

FIRST DAY OF DELIBERATIONS OF THE HOLY SYNOD OF THE PATRIARCHATE OF ALEXANDRIA

The Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, chaired by His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, convened today 21st November 2012 in statutory congress in the Conference Hall of the Holy Synod.

Prior to the Meeting a Divine Liturgy was held in the Patriarchal Chapel of Ss Theodoroi. The Meeting started immediately after this. The opening of the deliberations was declared by His Beatitude, as he addressed a greeting to all members of the Synod. His Eminence Elder Metropolitan Petros of Aksum, Patriarchal Vicar General, replied to His Beatitude on behalf of the Metropolitans and Bishops. His Beatitude then spoke at length to the Holy Synod about the work done during the past year in all departments of the Ecclesiastical ministry of the Patriarchate.

At the same time His Beatitude the Pope and Patriarch awarded the honourary distinction of the Great Cross of St Savvas the Sanctified to His Eminence Elder Metropolitan Petros of Aksum, Patriarchal Vicar General, on the completion of forty years of Hierarchical ministry. He also awarded the Appreciation of the Church of Alexandria to Their Eminences Jonah of Kampala and Makarios of Kenya on the completion of twenty years of productive pastoral ministry, and the order of the Commander of St Savvas to Their Eminences Proterios of Ptolemais, George of Accra, Nicholas of Ermopolis and Dimitrios of Irinopolis, on the completion of ten years from their election and ordination. Also, by issue of Patriarchal and Synodal Decrees, the Holy Diocese of Madagascar was elevated to a Metropolis and the Holy Diocese of Sierra Leone was renamed Holy Metropolis of Guinea.

There followed the filling of the vacant Holy Metropolis of Leontopolis, the Holy Metropolises of Guinea and Accra and of the Holy Diocese of Burundi and Rwanda together with the Holy Diocese of Brazzaville and Gabon established in 2010.

Elected as new Metropolitan of Leontopolis was His Grace Gabriel Bishop of Mareotis Patriarchal Vicar of Alexandria, elected by way of transfer as new Metropolitan of Guinea was His Eminence Metropolitan George recently of Accra, elected new Metropolitan of Accra was His Eminence Savvas Metropolitan until recently of Burundi and Rwanda, elected new Bishop of Burundi and Rwanda was the Very Reverend Archimandrite Innocent Biakatonda and unanimously elected first Bishop of the Holy Diocese of Brazzaville and Gabon was the Very Reverend Archimandrite Panteleimon Arathymos, Chief Secretary of the Holy Synod.

The deliberations of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Alexandria will continue in the afternoon with the reading of the reports by the Hierarchs and the Ceremony of the Great Messages.

Biography of His Eminence Gabriel of Leontopolis

His Eminence Gabriel Metropolitan of Leontopolis was born in Athens in 1957. He holds a degree from the Theological faculty of the University of Athens. He was ordained Deacon in 1981 and Priest in 1984, serving in Athens, Serres and in the Financial Services of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece. Posted to the ancient Patriarchate by the late Patriarch Parthenios III in 1990, he served as Chancellor of the Holy Metropolis of Zimbabwe and Patriarchal Vicar in Odessa. In June 2005 he was appointed Patriarchal Vicar of Alexandria and on 1st November 2006, he was elected as Bishop of Mareotis, ordained by His Beatitude Pope and Patriarch Theodoros II on 4th November 2006 in the Holy Church of St Savvas the Sanctified in Alexandria.

On 21st November 2012, by proposal of His Beatitude, he was

unanimously elected by the Holy Synod as Metroplitan of Leontopolis.

Biography of His Eminence George Metropolitan of Guinea

His Eminence George, Metropolitan of Zimbabwe, (born George Vladimirov), was born in Limassol, Cyprus, on 27th March 1966. In 1974 he went to Athens and completed his primary school education. On a scholarship given by the Ministry of the Presidency of the Greek Government he graduated as a 'Leader' from the Anargyrios and Korgialenios School in Spetses. He studied Law at the Aristotelian University of Thessalonica, Business Management at the Thames Valley University of London, where he was awarded a number of prizes and distinctions. During his four-year stay in London he worked as a teacher at the Greek School of the Virgin Mary in Camberwell Green. Returning from London he worked in the administration service of the Cyprus Bank in Athens until 1998. In the period of 1993-1997 he did voluntary work in the Missionary centres in Madagascar and India. At the same time he studied Theology at the Theological Faculty of the Kapodistrian University of Athens. On 30 June 1998 he was ordained a Deacon and on 5 July 1998 Priest by His Eminence Nikitas Metropolitan of Hong Kong. He then immediately travelled to Hong Kong where he took over the duties of Dean of the Cathedral of St Luke. On 18th October of the same year he was elevated to the rank of Archimandrite and took over duties as the Chancellor of the Holy Metropolis of Hong Kong and South Eastern Asia.

