

HIS BEATITUDE MEETS WITH HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

On Monday 20th February 2012 His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa received a courtesy visit from His Eminence Augustino Kasuja, Apostolic Nuncio of the Vatican in Nigeria.

He then went to visit His Excellency the Governor of Lagos Mr. Babatunde Raji Fashola. His Excellency expressed his joy at the presence of the Venerable Primate of the Orthodox Church of Africa in Nigeria, and emphasized the essential contribution of the ecclesiastical work to the progress and spiritual development in the country.

In his reply His Beatitude the Patriarch briefly presented the history of the ancient Patriarchate and its multifaceted service ongoing for the people of the African Continent, spoke particularly of the productive Orthodox presence in Nigeria and noted the peace-making role of the Church in the community of the citizens, unequivocally condemning every form of religious fanaticism.

He went on to speak to His Excellency Mr. Babatunde Raji Fashola on the positions and international initiatives taken by the Patriarchal Throne in the issues regarding HIV/AIDS and the protection of human rights, something which brought on the immediate expression of a will to assist from the Governor in the relative activities of the local Church. In conclusion, he awarded him the distinction of the Golden Lion of the Patriarchate.

Present at the meeting were Their Eminences the Metropolitans of Nigeria, Alexandros and Cameroon, Gregory, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Panteleimon Arathymos, Chief Secretary of the Holy Synod, Archim. Maximos Nnachette and

Father Cornelios Osuji, His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece in Nigeria Mr. Dionysios Sourvanos, His Excellency the High Commissioner of Cyprus Dr Anastasios Leventis, the Honourable Consul of Egypt in Lagos Mr. Ahmed Baha' el Din and other distinguished persons.

His Beatitude then met at the Holy Metropolis of Nigeria with the clergy who serve in the broader area of Lagos, as well as the Republic of Benin. His Eminence Metropolitan Alexandros introduced the clergy to His Beatitude who praised their productive service under the pastoral guidance of the Metropolitan of Nigeria, praised the developed monastic ideal which exists in this ecclesiastical province of the Patriarchate, as well as the spiritual growth of the clergy serving there, gave them paternal advice and gave them gifts and blessings.