

HIS BEATITUDE CELEBRATES HIS NAME DAY IN ETHIOPIA

On 17 February, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, celebrated his name day in Addis Ababa, capital of Ethiopia, beginning his official visit to the Holy Metropolis of Aksum. The young pupils of the Greek School, their teachers, the few remaining Greeks in Ethiopia as well as many Ethiopian Orthodox Christians welcomed His Beatitude at the Holy Church of St Frumentios.

In a pious atmosphere the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy was then conducted, officiated by the Alexandrian Primate. Among those present were His excellency the Ambassador of Greece in Addis Ababa Mr. Michalis Darantzikis, the Archon Megas Logothetis of the Alexandrian Patriarchate of St Mark, Mr. Spyridon Kamalakis, the Chairman of the Office Bearers of the Patriarchate Archon Protekdikos Professor Theodoros Panagopoulos, Professor of Microbiology at the Athens Medical Faculty and Archon of the Patriarchate Mr. Athanasios Tsakris and the Archon Hartoularios Dr Theodoros Pittaras.

Addressing the faithful and the young pupils, His Beatitude remembered his first trip to Abyssinia in 1994, accompanying his late predecessor, Patriarch Parthenios III. Mentioning his name day he said: " I have decreed that I will spend my name day each year in a different church jurisdiction of our Patriarchate. This year I wished to spend it here with you, in your blessed community, so that we can celebrate my name day together". He also very emotionally commemorated his spiritual father, the late Metropolitan Lambis and Sfakion Theodoros, who ordained him to the priesthood in 1978, giving him his name.

The Patriarch made special mention of the ties between the Alexandrian Church and Ethiopia reminding all that in the fame of the Patriarch mention is made of Libya, Pentapolis and Ethiopia. "Following the teaching of the Gospel message, by the Apostle Paul in Alexandria, Christianity came to Libya and Ethiopia. These are three cores that welcome Christianity, but we are glad that this river of the love of Christ has reached almost all the countries of Africa. I praise the name of God because of the 53 countries of Africa we already have significant missionary presence as a Patriarchate, in 47 countries:.

The Primate of the Patriarchate of Alexandria spoke to those present about the missionary effort, as well as about the general efforts of supporting Orthodox Christians and those who are in need and expressed great joy at being able to establish, after 470 years, the first Academy of the Alexandrian Church in Alexandria, Egypt. "Young people from all over Africa attend and are taught how to cultivate the earth, how to offer first aid to someone who is hurt, or to a mother, or a child. They are taught computers, modern technology, foreign languages. They are taught the Gospel. And as soon as they complete their studies, after three years, they return to the large countries of Africa to help the people:.

He then sincerely thanked the Elder Metropolitan Petros of Aksum for the love and the warm welcome, once again expressing his joy that he celebrated his name day this year in this missionary and historic country.

He also expressed grateful thanks to the Ambassador of Greece Mr. Michalis Darantzikis, who is a Greek from Egypt and with whom he has been friends for years.

He then presented his entourage, His Grace Bishop Niphon of Babylonos, Hegumen of the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of St George in Cairo, Mr. Kamalakis, Megas Archon Logothetis of the Patriarchate, the Chairman of the Office Bearers Professor

Theodoros Panagopoulos and the reporter Mr. Nicholas Papachristou.

He also thanked the leaders of the Patriarchate who were present as they always offer their valued support to the Patriarchate. He also remembered to thank the Chancellor of the Metropolis and Parish Priest of the Church of St Frumentios, Father Chrysostomos. The Chairman of the Office Bearers then presented the Patriarch with a small gift, on behalf of the Archons present, and the Archon Megas Logothetis Mr. Spyridon Kamalakis gave the Patriarch a pectoral cross bearing the emblem of the Patriarchate, the Lion of the Apostle Mark.

A wonderfully emotional moment came when the pupils of the schools gave the Patriarch two large bouquets of flowers. The children then all received antidoro and blessings from the Patriarch who was photographed with them and the teaching staff at the entrance to the Church.

At noon, His Eminence the Elder Metropolitan Petros of Aksum hosted a lunch at the Metropolis in honour of the Patriarch to whom he gave three separate gifts: an old Ethiopian triptych depicting the All Holy Virgin in the middle and two works of art on leather, which are works of local Ethiopian tradition and folklore.

On the evening of the same day at the Metropolitan Mansion, His Beatitude met with the Greek teachers who teach at the community schools, together with His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece, and discussed with them their needs and the efforts undertaken for the better education of the children.

On the morning of Thursday 18 February 2010, he would be visiting Patriarch Paul of the Ethiopians and immediately thereafter he would visit the Embassy of Egypt where he will attend an official lunch hosted in his honour by His Excellency the Ambassador of Egypt in Addis Ababa, Mr. Tarek Abou Ghoneim.

On the Sunday of Orthodoxy he will officiate at the festive Patriarchal Divine Liturgy which will be conducted at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral and on Monday he would be visiting the President of the Ethiopian Democracy His Excellency Mr. Ato Girma Woldegiorgis.