovery of the Russian people.

These are the virtues which now adorn your path as you safely guide the vessel of the Church of Russia far from the Laestrygonians and Cyclops of the times.

These are the virtues that adorn your pastorate now that the series of rocks and reefs in the salty seas of history are multiplying and the channel that leads to the Kingdom of Heaven is narrowing.

These are the virtues that do not allow you to forget the difficult years and to stand as helper to the Ancient Churches in the cradle of Christianity, now that faith is persecuted, beliefs are tested and hope is challenged. These are the virtues which give you grace to distinguish the signifier from the signified in the options which decide the lives of people in the Middle East. These are the virtues which enlighten you not to limit your love, but to disseminate it in a spirit of mutual understanding and sympathy to anyone who is being lost on the way, but without losing hope in the resurrection.

Honouring your virtuous experience and testimony through our presence here on the occasion of your seventieth birthday, be contemplate Your Holiness with joy. Our thanksgiving is expressed in our souls through spiritual gladness and is outwardly expressed and becomes prayerful and a fervent wish that the Lord will grant you indomitable health and

inexhaustible strength for the benefit of your flock. Amen!