

GRADUATION OF SEMINARIANS FROM THE “ATHANASIOS THE GREAT” PATRIARCHAL ACADEMY OF ALEXANDRIA

On Sunday, May 14, 2023, the His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa, officiated during the Divine Liturgy held at the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of Saint Savvas of Alexandria, after which the official graduation ceremony of the seminarians of the “Athanasios the Great” Patriarchal Academy took place.

During his speech, His Beatitude briefly referred to the re-establishment of the historical Academy during the 2007-2008 academic year, after 470 years, in order for it to promote the indigenous members of the missionary and pastoral work of the Patriarchal Throne. He expressed his satisfaction to the Headmaster, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Isaac Tsapoglou and the Greek teachers assigned to the Greek schools of Alexandria, who, having the approval of the Greek Ministry of Education, voluntarily teach the African students, and also thanked the Egyptian state, the which allows the unhindered proper functioning of this Patriarchal institution. In conclusion, he blessed today's remaining graduates – some graduates had left in the previous days due to special circumstances in their homelands – paternally urging them to pass on to the local Churches of their countries, where they will serve as clergy in the future, the knowledge and the general ecclesiastical experience that they acquired in the See of the Patriarchate.

In his reply, the Very Reverend Dean Archimandrite Isaac Tsapoglou emphasized among others things: “These young men who left their homelands and came to study Orthodox theology

and the Greek language, here in the center of the Alexandrian See, have a great task to accomplish, to “graft” into the their own traditions, through Greek literature, to evangelize themselves and then to evangelize their fellow citizens, into a new life that leads to true life. They get the appropriate resources to serve the Missionary echelons wherever the Church orders them, according to local needs.

These young men will be the best ambassadors, each to their own country, and will carry a ray of light from the Lighthouse of Alexandria. They will be grateful for your love, because that love formed them, but also transformed them internally. These young men, just by learning the Greek language, proudly confess that they are “African Greeks”. And the Greek Language, Greek Hospitality, Greek Love contributes to this, which takes a lot of time to analyze and separate from the simple verbal meaning of the term.

Of course, the greatest resource for these students is Prayer, which is contributed by the daily celebration of Holy Services here in the Cathedral of Saint Savvas, which hosts the Patriarchal Academy, close to the humble, meek, companionable, selfless, loving and patient, Metropolitan Germanos of Tamiathous, by teaching the courses Liturgics, Ritual Order, chanting, on a theoretical and practical level. Many grateful thanks to our Teachers, who sacrificed their free time, after their duties at the Greek Schools of Alexandria, to volunteer their knowledge...

... Your Beatitude, another year has passed and I believe that each one of us did the best we could for our young men, to be worthy of your call, to help and become part of your vision. A vision that aims from the present to the future. We believe that the work you have given us to do is not ephemeral. Now the sowing is being done, but the day will not be long in coming when we will have many fruits. And these present-day hopeful cadets will rightly boast that they studied during your tenure and indeed under your watchful paternal gaze.

As an active Bishop-Missionary when you plowed and sowed the Word of God in people's souls, but also now as Primate, Pope and Patriarch, you did not stop visiting your spiritual children very often, giving them courage, hope, love, your smile, your very heart and soul, your blessing. We are all grateful to you. We thank the Triune God that we exist during your tenure, and that you gave us the opportunity to contribute with our humble ministry to God's field. We are grateful to you and bow down in soul and body to your Beatitude. May your years be many."

Also, on behalf of the graduates, the Reader Aaron spoke, expressing his lifelong gratitude, but also everyone's devotion to the Patriarchal Throne of Saint Mark, especially for the selfless love and paternal care and affection they received in all their years of study in the Great City.

The ceremony was attended by Their Eminence the Metropolitans Narcissos of Pelusium, Patriarchal Vicar of Alexandria and Germanos of Tamiathus, Head of the Holy Patriarchal Monastery, the Honourable Mr. Athanasios Kotsionis, Consul General of Greece in Alexandria, the teachers of the School and devout Christians.