

HIS BEATITUDE IN KAVALA

On the afternoon of 15th May 2014, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa was welcomed by His Eminence Prokopios at the Holy Shrine of St Gregory the Theologian in Nea Karvali, where relics of this great Father of the Church are kept. His Beatitude then went on to the Holy Cathedral of the Apostle Paul in Kavala, where a festive Doxology was sung, on the occasion of the Patriarchal visit, which came about as a small token of gratitude towards Metropolitan Prokopios, for the generous contribution of the exceptionally active Office of External Missions of the Holy Metropolis of Philippi.

It is noted that this historic Metropolis of Northern Greece has tirelessly taken care of the erection of eleven churches, five Schools, two Clinics and two pharmacies in Kenya, Uganda and Madagascar. It has also donated many scholarships to African students, they have covered the board of hundreds of pupils and has come as a valuable assistant in countless baptisms of African newly-illuminated Christians. The colleagues of the Metropolis have been to Africa more than ten times and His Eminence Prokopios himself has visited Missionary stations on the African Continent four times. In recognising this multifaceted contribution of the reverend Hierarch, His Beatitude emphasized during his address:

In the soul and the heart of those called by grace to participate in the priesthood of Christ, an entirely distinguished place is held by people, who, through their word, their thought and their general way of life, forge their ecclesiastical conviction and their pastoral ethos. IN this dynamic personal effort of forging the image and likeness of God, they have had you, Your Eminence, as a luminous guide

I admired your ability as you listen to the pulse of the times and of society. I noticed your perceptive understanding of the needs of current humans and your co-ordinated response to the call of the times. I learnt from the Shepherd, the healer of

the struggles of the current times with robust and visionary words, when you did not negotiate the values of tradition, consistently promoting the conciliation of modernity and tradition as a safe way to face the challenges of the times with faith, piety and patience.

I keep always in the phylactery of my heart the undiminished understanding of Your Eminence of the struggle of the ancient Church of Alexandria, for the encountering of the people of Africa and for the condition of the nations of Africa, who are co-inheritors and participators in the command of God "in Christ through the Gospel" (Eph. 3: 2-6). You shared with us the anxiety of the sacrificial ministry of the mission of calling the Africans "into fellowship with the Son of God, Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:9).

You rejoiced with us on the renewal of our African brothers and sisters in the springs of our paternal Orthodoxy. You rejoiced with us on the strengthening of their relationship with God and the evergreen tradition of our Church. You rejoiced with us on the viable giving of the gold and silver of the grace of faith into their hearts, on the watering of their thirsty souls through the Holy Spirit for their ontological fulfilling.

For your unshakable assistance towards the asceticism of love and contribution to the African continent, we wish on the opportunity afforded us of being with you, to thank you from the depths of my heart for all the good you have done and are doing for us, praying that you will productively continue your noble and God-loved hierarchal ministry.

Present at the Doxology which ended with the exchange of commemorative gifts, were the former Minister Mr. Kalantzis, the Deputy regional Governors of the District, the Mayor of Kavala Mr. K Simitsis, the entire Municipal Council, the General of the 20th Armoured Division and the other Military Officials, as well as crowds of people, who came piously to approach His Beatitude and to receive his blessing.

His Beatitude is accompanied in Kavala by His Eminence Alexios

of Carthage, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Meletios Koumanis, Hegumen of the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of St Savvas the Sanctified in Alexandria, Professor Theodoros Panagopoulos, Chairman of the Brotherhood of Office Bearers of the Patriarchate and Mr. Anestis Arnopoulos, Archon Referendarios of the Throne.