

AFTER 11 YEARS THE CHURCH OF ST NICHOLAS IN IBRAHIMIA ALEXANDRIA IS OPEN AGAIN

On 10th May 2020, the Sunday of the Paralytic, the bell of the Church of St Nicholas in Ibrahimia, Alexandria, rang out again, with the Patriarch himself ringing the historic bell, proclaiming to this coastal area of the Mediterranean Egyptian capital, that the Second Throne Patriarchate is constantly opening its churches to glorify Hellenism and Orthodoxy.

In a church built exactly 121 years ago, in 1899, by the great benefactor Constantine Gogos and his wife Marionga and which church still exudes the history of Hellenism in Alexandria in the last century, maintaining well in its white walls, with the old images, the anxieties and the supplications of hundreds, thousands of Alexandrians who lit their candles there, just a hundred meters from where the sea wave 'breaks' and the saltiness of the Mediterranean emerges.

And with the Alexandrian Primate having difficulty keeping his emotions, not only because another House of God is again accepting the prayers of the faithful as a 'port of salvation,' but also because this church is dedicated to sailors so many of whom from Greece, visited Alexandria in the past decades and gazed from afar at its small dome and bell tower.

Those were the times when the Patriarchate of Alexandria was poor in its financial strength, but rich in the hearts of all those people of the Alexandrian community.

The parish, which in the middle of the corona virus was represented today by the representatives of the consular and community authorities on this symbolic date that coincides with the anniversary of the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas. Specifically, the Consul General of Greece in Alexandria, Mr. Athanasios Kotsionis, the President of the Hellenic Community of Alexandria, Mr. Edmond Kasimatis, the Vice President of the Cyprus Brotherhood, Mrs. Georgia Mastouridis, the President of the Lyceum of Greek Women of Alexandria and the former Director of the Hellenic Cultural Foundation Mr. Vassilis Filippatos.

Patriarch Theodoros made special mention of the Alexandrian Nicholas Eleftheriou, for his contribution and for always supporting this historic Holy Church with all his strength.

All of them attended both the moving ceremony of the first divine liturgy at the site, after its thorough renovation, in the presence of Patriarch Theodoros, as well as the enthronement in the Church of Metropolitan Narcissus of Naucratis who, as Patriarchal Vicar, will from now on have in Alexandria his own Church in which to serve the sacred sacraments of our Church.

Characteristic also was the gift offered by the Patriarch to Metropolitan Narcissus on the occasion of today's event: a hierarchical staff offered to Patriarch Theodoros by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios, in Myra of Lyceum, where St Nicholas served as Archbishop.

'Metropolitan Narcissus, take this staff, because you deserve it, you respect the institution of our Patriarchate, as a brave soldier of our church', said the Alexandrian patriarch to the Patriarchal Vicar, setting him on the hierarchal throne of the church and singing his acclamation.

For his part, the Metropolitan Narcissus of Naucratis, replied and thanked Patriarch Theodoros, saying 'thank you very much, Your Beatitude, because you give me the opportunity to be useful for the church'.

Also, the Patriarch of Alexandria thanked Greece in the person of the Consul General Mr. Kotionis for the assistance offered as well as his Alexandrian wife, Joanna Kotsionis.

Another element that should be mentioned, conveying the reasons for the touching atmosphere from the words of the Patriarch was the fact that Nicholas was also the secular name of Patriarch Theodoros before joining the clergy. At the same time, the Alexandrian Primate did not fail to turn back an entire 16 year period, when in front of the icon of St. Nicholas in this modest church, he himself prayed on the 9th October 2004, just before he was elected unanimously to the Missionary throne of the Apostle Mark as Patriarch of Alexandria.

Today's Divine Liturgy was attended by Bishop Germanos of Tamiathus and the Chief Secretary of the Holy Synod Fr. Nicodemus Totkas, at the service in which the Patriarch commemorated all the clergy that had served in this Greek Church in Alexandria: the late Metropolitan Irenaios of blessed memory and the late Priests Barnabas, Spyridon and Christoforos of blessed memory.

Immediately afterwards, everyone present inaugurated the community room of the church, which also includes a large lending library, which is dedicated to the community and to all the Greeks of Alexandria, in this vibrant suburb of the city of Alexandria.

'Good souls, some in heaven and some on earth, contributed with the excess of their hearts to the renovation of the Church. Among them are the Hellenic Community of Alexandria and its President Edmond Kasimatis, as Patriarch Theodoros said, who warmly thanked him, as well as all those who participated in the fundamental renovation of St. Nicholas in Ibrahimia, which will now be another church which will proclaim the two-thousand-year presence of the Patriarchate of Alexandria in the Land of the Nile.