

HIS BEATITUDE MEETS WITH THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF MADAGASCAR. SYNAXIS WITH LOCAL PRIESTS.

On the evening of 15th February 2008, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa had a meeting with His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Marcel Ranjeva, in the capital Antananarivo, together with the local Bishop His Grace Ignatios, the Honourary Consul General of Greece Mr Panayiotis Talpoumis and the Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Madagascar, Mr Christos Spiliopoulos. During this hour-long meeting, His Beatitude thanked His Excellency for the warm welcome given to him on his arrival at the Airport and asked of His Excellency to pass on his fervent greetings to the President of Madagascar, Mr Marc Ravalomanana. He also spoke of the significant progress made by the country over the past few years and expressed his great satisfaction regarding the excellent relations with the Orthodox Church of Africa and especially with the Holy Diocese of Madagascar. His Beatitude ended by issuing an official invitation to the Minister of Foreign Affairs to pay an official visit to the Patriarchate of Alexandria.

His Beatitude then held a meeting with the priests of the local Church who came from all over Madagascar to the Missionary Centre of Alamour. During the long meeting, His BEatitude advised and counselled them all and listened to what they had to say regarding the doubts, anxieties and the personal and pastoral problems of the humble African priests, who for ther most part have many children. His Beatitude stressed the need for finding new ways to make missionary efforts work and emphasized the importance of ceaseless spiritual development of the priests. The priests then sang hymns in the local dialect and His Beatitude gave them all material and financial assistance and a cassock.