

HIS BEATITUDE ATTENDS VARIOUS FUNCTIONS IN JOHANNESBURG

The new home of the Lyceum of Greek Women of Johannesburg, which was established within the framework of the 100th anniversary of the Hellenic Communities of Johannesburg and Pretoria and of the 80th anniversary of the Holy Metropolis of Johannesburg, was inaugurated by His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa on 17th May 2008, the 2nd day of his pastoral visit to South Africa.

His Beatitude did not hide his satisfaction regarding "this new Greek home which honours Hellenism and our homeland and which is the result of a large donation by Lukas and Artemis Pouroulis.

Present at the inauguration were His Eminence Metropolitan Seraphim of Johannesburg and Pretoria, His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece Mr Aristeidis Sandis, His Excellency the High Commissioner of Cyprus Mr Argyros Antoniou, the Honourable Consul General of Greece in Johannesburg Mr Panayiotis Sarris, the former Chairman of the Federation of Hellenic Communities Mr Panayiotis Manikas and other representatives of diplomatic and parochial offices.

The highlight of the inauguration was when His Beatitude donated to the Lyceum the stole and chasuble (phelonion) worn by the Greek priest of the historic church of the Holy Trinity in Odessa during the swearing in of the members of the "Filiki Eteria".

The Chairlady of the Lyceum, Mrs. Domniki Souris spoke of the long and successful work of the Lyceum, which can now become even more successful with the opening of this new Greek cultural home, where there will be a permanent exhibition of traditional Greek costumes, woven articles, embroidery, books and any other objects which represent Hellenic tradition and culture.

Finally, in an emotional atmosphere, His Beatitude honoured the enormous contribution of Mr. and Mrs. Pouroulis and especially that of Artemis Pouroulis, by naming her as "Archontissa" (Lady) of the Patriarchate.

On the evening of the same day, His Beatitude visited the Hellenic Community of Germiston, where he was warmly greeted by the Hellenes of Egypt now living in South Africa . Addressing His Beatitude, the Chairman of the Association of Hellenes from Egypt and Sudan , Mr Costa Georgiou, said:

"...Your Beatitude, your visit to South Africa is significant for all of us. You illumine with your presence the celebrations for the 80th anniversary of our Metropolis and the 100th anniversary of the historic Hellenic Communities of Johannesburg and Pretoria ... We thank you from the bottom of our hearts, for accepting, despite your heavy programme, to attend the annual dinner of our Association. We are especially grateful and assure you that our entire community, especially the Hellenes from Egypt and Sudan , will always be with you and assist you in your multifaceted and important work in our Patriarchate.

We are also very happy tonight that we have with us the Elder Metropolitan Paul of Memphis who contributed so much to our Patriarchate and especially our Metropolis during his thirty years of service here.

Your Beatitude, we want you to visit us often, to give us your Patriarchal

blessings...Our Metropolitan has told us of your multifaceted Patriarchal works, especially of your great daily efforts for the completion of the building of the Patriarchal Mansion in Alexandria, the organization of the Patriarchal Museum and the Patriarchal Library, which was inaugurated this past week. You have already begin the renovations of the historic Patriarchal Monastery of St George in Cairo , and of other churches in Egypt . These are enormous undertakings which are need not only of our prayers, but also our support in every way possible. We assure you, Your Beatitude, that we will be at your side, supporting and assisting you..."

In his reply, the Alexandrian Primate thanked the Hellenes of Egypt who support the efforts of the Church of St mark as well as those of the local church. He also spoke about the historic journey of Hellenism I the diaspora, who despite difficulties have managed to survive and to creates many wonderful things.