He also undertook the publication of the Metropolis' Orthodox magazine 'The Censer'. During his stay in Asia he showed great zeal for Missionary work both within the Holy Metropolis as well as in the Philippines and Indonesia. He worked as a teacher at the St Makrina Greek School of the Church and gave lessons in Orthodox faith at Theological Schools of other faiths. In November 1999 he was enrolled in the ranks of the venerable clergy of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, where he undertook duties as the English speaking Secretary and was

appointed by the late Patriarch Petros VII as Dean of the Holy Church of the Annunciation in Alexandria. He was responsible for electronic press and reorganised the Patriarchal website. He accompanied the Patriarch to the Great Synod in Cyprus, to the Meeting of the Primate of the Churches of the Middle East in Lebanon and to the Meeting of the Primate of the Orthodox Churches in Constantinople, as well as on his missionary journeys to South Africa, Zimbabwe and Sudan. He has been appointed as a member of the Executive Committee of the Middle East Council of Churches.

By proposal of the Patriarch and voted by the Holy Synod of the ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria he was unanimously elected Bishop of Nilopolis on 22nd February 2001 and appointed Patriarchal Vicar of Alexandria. His ordination as Bishop took place on 4th March 2001 in the Holy Church of the Annunciation of the Theotokos by the late Patriarch Petros VII of Alexandria. By proposal of His Beatitude Theodoros II Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa he was unanimously elected by the Holy Synod as Metropolitan of Zimbabwe on 27th October 2004 and was enthroned by His Beatitude on 19th December 2004 at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Harare. He served as a member of the Enthronement Ceremony Committee of the new Patriarch in October 2004 and of the Committee for the organization of the inauguration of the new Patriarchal Mansion as well as of the Opening of the Holy Church of the Annunciation in Alexandria in April 2006. On October 2010 he was elected Metropolitan of Accra and on 21st November 2012 he was unanimously elected by the Holy Synod, by proposal of His Beatitude, as Metropolitan of Guinea.

He is the Representative of His Beatitude in Athens and Director of the Office of the Patriarchate of Alexandria in the Greek capital.

Biography of His Eminence Savva Metropolitan of Accra

His Eminence Savvas, Metropolitan of Accra, was born in Rhodes

in 1971. He holds a degree from the Patmiada Ecclesiastical Academy and of the Department of Social Theology from the Theological Faculty of Athens. He speaks Greek, English and Arabic. In 1990 he was tonsured a monk at the Holy Monastery of the Archangel Michael in Tharri in Rhodes, by the then Hegumen of the Monastery and non Metropolitan Amphilochios of New Zealand. He was ordained Deacon in 1991 and Priest in 1993 by His Eminence Apostolos formerly of Rhodes, receiving at the same time the office of Archimandrite. During his eight-year ministry there he served as Hierarchal Vicar of Halkis and as Parish Priest in Parishes of the Holy Metropolis of Rhodes.

Following an invitation by the late Patriarch Petros VII he was enrolled among the clergy of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, appointed as Parish Priest of the Patriarchal Church of St Savvas the Sanctified in Alexandria, undertaking also the directorate of the Press and Public Relations Office of the Patriarchate. In 2001 he served on the Patriarchal Commissioner of the Trusteeship of Alexandria and Manager of the Patriarchal Finances. Following the re-operation of the "St Athanasios" Patriarchal Academy of Alexandria, with the personal care of His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, he was appointed as its principal as well as a Member of the Synodal Committee on Education.

On 6th October 2009 by proposal of His Beatitude Theodoros II Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa he was unanimously elected by the Holy Synod of the patriarchate of Alexandria as Bishop of the newly-established Diocese of Burundi and Rwanda, ordained on 11th October 2009 by His Beatitude and on 21st November 2012 he was unanimously elected by the Holy Synod following a proposal by His Beatitude, as Metropolitan of Accra.

Biography of Panteleimon, Elected Bishop of Brazzaville and Gabon

His Grace Panteleimon, Elected Bishop of Brazzaville and Gabon was born on the holy island of Tinos in 1974. He holds a degree from the Theological Faculty of the University of Athens and is a graduate of the French Institute of Athens. He speaks English, French and Italian.

He was ordained Deacon in 2000 and Priest Archimandrite in 2001 by the late Metropolitan Dorotheos I (Stekas) of Syros and served as Preacher and Director of Services of the Holy Metropolis of Syros, next to His Eminence Dorotheos I, Metropolitan of Syros.

He was transferred in September 2006 to the Patriarchate of Alexandria and served in succession as Director of Developmental Works, Codicographer of the Holy Synod, Director of the Private Patriarchal Office and Chief Secretary of the Holy Synod. He is also a Member of the Patriarchal Commission of European Issues as well as of the Inter-Orthodox Commission of Bioethics and of the Advisory Body KAICIID (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Inter-religious and Inter-cultural Dialogue), representing the ancient Church of Alexandria.

On 21st November 2012, by proposal of His Beatitude, he was unanimously elected by the Holy Synod as the first Bishop of the Holy Diocese of Brazzaville and Gabon.