

# **CONFERMENT OF HIGHEST HONORARY AWARD OF RUSSIA TO HIS BEATITUDE**

**On 26<sup>th</sup> November 2009, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa** received at the Patriarchal See a visit of His Excellency the Ambassador of Russia in Egypt Mr. Michael Bogdanov, accompanied by Archimandrite Leonid Gorbachev, Exarch of the Russian Church in Egypt and Mr. Dmitry Korakov Consul General of Russia in Alexandria.

His Excellency the Ambassador visited His Beatitude to officially confer on him, on the order of His Excellency the Russian President Mr. Dmitry Medvedev, the highest honorary distinction of Russia, the Gold Star of Honour and Friendship, which is conferred on figures of international importance for their contribution to development of friendship and co-operation between nations.

The ceremony took place in the Patriarchal Throne Room. Addressing His Beatitude the Ambassador said that His Excellency Mr Medvedev is honouring the Venerable In his reply, His Beatitude Primate of the Patriarchal Throne of St Mark for his great humanistic and missionary effort, which contributes significantly both to the development of the nations on the African Continent, as well as to the consolidation of peaceful coexistence and friendship between nations. He also invited His Beatitude to make an official visit to the Kremlin.

Expressed His Beatitude for the honour bestowed on him, which is a point of spiritual replenishment and strengthening, emphasized the contribution of the Christian

message and religious faith in general for world peace, mentioning the example of the harmonious co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Egypt, thanking His Excellency the President of Egypt Mr. Mubarak for this, and wished the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia health, and strength for his Patriarchal duties.

**His Excellency the Ambassador** also gave His Beatitude a personal congratulatory letter from the President of Russia on his 55<sup>th</sup> birthday, in which he praises his multifaceted pastoral work which strengthens the progress of Orthodoxy in Africa and the world as well as the unity between the Christian churches. He also wrote of the many years of ties between the Russian and Alexandrian Churches. He also remembers warmly his recent meeting with His Beatitude in Cairo and finally wished him a continued and ceaseless productive patriarchal service in Africa.

Commemorative gifts were then exchanged in his Private Patriarchal Office, and his guests were then taken on a conducted tour of the Patriarchal Mansion and the Patriarchal Library, followed by an official lunch in the Patriarchal Refectory.